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## The Means of Grace from the Administrative Angle

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pages for the study of nascent Christianity," and Sir William Ramsay holds them "the most wonderful preface to the most remarkable letter that ever was written."

P.S. Neither with microscope nor telescope nor periscope nor hydroscope nor fluoroscope can we detect a Pope in Peter at Antioch.

Milwaukee, Wis.

WILLIAM DALLMANN

(To be continued)

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## The Means of Grace from the Administrative Angle

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The topic which is here to be briefly treated, chiefly on the basis of a problem which has recently been suggested for discussion, has been broached in the columns of this journal before, although not in an exhaustive manner.\* It is clearly not a mere academic question, nor may it be placed in the category of the *adiaphora* or *a priori* included in the field of casuistry, although certain situations may cause it to be placed under that heading. The problem, as it is before us, involves chiefly three *loci* in dogmatics, namely, *De Ecclesia*, *De Ministerio Ecclesiastico*, and *De Sacramentis*. As we take up the questions concerned, we become increasingly aware of the fact that we are not dealing with a matter of scholasticism, but with a problem that touches closely upon doctrines that are in no way in controversy in the Lutheran Church.

If we want to see and judge clearly in this matter, we must acknowledge chiefly two facts, both clearly set forth in Holy Writ. The first is this, that a Christian congregation (local church) is not a mere casual, occasional, or temporary gathering of Christians, but the permanent organization of Christians professing the same faith who have locally established the ministry of the Word in their midst and exercise the Office of the Keys. The truth of this statement is apparent to any one who so much as takes a concordance and reads the passages in which the word *ἐκκλησία* occurs in the New Testament. Scripture clearly associates this term, if applied to a corporate or visible entity restricted to one city or locality, with the concept of the local church (*Lokalgemeinde*). Paul and Barnabas arranged to have every congregation along their route of travel elect its elders. Acts 14:23. Cp. Acts 8:1; 15:22; Rom. 1:7; 16:5; 1 Cor. 4:17; 16:19; Phil. 4:15; Col. 4:15; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1; Philemon 2; 1 Pet. 5:13; Acts 13:1; 20:17; Rev. 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14; 1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor.

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\* See Vol. I, 588—590; II, 818—825.



1:1; 2 Cor. 8:1, 18. Such local congregations are described in Holy Writ as being units endowed with special functions, with privileges, responsibilities, and duties which presuppose a permanent or continued existence, activities which in their very nature could not be associated with a casual, temporary, or occasional gathering of Christians. This is apparent in particular from Matt. 18:15-18, where the form and manner of Christian discipline is described, but also from 1 Cor. 5:4 and 2 Cor. 2:6-10. Even occasional historical remarks point in the same direction. Thus Acts 2:47 tells us that "the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved," the holy writer thereby indicating that the congregation at Jerusalem had a permanent organization, to which members were added by the process of growth, Acts 5:14; 6:1, just as the congregation was later diminished in size on account of the persecution which followed the murder of Stephen, Acts 8:1. Later the congregation again grew in size, Acts 15:4, 12 (this in the year 49 A. D.), and in the year 58 there were many thousands who were affiliated with the congregation at Jerusalem. The fact of the permanent character of the body described in Scripture as the local congregation is brought out also in Acts 11:26, where it is stated that Paul and Barnabas assembled themselves a whole year with the church and taught much people. Hence the definition of a local congregation as given above is in full accord with the description given in the New Testament.

The second fact which clearly appears from Holy Writ is this, that the public administration of the means of grace in the Christian congregation is not a matter of any person's arbitrary choice, so that he alone (or possibly even a group) may arrogate to himself rights and privileges in teaching the Word of God and in administering the Sacraments. The universal spiritual priesthood of all believers, according to 1 Pet. 2:9 and many other passages, is a God-given blessing and privilege, and all Christians are to use and exercise the rights and duties of this priesthood, particularly in carrying out the provisions of the Great Commission, Matt. 28:19, 20, in making known the message of salvation to others, in teaching their children and their household, and in teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. We find Luther making some rather sweeping remarks on this thought, very likely with reference to the statement "All things are yours," 1 Cor. 3:21 b, in his treatise on "How Ministers Should be Chosen": "We firmly insist upon this, that there is no other Word of God than that alone which is commanded to all Christians to proclaim; that there is no other Baptism than that which all Christians may administer; that there is no other commemoration of the Lord's Supper than that com-



