

The Office of Ministry and Ordination.

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Introduction

We are, as you all know, presently engaged in discussion on whether women may be ordained into the office of the public ministry of the LCA. This question, however, presupposes that we agree on two even more basic theological issues. It assumes that

- there is such an office or ministry,

and

- that the rite of ordination places a person into that office.

The course of the debate, as well as feedback from the forums held earlier this year, has shown that some do not agree on these matters. In fact, we seem to have wider disagreements on the doctrine of ministry than on almost any other issue. Some of this is the result of ignorance, as many of our members and some of our pastors are not familiar with our teaching on ministry and its Biblical foundations. But it is also true that some people are not convinced about our teaching on ministry. It is challenged by some people and rejected outright by others. This has led to miscommunication which results in frustration and misunderstanding. So, for example, all the arguments against the ordination of women are irrelevant and inconsequential for those who assume that there is no divinely instituted office of ministry. On the other hand, many of the arguments for the ordination of women lose their force if the office of ministry is completely divorced from the priesthood of believers.

The time has therefore come, I think, for us to stand back a little from the debate and deal with these more fundamental questions first, before we attempt to reach some agreement on how to proceed with the ordination of women.

This paper is my tentative attempt to do just that. I am, of course, presenting my own analysis of the situation from my own perspective which some of you may not share. My aim in doing this is to clarify what we are discussing, to ascertain where we agree, and to discover where we differ from each other, and why. It is meant to facilitate clearer communication and to stimulate more productive debate, debate which avoids false antitheses, simplistic categorisation, and unnecessary polarisation.

Questions

Do you agree with the doctrine of ministry as sketched out in our Theses on the Office of the Ministry?

Which questions about the office of ministry do we need to resolve before dealing with ordination of women in the LCA?

1. What is meant by ministry, office, and ordination?

Some of the debate on the ordination of women has been confused by our lack of clarity in the use of language and by some misunderstanding of certain key terms which we have traditionally used in our church. I shall therefore attempt to define these key terms to avoid unnecessary miscommunication.

a. Ministry

As you all know the Greek word for this is *diakonia*. These days we tend to use the word ministry rather loosely for any kind of work in the church. It has become a virtual synonym for service. Hence congregations claim that all their members are ministers. But that is not how the word has been used traditionally in our circles and in the church (Scaer). A minister was an authorised assistant, an intermediary, an envoy employed to perform a task for another person, a steward who administers the property of his employer (Collins; Donfried). A minister of Christ is therefore appointed by him to work with him and under his authority; a minister of the gospel administers Christ's gospel; the ministry of word and sacrament is their administration by duly authorised people. The word is therefore used to highlight the authority and responsibility of a person to act as an intermediary for the person who had appointed him or her. When we speak of pastors as ministers of Christ, we imply that they have been appointed by him, as his envoys, to convey his word and sacraments to his people. Other people may, of course, be ministers of Christ with a different ministry in the same context, or a different context.

b. Office

This rather cumbersome term, which has played such a decisive role in our tradition, is, without doubt, open to misunderstanding among our people. When they hear it used, they think first of a place where business is transacted in an impersonal way. It speaks of what we most dislike in business, in government, in education, and wherever we have to deal with officials who care little or nothing for us as people. Nevertheless it is still a key term for us as Lutherans, for in our tradition it has not been used to depersonalise work but to empower people to serve others.

Unlike most other orthodox churches in Christendom who tend to speak about the order of ministry with all its connotations of rank and status, we Lutherans have always spoken about the office of ministry (Latin *officium*; German *Amt*). Traditionally, we have understood an office as a position of responsibility in a community. Through its leaders a community appoints a person to a position of leadership in it and authorises that person to serve in that position according to certain given terms of reference. Theologically speaking, we distinguish those positions of responsibility which God has established and authorised through his word from those which have been created merely by human beings.

An office is therefore a position of delegated authority with set duties and clear accountability. It empowers a person for a task and yet at the same time limits the power of the person. It gives a person freedom to act within certain fixed parameters. It situates leadership within a community, without delivering the leader to disempowerment by the community.