mitted to every Christian, which Christ has instituted for observance; also that there is no other sin but that which every Christian may bind and loosen; also that there is no sacrifice but the body of every Christian; also that no one can and may pray but only the Christian; in addition that no one should judge concerning the doctrine but only the Christian. But these are truly the priestly royal offices." (St. Louis ed., X, 1590.) Yet Luther and all the faithful teachers of the Church, as we shall presently see, was most careful to point out that no one should publicly "teach and admonish the congregation and administer the holy Sacraments but only those who have been called by the congregation and to whom the ministry is committed." (Sermon on 1 Pet. 2:5. St. Louis ed., IX, 1173.) It is the same truth which is so emphatically stated in Article XIV of the Augsburg Confession, in the well-known words "That no one should publicly teach in the Church or administer the Sacraments unless he be regularly called."

The relation between the congregation and the ministerial office is well described by Pieper (*Christliche Dogmatik*, III, 502): "By the public ministry we *here* understand the office in the narrower sense, namely, the office through which the means of grace, originally and inalienably entrusted to the Christians, are administered by the commission of the Christians, that is, *von Gemeinschafts wegen*. The ministry in this sense presupposes the existence of Christian congregations. Only where there is *previously* a congregation can the public ministry be established. . . . That the public ministry presupposes the existence of congregations must also be concluded from the fact that the Scripture speaks of congregations as units and of every individual member of them as the *objects of the activity* of this office. Thus 1 Tim. 3:5; Acts 20:28, 31; 1 Pet. 5:3. Hence this office and its functions are called 'public' not on account of the location where they are carried on but in the sense of: by commission of the congregation and in the service of the congregation, just as we, in civil life, speak of public servants and public service with respect to those who are in the service of the state. Hence the functions of the public ministry are 'public' not only when its incumbents proclaim the Word to an entire assembly but also when they minister to the individual souls in private pastoral care."

With this background of Bible-truth to guide our discussion, we can now approach the real problem, that of the administration of the means of grace, with specific reference to the boundaries or limitations set by the Word of God in the manipulating of these blessings, as entrusted to the believers on earth. "All things are yours," writes the apostle, not, however, with the intention of opening the doors to license and arbitrariness. According to the



word of the Lord in Mark 16:15 and in Matt. 28:19, 20 all believers are indeed expected to go out into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. And this command is limited only by the functions, obligations, and duties which God has given to the ministry of the Word. Christians are to show forth the praises of Him who has called them out of darkness into His marvelous light, 1 Pet. 2:9. Parents are to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, Eph. 6:4, which, by a comparison with Deut. 6:6, 7, means that they are to teach their children the Word of the Lord and train them in ways of true sanctification. Christians are to let the Word of God dwell in them richly in all wisdom, Col. 3:16, and the mutual admonition is made a feature of this teaching. Numerous other passages could well be added here to show that the Lord is serious about making the believers everywhere responsible for the spread of the Gospel.

But any activities along this line are not to interfere with the functions of the ministry as instituted by the Lord. The proclamation of the Word of God in the public assembly of the congregation is, by the call of the congregation, delegated to the servant of the Word. Whenever, therefore, the Word of God is to be taught and applied by commission of the congregation and in the service of the congregation, this is to be done by the pastor or by his duly appointed representative. This applies also to all persons who occupy auxiliary offices in the church (parish-school teachers, Sunday-school teachers, elders or deacons, deaconesses, parish workers), and it is contrary to the evident intention and will of the Lord if any person arrogates to himself the right to preach and teach *von Gemeinschafts wegen* unless commissioned to do so. Thus any Christian, in calling upon a sick brother or sister or on one in need of special comfort and consolation, may impart such assurance from the Word of God as a fellow-Christian. But only the pastor will pronounce the absolution upon a person in need of it "by virtue of his office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word," as a function of the public ministry and in accordance with the call received from the Christian congregation. The so-called "sick committees" of the various church organizations should be instructed and trained in accordance with these principles.

This conclusion is reached also by Luther in several of his writings. In his sermon on Ex. 3:1 he states: "This is the call of the public office among the Christians. If one should (however) come into an assembly where there are no Christians, one might do as the apostles did and not wait for a call. . . . If one should say: Here are no Christians; I want to preach and instruct them concerning the Christian faith, and then a company should gather and choose and call me as their bishop, then I should have a call."



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(St. Louis ed., III, 723.) And in his treatise "That a Christian Congregation Has Power and Authority," etc., Luther writes: "Now you say: How is this? If he is not called, he may not preach, as you yourself have so often taught. Answer: Here you must put the Christian into two categories. In the first place, if he is in a locality where there are no Christians, he requires no other call than that he is a Christian, called and anointed by God by an inner call; there he owes it to the erring heathen and non-Christians to preach and to teach the Gospel from the duty of Christian love, even though no man call him to that end. . . . For in such a case a Christian, for brotherly love, looks upon the needs of the poor, corrupt souls and does not wait whether he be given a command or a letter from princes or bishops; for necessity breaks all laws and has no law; therefore love is under obligation to help where is no one else who does help or should help. In the second place, if he is in a locality with other Christians, who share the same power and authority with him, he should not presume upon power of himself, but he should let himself be called and placed at the head, in order that he may preach and teach in the stead and by the commission of the others." (St. Louis, ed., X, 1544.)

With regard to the administration of the Sacraments, the situation is even more limited. As stated above, the *right* to administer the Sacraments in itself, as a power connected with the establishment and maintenance of the kingdom of Christ on earth, cannot be denied to *any* believer. On this point the statement of Luther quoted in the first part of this paper should be satisfactory to all who desire a clear presentation of the privileges of the priesthood of believers. But other considerations enter into the problem which we have before us, chiefly that of the relation of the Sacraments to the outward organization of the congregation as a communion, or corporate body.

We consider, in the first place, the case of Holy Baptism, the *sacramentum initiationis*. This designation is used in a twofold sense. In the first and primary meaning of the term, Holy Baptism is the Sacrament of the reception into the membership of Christ, into the invisible Church, always presupposing, as a matter of fact, the presence of faith on the part of the catechumen or new member. This is plainly indicated in the words of Jesus: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," Mark 16:16, and in the Great Commission: "Make disciples of all nations (*μαθητεύσατε*) by baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost," Matt. 28:19; for the baptism in or into the name of Jesus Christ or in that of the Trinity had the object of making the baptized persons members of the body of Christ. The same



thought is conveyed in the well-known words of the apostle: "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." Gal. 3:26, 27. Cp. also Rom. 6:3, 4; Titus 3:5-7. If a person by faith accepts Christ as his personal Savior, Baptism is to him a seal of the forgiveness of sins. In this connection the term *sacramentum initiationis* is particularly appropriate of the baptism of infants, since in their case Word and water together effect or create faith, since the water of Baptism is comprehended in God's command and connected with God's Word.

It should be noted here that we do not indeed assert the absolute necessity of Holy Baptism, as though it were impossible for a person who is not baptized to receive forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. Baptism is not unconditionally and under all circumstances the *sacramentum initiationis*. In the case of adults faith is engendered, as a rule, by the Word of the Gospel, before Baptism is actually administered. Thus the reception of such an adult into the membership of the Savior is an accomplished fact even before he received the Sacrament. Circumstances may also make the application of the Sacrament impossible, as most likely in the case of the thief on the cross, or when the earthly element is missing, for example, when a person is converted in a desert where there is no water obtainable. We must also keep in mind the special cases of children who die before or during birth, or before emergency baptism can be applied, although in instances of this kind we cannot speak of the use of the Word of God in the usual way. We regard it as self-evident that Christian mothers pray for their children before and during birth, thus applying also the Word of God (cp. Luke 1:41-44), and we know that God on His part is not bound to the means of grace which He has ordained. But we firmly adhere to the fact that all Christians are, *by God's order*, directed and commanded to use the Sacrament of Baptism and that the contempt of the Sacrament is equivalent to despising the counsel of God intended for the salvation of men, as is stated of the Pharisees in Luke 7:30. It is not a matter of a *vis magica*, but of an order of God, which He expects to be observed and followed by all those who are governed by His will.

But we may speak of Holy Baptism as the initiatory Sacrament also in another sense. For it is not applied in an invisible manner, although it is primarily and in a most emphatic sense the Sacrament of reception into the communion of saints, the invisible Church. At the same time, however, it is a rite of initiation and represents the reception of the person who is baptized into the external or visible organization, the corporate body of the Christian congregation, and thereby, *ceteris paribus*, into the so-called ex-



ternal or visible Church, as it exists in the world and is so recognized by common consent and usage. The formula commonly employed, "received into membership by Holy Baptism," is in full accord with the standing practice of the Church and is undoubtedly connected also with the example of the Apostolic Church, for we read of the effect of the great Pentecost sermon delivered by Peter: "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls," Acts 2:41, the context clearly showing that the congregation as a corporate body is meant. This form of reception into the congregation by the act of baptism, also as initiatory rite, the Church has always observed. In the Lutheran Church in particular, which has the correct doctrine concerning the baptism of children, this view is clearly in evidence in the practice of speaking of the entire baptized membership of a congregation, which includes all those who have received Holy Baptism, young and old, children and adults.