Thus the office of the public ministry is the position of leadership in the church under Christ as the head of the church. Those who serve in that office receive their position with its responsibilities and their authority from Christ through the church to lead the church. Their power does not derive from themselves and their abilities but from Christ and his word. They are therefore always dependant on him and ultimately accountable to him.

c. Ordination

People argue that the New Testament does not speak of ordination. That is true if we turn to the modern translations of the New Testament, because none of them uses the verb ordain or the noun ordination as a technical ritual term. Instead, they speak about the laying on of hands (1 Tim 4:14; 5:22; 2 Tim 1:6). But it is not true if we turn to the King James version where it is used quite deliberately and technically in Acts 14:23 and Titus 1:5. The English verb ordain comes from a rather nondescript Latin word which means to appoint a person to do a task. This Latin word was used in the early church to translate the Greek verb *cheirotonein* (to raise hands). It was used for the election of a person communally in a public assembly by the raising of hands. That is how it is used in 2 Corinthians 8:19. But in Acts 14:23 it is used for the choice of presbyters by Paul and Barnabas. From its use in Acts 14:23 this rather general word became a technical ritual term in the early church, as is shown by the textual addition to Titus 1:9, the subscriptions to 2 Timothy

and Titus, and its use in Didache 15:1 for the election of bishops and deacons. It seems that the early church deliberately chose this term because it had no pagan religious connotations.

Even though the word had by the time of Reformation acquired hierarchical connotations of order, rank, and status, it was not rejected by the Reformers but was used in two ways. On the one hand, it was used rather generally for the whole process of making a person a pastor, from the initial self presentation for service to the installation in a congregation. On the other hand, it was also used more narrowly for the liturgical act by which candidates were received, appointed, and commissioned as pastors. That is how the term is used in our confessions, and that is how it is used in this paper.

Questions

Do you have any difficulties with our use of these terms?

Can you think of other terms to express what they mean to a modern audience?

2. What are the Biblical foundations for the office of ministry?

The Augsburg Confession claims that God himself has instituted the office of ministry (CA V,1). This statement has foundational significance for us. It means first and foremost that the Holy Scriptures record how Christ has established this ministry by his word. That word of Christ provides the divine mandate for the ministry of the word; it gives a secure basis for it and its operation. It establishes the office and determines its function. It also bestows the office on those who serve in it. Christ's mandate gives pastors their authority in the church. Hence Melancthon asserts in the Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope that the authority of the ministry depends on the Word of God (Tr 10) and that the ministry of the gospel is not valid because of any individual's authority but because of the word given by Christ (Tr 26). The German translation adds this explanation of Christ's mandate and its importance for the ministers of the word: The person adds nothing to his Word and the office commanded by Christ. No matter who it is who preaches and teaches (that word), if there are hearts that hear and adhere to it, something will happen to them according as they hear and believe because Christ commanded such preaching and demanded that his promises be believed.

Secondly, the words of Christ do not just found the office of preaching; since they are the powerful, Spirit-filled, effectual words of God, they empower the office and those who serve in it, so that they do the work of God in and through the office (Kliefoth). For God has created that office, like all offices, to offer and convey his gifts, his blessings, to people through it. Those who serve in it not only serve under the authority of Christ as agents of Christ, but depend on the power of Christ's word and his Holy Spirit as they serve in it. The power for ministry therefore comes from Christ's word which establishes the office and is at work in and through it.

Thirdly, Christ's mandate for ministry makes for certainty and confidence and boldness in a pastor. It means that those who serve faithfully according to that mandate can be sure that God is pleased with their work, for God is pleased only with services instituted by his word and done in faith (ACA XXV11, 70). They can therefore work wholeheartedly and energetically with a good conscience and defy Satan when he accuses them of unworthiness and failure. But that can only be if God has in fact instituted the office of the ministry.

As soon as we claim that Christ has instituted the office of ministry, people ask: Where, when, and with whom? Now while some Lutherans claim that our teaching on ministry is not derived from any particular passages in the New Testament but is deduced from general theological principles, it is generally agreed that we can refer to a number of passages in the gospels. I have perused the confessions and the early Lutheran rites of ordination and have come up with this list which I place before you to discover whether we agree on their use to establish Christ's mandate for the ministry of word and sacrament.

Our Confessions appeal to the following five texts:

1. John 20:21-23: CA XXV111, 6-7; Tr 9, 23, 31.
2. Luke 10:16: CA XXV111, 22; ACA V11/V111, 28, 47.
3. Matthew 16:18-19: Tr 22,25.
4. Matthew 28:19-20: Tr 31
5. John 21:17: Tr 30.

Of these John 20:21-23 is obviously the most significant (Scaer, 407-408). In it the risen Lord Jesus gives the mandate for ministry to the apostles and defines their ministry as the power of the keys. He establishes the office of the keys.

The early Lutheran rites for ordination and subsequent Lutheran rites appeal most commonly to Matthew 28:16-20 and John 20:20-23 as Christs mandate for the office of ministry in the church. They assume that Jesus addresses the apostles in John 20:20-23, just as he does in Matthew 28:16-20. They also assume that Christs promise to be with his eleven disciples until the close of the age in Matthew 28:20 implies that they are to pass on their commission to others after them. Sasse claims:

this mandate did not cease to exist with the death of the apostles. According to Matthew 28:20, it continues until the end of time and is carried out by the bearers of the ministry in the church as the successors of the apostles and the representatives of the entire church (1943/4,33).

Besides these two passages, our rite of ordination and the rite in the Lutheran Book of Worship also use 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 as the mandate for the administration of the eucharist by pastors. This passage obviously echoes Luke 22:19-20. Its use is new, for our Lutheran rites have traditionally been wary of this passage because of its abuse by the Roman Catholics as a warrant for the performance of the Mass as a sacrifice for the living and the dead.

A fourth passage could, I think, also be adduced. That is Luke 22:24-30. It is regarded by some exegetes as Lukes account of the ordination of the apostles. Christ appoints them to reign with him in his kingdom by presiding with him at his table and judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Art Just has this to say about Luke 22:30 (849):

This refers ... to the responsibility of shepherding and oversight in the new Israel, the church. This is the Lukan equivalent to Jesus giving Peter the keys to the kingdom in Matthew (16:9) and his bestowal of the office of the keys upon the disciples in John (20:22-23).

Many modern scholars claim that in these passages Christ does not deal with the apostles as ministers of word and sacrament but only as representatives of the church. They therefore conclude that, even though Christ did institute word and sacrament, he did not institute the ministry of word and sacrament. Now it is true that the apostles do represent the whole church. It is also true that Christ does give word and sacrament to the whole church through them. But at the same time his words to the apostles which institute word and sacrament, also institute the ministry of word and sacrament in the church. Melanchthon therefore concludes:

the church has Gods command to appoint preachers and deacons. This is very comforting because we know that God wills to preach and work through men and those chosen by men. Thus it is good that we highly praise and honour this choice, especially against the devilish Anabaptists who despise and ridicule this choice, together with the preaching office and the physical word (German ACA XIII, 12-13).

Questions

- Can we use these four passages to support the claim that Christ instituted the ministry of word and sacrament?
- Does it matter whether Christ instituted the ministry of word and sacrament?
- What are the theological and practical implications of the claim that Christ did not institute the office of ministry but only instituted word and sacrament?

3. What are the biblical foundations for the rite of ordination as a liturgical act?

There is general agreement that, while Christ appointed and commissioned the apostles as ministers of word and sacrament, he did not appoint and commission presbyters or pastors directly in the church, unless the commission of the seventy two in Luke 10:10-20 is meant to establish the office of preachers in the church (Scaer, 409). The apostles did, however, choose men to work with them and appointed them as pastors in the congregations of the early church. The New Testament has a range of texts which show us how this occurred. These texts have been used in our orders in various ways. They can be divided into four functional categories.

- a. Some orders base the rite for the ordination of pastors on Christs command to his disciples in Matthew 9:38, before he chose the twelve, that they were to ask the Lord of the harvest, to send out workers in his harvest field. Hence the accent on prayer in all Lutheran orders.
- b. The second group consists of three prescriptive apostolic texts about the appointment of presbyters. The basic text is Pauls command in Titus 1:5 to Titus, a fellow pastor, to appoint elders in every city as bishops and stewards of God, according to the criteria set out in 1:6-9. Luther claims, in one of the drafts for his rite of ordination, that Paul thereby commands us to install priests in the cities (Smith, 105). Melanchthon alludes to this in his addition to CA X1V in the Variata: just as Paul instructed Titus that he should appoint presbyters in the cities. Luther also interprets Pauls command to Timothy in

2 Timothy 2:2 to entrust the apostolic tradition to those who were qualified to instruct others as an instruction to ordain them (Smith, 105). The third text is 1 Timothy 3:1-7, in which Paul instructs Timothy on the qualifications for bishops in the church. This is replaced in some orders by the parallel text in Titus 1:5-9. Both these were especially favoured by the reformers because they show that pastors are bishops.