These considerations have a direct bearing upon our discussion of Holy Baptism from the administrative angle. While it is true that the Great Commission, Matt. 28:19, makes Holy Baptism a function of the universal priesthood, which makes it not only a right but, under circumstances, the duty of every Christian to administer the Sacrament of Baptism, and while the Articles of Visitation of 1592 repudiate the position of the Calvinists in denying the validity of emergency Baptism (cp. *Conc. Trigl.*, 1156, 37), yet we do not in the practice of our Church disregard the divine order which makes the called ministers the stewards of the mysteries of God, 1 Cor. 4:1. Because of the fact that Holy Baptism has the significance of an initiatory rite also into the congregation as corporate unit, the pastor is to assume the responsibility for such reception into membership. On this account, for example, we have the public ratification, or acknowledgment, of emergency baptism, chiefly by a testimony of the witnesses concerned in the act, not as though the Sacrament as performed by a layman was essentially in need of such ratification, but because the congregation which has received the baptized infant as a member is entitled to have the information that the act of baptism was performed in keeping with the institution of the Lord. It is partly with reference to these considerations that the Lutheran Church continues the institution of sponsors and that most congregations rightly insist upon having Baptism performed in a public service of the church, since it signifies a reception of a new member or members. Still another point connected with the administration of Holy Baptism is that which might cause a congregation to inquire concerning a so-called "heretical baptism," that is, one which was



performed by a person whose own public confession or belief, with or without that of the body in whose midst he functions, is anti-Trinitarian and thus places him outside the Christian Church. Reception into the membership of a church-body cannot obtain when the one who ostensibly officiates in that capacity is not himself a member of that church-body or acting as a fully acknowledged agent. (See C. T. M., III, 167 ff.)

But what about the celebration of the Lord's Supper from the administrative angle? What considerations must guide our discussion here? Is its necessity in the life of the Christians to be placed on the same level with Holy Baptism? Do the rights of the universal priesthood extend also to the private or public exercise of the Office of the Keys as connected with the Eucharist and the public administration of the Sacrament?

Viewing the problem before us from this angle, we are bound to admit that the Lord's Supper, in spite of its great value and incomparable worth in the life of the Christian, cannot be placed on the level of even Holy Baptism so far as necessity is concerned, a fact which is also brought out in the designation *sacramentum confirmationis*, that is, the Sacrament which is intended to strengthen and confirm the believers in their Christian faith and life. If we are obliged to say, even of Holy Baptism, that it is not *absolutely* necessary, we must concede even more readily that the Sacrament of the Eucharist is only relatively necessary. In making this statement, we do not imply that faith may be retained if this Sacrament is despised or even deliberately neglected by such as are eligible to receive it (for this would be contrary both to its institution and its history), but that there are many factors which may suspend the celebration of the Holy Supper or postpone attendance at the sacred meal which could not be alleged in the case of Holy Baptism. At the same time the injunctions and ordinances of the Lord, the conditions which He associates with this Sacrament, are of a nature compelling us to draw the circle closer.

It is evident, for example, that the Scriptures expect a greater amount of Christian knowledge and understanding of the Christians who partake of the Lord's Supper than of the candidates for Holy Baptism. This appears not only from the words of institution, which require an understanding of the substitutionary atonement ("given and shed for you for the remission of sins"), but also from the other *loci*, namely, those in 1 Cor. 10 and 11. In 1 Cor. 10:16, 17, 21 the apostle presupposes an understanding of the fellowship with God and Christ, on the one hand, and with one's fellow-believers, on the other hand, which is demanded of one who would partake of the Sacrament. In the passage 1 Cor. 11:17-34 still more



is demanded by the apostle, namely, the ability to distinguish between the Eucharist and a common meal, between the consecrated elements and ordinary bread and wine, the understanding of worthiness and unworthiness with respect to the Eucharist, the training in examining oneself before partaking of the Lord's Table, the recognition of the fellowship of faith and the common membership of the believers in Christ. And if one examines these Scriptural requirements somewhat more closely, he will readily see that the Lutheran Church has a sound basis for other demands which it brings to the attention of those who wish to be enrolled as adult members, as communicants in the congregation, namely, at least some measure of the ability to distinguish between truth and error in testing the spirits (chiefly with regard to false doctrines concerning the Sacrament), 1 John 4:1 ff., the willingness to contend for the faith once entrusted to the saints, Jude 3, the readiness to give a reason for the hope that is held by the Christians, 1 Pet. 3:15, the promise to amend one's sinful life, 1 Thess. 4:3, growth in the knowledge of the truth, Heb. 5:12 to 6:3; Eph. 4:14-16, and others.