- c. The third group of texts describes the act of ordination in its liturgical context.

In Acts 14:23 we read that Paul and Barnabas ordained elders in the churches of Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch. They did this by committing them to the Lord with prayer and fasting. This custom is amplified by Pauls reference to the ordination of Timothy in

1 Timothy 3:14 and in 2 Timothy 1:6-7. Timothy was ordained by Paul together with his fellow elders. Together they laid hands on him and prayed for his empowerment by the Holy Spirit, after a prophetic word had been spoken to him. But since these texts describe the rite, they were not used in Lutheran orders as readings.

- d. The last set of texts instruct the ordinand and the pastor about the nature of the office and its responsibilities. Thus Acts 20:28-31 was used to assure the ordinands that the Holy Spirit was appointing them as bishops in the church to feed the flock and guard it against false teachers. This was replaced in some orders by 2 Timothy 3:14-4:5 which charges the pastor to teach and preach Gods word. Already in Luthers rite, 1 Peter 5:2-4 was used as a charge to the newly ordained pastors about their pastoral duties and their ultimate accountability to Christ as their head-pastor.

Questions

- Do you have any difficulties with the use of these texts as a foundation for the rite of ordination?
- Which are the most significant, and why?

4. How does the office of ministry differ from the spiritual priesthood of the saints?

The Theses on the Office of the Ministry rightly assert that the office of the ministry exists only in the church (TA VI, 3,4). Pastors therefore do not stand over the church, or operate apart from the church, but are always in every way members of the church. They do not therefore cease to belong to the royal priesthood of Christ when they are ordained. The Theses go on to claim that the office of the ministry is not identical with the spiritual priesthood of all believers in Christ (TA VI, 4). But they do not explain how they differ.

Before we can answer that question, we need to establish the nature of the spiritual priesthood of believers in Christ. As holy priests all Christians have equal access to the presence of the Triune God. As priests with the privilege of access to Gods heavenly presence they perform two functions. On the one hand, they offer true sacrifices of themselves to God in Christ with their gifts, their prayers, and their praises. These are offered both for themselves and other people. They therefore represent the world and the people of the world sacrificially before God in the divine service. On the other hand, they represent God to the world, communally in their corporate witness, and personally in their vocation. As holy priests they bring Gods love and peace and blessing to those who, unlike them, do not yet have access by faith to Gods gracious presence. The spiritual priesthood therefore straddles heaven and earth.

It seems to me that there are three complementary ways of distinguishing the ministry of the word from the priesthood of the faithful. The first, which is implied in our Theses of Agreement (TAVI,4), holds that, even though the keys are given corporately to the whole church and each congregation, Christ exercises the keys publicly in the divine service through those who are ordained ministers of his word. According to the Augsburg Confession (AC XXVIII, 5, 21), this involves the preaching of law and gospel, absolving and retaining sin, baptising and withholding baptism, granting and withholding Christs body and blood, judging right doctrine and condemning false doctrine, excluding people from the congregation and readmitting them into communicant fellowship in it. No individual member of the priesthood may perform these tasks in the church without proper authorisation. Likewise, a pastor may not perform these tasks apart from the priesthood and the church.

The second way of distinguishing the ministry of the word from the role of the priesthood is also implied in the Theses of Agreement which assert: the spiritual functions of the Apostolate are continued only in the ministry of the Word and Sacraments (TA VI, 6). This tantalizing reference is all too brief and unqualified. It is, after all, quite obvious that the role of the apostles as eyewitnesses to the risen Lord Jesus is not continued in this ministry. We may, however, infer what is meant from scriptural and confessional passages which are cited in support of it. According to the Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope (TR 10) in its German text, the office of the ministry derives from the general call of the apostles. Here Melancthon most likely refers to John 20:20 which he had quoted in the previous paragraph. The authority of both apostles and pastors depends on that word of God. Like the apostles, all bishops (and pastors!) are to act corporately and collegially under Christ (SA II, III, 9). It is, furthermore, a divine tradition and apostolic usage that bishops (and pastors!) are elected in the presence of neighbouring bishops and ordained by them with the laying on of hands (Tr 13-15). Like the apostles, pastors receive their ministry from the Lord (Col 4:17), even if it is conferred on them by other pastors (Acts 14:23), Like the apostles, pastors are leaders (Heb 13:17) whom Christ has appointed to preside and rule in his church (1 Tim 5:17; FC SD, X, 10). Together with the apostles they are elders who exercise oversight over Gods flock (1 Peter 5:1). Like the apostles, they are to preach Gods word (Acts 6:2,4), teach sound doctrine (1 Tim 3:2; 5:17; Tit 1:9; FC SD, 10), and shepherd Gods flock (Acts 20:28). Sasse therefore maintains: The preaching of the gospel and the