Now, we are bound to take note of the fact that these conditions for admission to the Lord's Table, while not absolute demands with equal emphasis in the case of *all* communicants, are clearly noted in Scripture and that the responsibility for admission to the Lord's Table is laid upon the Christian congregation. This includes not only the preliminary instruction of candidates for adult membership, with the privilege of attending the Holy Communion, but also the subsequent conduct of members of the Christian congregation (and, in a measure, of the entire church-body to which the congregation belongs). For that the celebration of the Eucharist is, in an even greater degree than in the case of Holy Baptism, a function of the Christian congregation and of the called ministers of the Word appears not only from 1 Cor. 4:1, referred to above, but especially from 1 Cor. 11. For it is clear that the apostle does not address individual Christians or such as may have gathered for a casual meeting, but he speaks to the ἐκκλησία at Corinth. He writes: "when ye come together *in the church*," v. 18, and immediately afterwards: "when ye come together, therefore, into one place," v. 20, evidently referring to the meetings of the congregation for the purpose of celebrating the Eucharist, the Lord's Supper. The same fact appears from the history of the Holy Supper in the Apostolic Church. For although the Eucharist at Jerusalem, Acts 2:46, at Troas, Acts 20:7, and elsewhere was celebrated in the homes of members, this does not demand the assumption that families alone are concerned or that we are dealing with conventicles, for it is a well-known fact that the early congregations



distinguished between the public proclamations of the Word and the meetings of those who were actually communicant members, and the more intimate fellowship meetings were held in the large homes of wealthier members, with only *bona-fide* believers in attendance. The congregations in those days took their responsibility over against admission to the Lord's Supper very seriously, and this attitude subsequently became so pronounced that it led, in connection with the *disciplina arcani*, to unpleasant misunderstandings and blasphemous suspicions on the part of non-Christians.

These facts do not militate against the rights of the universal priesthood of the Christians, but they do direct the public use of the means of grace, specifically the participation in the Holy Communion. And in understanding the situation, we must also consider the Office of the Keys and the duty of Christian discipline. It is true that the individual believers possess the power of the keys; but the public administration of this power lies in the hands of the congregation as such and in that of the office of the ministry, established for that purpose. The Christian congregation according to the teaching of the New Testament, is responsible for the celebration of the Lord's Supper and for those whom its pastor admits to the Lord's Table, especially in the interest of avoiding offense or in removing the consequences of sins. (Cp. Pieper, *Christliche Dogmatik*, III, 443 f., 503—506.) The statement of the Augustana: "It is not usual to give the body of the Lord, except to them that have been previously examined and absolved" (Art. XXV., *Conc. Trigl.*, 69), is not the result of a mere historical development but represents the application of principles clearly set forth in the Word of God.

To summarize briefly, then, at this point, we may state that the celebration of the Lord's Supper should be in charge of the Christian congregation, 1. because it is historically connected with the Christian congregation; 2. because it presupposes congregational membership; 3. because it should evidently be celebrated only under congregational supervision and control, since the responsibility for those partaking of the Lord's Supper has been laid upon the congregation.

What conclusions must we draw from these facts? For one thing, that the functions of the universal priesthood do not include the administration of the Eucharist (except, perhaps, in certain unusual emergencies), since this Sacrament according to its essence is to be celebrated *von Gemeinschafts wegen*, by the congregation as such. This is the case also in private communions, for the pastor in such cases functions in a representative capacity, and ordinarily only the sick person receives the Sacrament, unless other members of the family are *bona-fide shut-ins*. In this connection we might



remember the practice of the early Church to deliver the consecrated elements to the sick members of the congregation by the hand of the deacons, so that all communicant members of the congregation actually partook of the Eucharist at the same time. As emphatic as Luther is in his defense of the rights of the universal priesthood, as noted above, yet he refuses to leave the principle of Scripture concerning the congregational character of the celebration of the Sacrament. In his sermon on 1 Pet. 2:5 he writes: "These three offices He has given to us all. Because He is Priest and we are His brethren, therefore all Christians have power and command to preach and to proclaim God's mercy and attributes, etc., and to step before God in order that one might pray for the other and sacrifice himself to God; yet, as St. Paul says, that everything be done in order, that not every one teach in the congregation and administer the holy Sacraments, but only those who have been called by the congregation and to whom the ministry is committed." (St. Louis ed., IX, 1173.)