administration of the sacraments is not the activity of the general priesthood but the performance of a mandate given to the apostles, and through them, to the entire church (1943/44,33).

The office of ministry may also be distinguished from the priesthood in a third way by virtue of its location, for in ministry, as in real estate, location makes all the difference. The Augsburg Confession maintains that pastors have been called to teach God's word and administer the sacraments publicly in the assembly of the saints (CA XIV; Strelan, 20). They perform that role in the divine service. So while pastors are responsible for the sacramental aspects of the divine service, by which the Triune God comes to the faithful and graciously enacts the gospel for them, the priesthood is responsible for the sacrificial aspects of the divine service. Sacrificially, pastors stand together with the congregation before God, even when they lead it in confession, prayer, praise, and offering; sacramentally, they offer and convey the gifts of God from God to the congregation. More correctly, God does this through them as his mouthpiece and his hands. However, outside the church, at home and in the world, the role of pastors does not differ theologically from the role of the priesthood.

In sum: we need to determine whether the role of the public ministry differs from the role of the priesthood. Feedback from the forums on the ordination of women has shown that many of our members are uncertain and confused on this question. It would be good to reach some consensus on this matter, because this confusion not only clouds the debate on the ordination of women but in many ways creates problems for the life and mission of our church. It is my conviction that, if we can clearly distinguish them from each other, we will be able to promote the maximum involvement of all our members in the mission of God and at the same time free our pastors to be real spiritual leaders.

Questions

- Does the role of a pastor as a minister of the gospel differ from the role of the spiritual priesthood? If so, how?
- How can we best distinguish these roles to maximise our resources for mission without promoting clericalism or anticlericalism?

5. What is the function of the rite of ordination?

I do not intend to develop a full theology of ordination here but to focus on our tradition of ordination and its theological significance.

Before I do that, I need to clear up two common misunderstandings of our tradition. The first arises from a misreading of what CA XIV means by a call. While many modern Lutherans understand the call legally as a letter with an offer of appointment from a congregation or the church, Luther and the reformers understood the call theologically as the whole process by which Christ, through his church, appointed and commissioned candidates as pastors in the church. Luther, in fact, equates the call with true consecration and ordination to the office of the ministry (LW 38, 211). For him the rite of ordination was therefore an important part of the call to be pastor. It enacted the call. Hence in CA XIV *rite vocatus*, means both regularly called and ritually called. In fact, Luther defines ordination as calling to and entrusting with the office of the ministry (LW 38, 197).

The second misunderstanding comes from the assumption that, when the Treatise maintains that ordination with the laying on of hands was nothing but the confirmation of a pastor's election (Tr 70), and when our Theses maintain that ordination ratifies and publicly acknowledges the call of a pastor (TA VI, 8), ordination is understood legally as a public announcement and official notification without any special theological functions. Our Theses, in fact, contradict that interpretation. They argue that ordination is a solemn ecclesiastical rite which performs three

important theological functions: the reception of the pastor as a gift from Christ to the church, the declaration of the pastor as a minister of the new covenant, the invocation and bestowal of the Lords blessing on the pastor with the laying on of hands.

We Lutherans have historically understood ordination as liturgical act in which the Triune God calls, empowers, and commissions the ordinand as a minister of the gospel (Heubach). John 20:21-23 is a key text in this teaching. It shows that all three persons of the Trinity are involved in this act of ordination. The Father sends the Son who in turn sends out the disciples to forgive and retain sin. The Son breathes on the disciples and empowers them to do the work of the Father by the gift of the Holy Spirit. The disciples, and all ministers of the gospel after them, are therefore commissioned by the Triune God.