Luther had occasion to refer in particular to group communions in the homes, in families which might otherwise be deprived of the blessings of the Eucharist. In his treatise on *How Ministers are to be Elected and Commissioned* he writes (with reference to Christians in the *diaspora*): "For it would be far safer and more beneficial [namely than submitting to papal authority] that every housefather read the Gospel at home. And since the opinion and usage of the whole world by common consent permits laymen to baptize, my advice would be that fathers to whom children are born should baptize these themselves and thus, according to the doctrine of Christ, govern themselves and those entrusted to them, even though they do not receive the Lord's Supper all their lives. For the Sacrament of the Altar is not absolutely necessary for salvation; but the Gospel and Baptism alone are sufficient in themselves, because faith alone sanctifies and love alone lives properly." (St. Louis ed., X, 1557.) And in another treatise, *Of Communion in the Home*, Luther states: "Answering the question which your good friend . . . has presented to you in writing and desires to have brought to my attention, this is my answer, namely, that you ought to indicate to your good sir and friend that he is not under obligation to adopt this mode and to administer Communion to himself and his household, and, in addition, it is unnecessary, because he is neither called thereto nor has he a command; besides, if the tyrannical ministers of the Church, who should do so, refuse to give it to him and his family, he may yet well be saved by his faith through the Word. It would also cause great offense to administer the Sacrament here and there in the houses, so that finally it will not come to a good end, but divisions and sects will follow. . . .



For it is an altogether different thing about a public office in the Church and about a housefather in relation to his household. . . . One should not undertake anything without God's certain command, by mere devotion, for nothing good will come of it." (St. Louis ed., X, 2224—2226.) It is evident that Luther, though he has specific cases in mind, was fully aware of the principles involved and did not hesitate to apply them.

The fact that the celebration of the Lord's Supper is a function of the Christian congregation should be kept in mind also in our days, as it was ever emphasized in the history of the Church. The celebration of the Eucharist by conventicles, *ecclesiolae in ecclesia*, as in the case of the Pietists, the Stundists, and other enthusiasts, was always definitely condemned by the teachers of the Church. In the history of our own Synod, conventions of synodical Districts and pastoral conferences have always celebrated the Lord's Supper not as independent organizations or as temporary congregations but as guests of the local congregation in whose midst they were assembled. And it was always understood that lay members of the congregation which acted as host to the conference had the full right and privilege to partake of Holy Communion with the guests from other congregations (the pastors). It is not a mere tradition that laymen and parish teachers, on such occasions did not, as a rule, partake of the Lord's Table (unless with a guest card); for it was understood that they had the opportunity of partaking of the Holy Supper at any time in their home congregation. The alleged difficulty concerning the infrequent Communion attendance of pastors may easily be solved if the congregations in whose midst a conference meets will always arrange a communion service, so that the visitors may partake of the Sacrament. And the custom of announcement in a more or less formal manner, also of having a confessor and of observing the safeguards which the Lord has placed about the Holy Supper, should by no means be neglected or dropped. If a pastor feels the need of more frequent communions, he may well make it possible, by conferring with his congregation, to be excused at a time when a neighboring congregation is celebrating the Holy Supper, so that he will not be deprived of the blessings which are connected with the Sacrament.

As for group communions of laymen in various church organizations, they are hardly compatible with the principles discussed at some length in the body of this paper. All the questions connected with the Holy Supper, those of a knowledge of the faith and life of the communicants, those pertaining to announcement, confession, close Communion, and others, argue against such an innovation. The members of our congregations, old and young,



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are to partake of the Sacrament in the congregation of which they are members, where their *Seelsorger* can give them the pastoral advice, admonition, and comfort which is required. The conditions at meetings of laymen in conventions are not favorable to quiet meditation and proper preparation for the worthy reception of the Sacrament. If the convention takes place in the midst of a congregation, this fact alone does not make the pastor of the congregation the *Seelsorger* of those in attendance at the convention. The conventions last one or two days, possibly a week—why should there be a special need for the Holy Communion in this short time? It is true, the local congregation might arrange for a celebration of the Lord's Supper, and visitors might attend if they bring guest cards, but even then irregularities are bound to occur. And if the members of the visiting organization do not attend in a body (the one or the other not partaking with the group), invidious comparisons are bound to be made. If everything is done "decently and in order," arrangements of this kind will not be necessary.

P. E. KRETZMANN

## ADDENDUM

Since there has been some discussion recently on the self-communion of the pastor, the following paragraphs from Meusel's *Handlexikon* will offer a factual background for proper conclusions:

"Hier ist nun noch eine innerhalb der lutherischen Kirche auch in neuerer Zeit vielverhandelte Frage zu beruehren, die Frage der sogenannten Selbstkommunion der Geistlichen, das heisst, ob der das Sakrament verwaltende Geistliche in dem Falle, dass kein anderer Geistlicher zugegen ist, der es ihm reichen kann, befugt ist, sich selbst dasselbe zu geben, beziehungsweise zu nehmen (*se ipsum communicare*). Vgl. J. L. Koenig, *Der jedesmalige Mitgenuss und das Selbstnehmen des heiligen Abendmahls von seiten des konsekrierenden Geistlichen*, Demmin 1859, eine Schrift, welche viel geschichtlichen Stoff bietet, aber vielfach der rechten Kritik entbehrt. Trefflich ist die Frage nach der geschichtlichen Seite behandelt von Kliefoth, *Liturgische Abhandlungen*, Bd. 8, S. 117 ff. (die urspr. GDD. 2. Aufl., Bd. 5). Von aeltester Zeit her herrschte in der Kirche unbeanstandet der Brauch, dass der ministrierende Geistliche in der Regel mitkommunizierte, und zwar so, dass er mindestens in dem bezeichneten Falle aus eigener Hand das Sakrament empfang. Daraus ergab sich mit dem Aufkommen der Winkelmessen in der roemisch-mittelalterlichen Kirche der Missstand, dass der sich selbst kommunizierende Geistliche der einzige Kommunikant war, und die Missdeutung, dass er auch im Empfang des Sakramentes die Gemeinde mittlerisch vertrete. Die lutherische Reformation hat zunaechst die Selbstkommunion des Geistlichen im Zusammenhang mit der Gemeindekommunion unbeanstandet gelassen. Luther in der *Formula Missae* vom Jahre 1523 sagt ausdruecklich: *Deinde communicet tum sese tum populum*. Vgl. *Conf. Aug.*, Art. XXIV, 34. Auch eine Reihe von lutherischen Kirchen-



ordnungen bis in den Anfang des 17. Jahrhunderts haben dieselbe teils zugelassen (wie der *Unterricht der Visitatoren*, Ausg. v. 1538), teils geradezu angeordnet (wie die Pfalz-Reuburger Kirchenordnung v. 1543). Allein zunaechst der Gegensatz gegen das Unwesen der Winkelmessen fuehrte schon Luther zu Reflexionen, welche der Selbstkommunion ueberhaupt unguenstig waren (Walch, XVI, S. 1202: 'Es ist eine Verwirrung des Amtes, wenn sich einer selbst kommuniziert, eben als wenn sich einer selbst tauft'; vgl. Art. *Smalc.*, p. II, Art. II, 8). Dazu wirkte weiter mindestens instinktiv der Gegensatz gegen reformiertes Wesen. Denn in den reformierten Kirchen ward von vornherein die Teilnahme des Ministranten an dem Mahl der Gemeinde ausdruecklich angeordnet, so zwar, dass derselbe, wie er Kelch und Patene einem andern der Kommunikanten hingibt, so auch seinerseits beides von einem derselben empfaengt. Auch hierin kommt die oben bezeichnete Sakramentsauffassung zum Ausdruck, welche der  $\delta\acute{o}\varsigma$  im lutherischen Sinne widerstrebt. Demgegenueber haben die meisten lutherischen Kirchenordnungen die Selbstkommunion der Geistlichen teils stillschweigend beseitigt, teils geradezu verboten (so zuerst die Bugenhagensche Kirchenordnung der Stadt Goslar von 1531: 'Ess sol niemand ihm selber das Sacrament reichen oder geben'), so dass schon im Laufe des 16. Jahrhunderts dieser Brauch allmaechlich verschwindet und etwa seit Mitte des 17. Jahrhunderts nur noch als kaum geduldete Ausnahme vorkommt. Den Hauptgrund fuer diese auffallende Erscheinung, dass die lutherische Kirche einen so uralten und allgemeinen Brauch hat fallen lassen, spricht ein Gutachten der Wittenberger theologischen Fakultetaet von 1612 damit aus, dass zum Abendmahl sowohl  $\delta\acute{o}\varsigma$  als  $\lambda\eta\psi\iota\varsigma$  erforderlich sei (vgl. bei Joh. Gerhard, *Loci Theol.*, XXI, cap. IV, 18: 'Da zum heiligen Abendmahl zwei Personen gehoeren, eine welche austeilte und eine welche nimmt, so duerfte der Geistliche richtiger und der Einsetzung Christi entsprechender handeln, wenn er von einem andern und nicht von sich selbst das Sakrament empfaengt'). Dabei ist jedoch in der lutherischen Kirche nie verkannt worden, dass die liturgische  $\delta\acute{o}\varsigma$  an sich ein *Adiaphora* ist, und hervorragendste Theologen wie Chemnitz, Gerhard, Hunnius haben die Selbstkommunion des Geistlichen als mindestens im Notfall zulaessig behauptet mit der Begruendung, dass der Geistliche, auch wenn er aus eigner Hand das Sakrament nimmt, doch zugleich als darreichendes Organ Gottes fungiert. Daraufhin ist in neuerer Zeit, seitdem der Sakramentsempfang wieder zu hoeherer Wertschaetzung gekommen ist, vielfach, namentlich in den 50er Jahren, aus den Reihen der Geistlichen die Forderung erhoben worden, dass die Selbstkommunion ueberhaupt oder unter gewissen Kautelen freigegeben werde. Denn es ist offenbar, dass durch das Verbot derselben der grossen Mehrzahl der Geistlichen ein haeufigerer Sakramentsgenuss unmoeglich gemacht und damit auch die Moeglichkeit genommen ist, durch eigenes Beispiel die Gemeinden zu reizen. Der Gewaehrung jener Forderung scheint zunaechst entgegenzustehen, dass der Sakramentsempfang an vorgaengige Beichte und Absolutionsempfang geknuepft ist. Man hat erwidert (vgl. die Oesterreichische Kirchenordnung von 1571), dass diese Vorbedingung nicht absolut notwendig sei, dass der Geistliche sich in die