This trinitarian understanding of ordination is confirmed by other texts in the New Testament. God the Father appoints pastors as teachers (1 Cor 12:28), gives them the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:18), gives them the Holy Spirit (1 Tim 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6-7; cf. 2 Cor 3:6), and sends out both apostles and pastors (Matt 9:38). Through the apostolic tradition the Son hands on the ministry to the pastor who receives it as a gift from him, even as he gives the pastor as a gift to the church (Eph 4:11). So when Paul and Barnabas ordain elders in Acts 14:23, they commit them to the Lord. The Holy Spirit appoints pastors as bishops in the church to shepherd Gods flock (Acts 20:28).

The Triune God does not ordain pastors immediately by calling them as prophets were called through the Holy Spirit or some charismatic experience. Rather God ordains pastors through the church (ACA XIII, 12; SA III, X, 3; Tr. 66,67,69,72; Sasse 1986, 79-81) and its leaders (Tr. 62,64 65). Consequently the rite of ordination has always been performed in our church by a pastor together with other representative pastors in a representative congregation as part of the divine service. The act of ordination is normally performed by a bishop or regional superintendent, a president or his deputy, since candidates are ordained by the whole church for ministry in the whole church, rather than a single congregation (Sasse 1943/44, 29-30).

Luther's rite of ordination in Wittenberg quite deliberately involved the congregation in its enactment. The role of the church was highlighted in two ways. On the one hand, the location of the rite was shifted from before the reading of the gospel and made part of the offertory after the sermon. There the presentation of the candidates was associated with the offerings of the people and the prayers of the church. On the other hand, at the beginning of the rite the congregation was called to pray to God to send out labourers into his harvest and to empower both the candidates and the ministry of all pastors with the Holy Spirit. In a lovely ritual gesture, this was done by the congregation and the choir as both the candidates and pastors knelt together before the altar. Then when the rite was over, the whole congregation sang O Holy Ghost (LHS 118) for all the pastors of the church.

Theologically speaking, the Lutheran rite of ordination consists of three interlocking elements:

5. the proclamation of the word,
6. the laying on of hands with prayer, and
7. the commissioning of the ordained.

The scriptural readings, however, are foundational for the whole rite. They not only provide God's mandate for the ministry of the word and for the appointment of people as ministers of the word, but, since these readings are the Spirit-filled, inspired word of God, they call, empower, and commission candidates for the ministry. What God has ordained in his word is enacted performatively in the rite as Gods word is used in proclamation, prayer, declaration, commissioning, and benediction (Kliefoth). Through his word and those who are ministers of his word, Christ appoints and commissions people to be ministers of the word. Through the prayer of ordination and the declaration of appointment Gods word is

enacted, so that God bestows the ministry of the new covenant on the candidates and empowers them to serve in that ministry by the power of the Holy Spirit. Through the charge and the benediction God sends out the ministers of the word to work in his name and with his word in the church and his mission to the world.

Luther is quite happy to speak about ordination as an act of consecration. In his rite from 1535 he reminds the ordinands of Paul's statement in 1 Timothy 4:4-5: everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received in thanksgiving, for then it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer. He then addresses the candidates with these words: You are not only good creatures, sanctified by the Word and the sacrament of baptism, but in a second sanctification you have also been called to the holy and divine ministry, so that many others may be sanctified and reconciled to the Lord through your word and deed (Smith, 103). Thus even though he categorically rejected the Catholic understanding of ordination as consecration by a bishop with holy anointing oil, he nevertheless still regarded ordination as an act of consecration by God's holy word and name in proclamation and prayer. These holy things consecrated the pastor for the holy ministry which used the holy things of God to consecrate the holy people of God for their priestly service.

Questions

- What is the theological function of the rite of ordination?
- Does our rite of ordination accurately enact our theology of ministry?

6. Conclusion

I would like to end this discussion paper on a personal note. Two things have surprised me and edified me greatly in my research for this paper. The first is the discovery that Christ not only commissioned me as a pastor with his powerful word at my ordination but also continues to commission me as a pastor by that same word. The second is that Luther's emphasis on prayer for the Holy Spirit in the rite of ordination has as its corollary that I can only fulfil my ministry by the power of the Holy Spirit and the prayer of the church for my empowerment by the Holy Spirit. So please pray for us as we do for you!

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