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gemeine Absolution einschliessen koenne, dass er daneben wie bisher Absolution wie Sakrament mitunter von einem andern Geistlichen sich erteilen lassen moege. Wenn trotzdem von kirchenregimentlicher Seite jener Forderung bisher ueberwiegend widerstanden worden ist, so scheint dafuer entscheidend gewesen zu sein, was Kliefoth a. a. O. S. 123 anfuehrt, naemlich die Ruecksicht auf die Gemeinden, welchen die Selbstkommunion der Geistlichen anstoessig und widerspruchsvoll erscheinen muesse."

A simple and practical solution of the problem might consist in this, that a pastor, having properly instructed his congregation, be given the Eucharist by an elder designated for that purpose. (Cf. Fritz, *Pastoral Theology*, 141, 146.)

## Entwürfe über die von der Synodalkonferenz angenommene Epistelreihe

### Elfter Sonntag nach Trinitatis

2 Tim. 4, 1—8

„Ich habe einen guten Kampf gekämpft; ich habe den Lauf vollendet; ich habe Glauben gehalten.“ Im dritten Satz sagt der Apostel ohne Bild, was er in den vorigen Sätzen unter einem den athletischen Spielen entnommenen Bild zum Ausdruck gebracht hat. Er ist in seinem Glauben sowohl als auch in seiner Amtsführung seinem Gott und Heiland treu geblieben. Das soll jeder Prediger von sich sagen können, 1 Kor. 4, 2. Worin besteht aber nun diese Treue? Das zu wissen, ist wichtig für die Lehrer, damit sie ihr Amt treu ausüben, wovon so viel abhängt, aber auch für die Hörer, damit sie ihren treuen Pastor recht ehren. In dem einen wie in dem andern Stück wird leicht und viel gesündigt.

#### Wann kämpft ein Prediger einen guten Kampf?

1. Wenn er das eigentliche Ziel ins Auge faßt
2. Wenn er unentwegt den göttlichen Anweisungen folgt

#### 1

B. 1. Der Apostel erinnert an Christi Wiederkunft. Er wird dann an den Werken den Glauben, beziehungsweise den Unglauben, nachweisen und demgemäß sein Urteil fällen, Matth. 25, 31—46. Dieser jüngste Tag, an dem das ewige Los der ganzen Menschheit entschieden wird, liegt nicht in weiter Ferne. Angesichts dieser Tatsache beschwört der Apostel jeden Prediger, doch ja treulich seines Amtes zu warten. Das ist also das große Endziel, das er stets im Auge behalten muß, die ihm anbefohlenen Seelen durch rechte Handhabung des Wortes Gottes dahin zu bringen, daß sie stehen können vor des Menschen Sohn. Dieses Ziel hat Paulus stets im Auge behalten, und das Absehen eines