A Minority Opinion

to the

CTCR's Response to Questions from BHE/CUS on Lay Teachers of Theology

I <u>agree</u> with the CTCR's Response at three crucial points:

The Commission states: "...all those who are privileged to teach theology at a Concordia University System school do so within and for The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. ... Theology instructors submit willingly to professional and theological admonition and discipline from their peers, from their university president and District President, from their boards of regents, and from the duly elected officials of the church at large."

These theology professors are teaching <u>within</u> the church and <u>for</u> the church. They are also responsible and accountable to the persons listed for their assigned teaching duties. A position on the CTCR is presumably reserved for "a member from the faculties of the synodical colleges" because these share the responsibility for maintaining the Synod's doctrinal unity and integrity along with the seminaries, pastors, teachers, and laity.

The seminaries, universities and colleges of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod certainly ought not be considered as spinning in their own autonomous galaxy known as the "academy." They were created by the church in order to serve the church and her proclamation of the Gospel. The institutions of the church, including the academy, can be anchored no more firmly in the church's teaching and practice than the individual people who comprise those institutions.

2) A key text of Scripture has relevance for this discussion: "And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man" (1 Tim. 2:12 NKJV).

This authoritative Word of God is perfectly clear, unambiguous, and without metaphor. The LCMS ought to affirm and embrace it openly, confidently, and boldly. We must not violate, circumvent, marginalize, dilute or move away from the forthright implications and applications of this text.

Elsewhere the CTCR has said: "Again, on the basis of Scriptural arguments, the apostle holds in this text that women are not to take the position of one to whom is assigned responsibility for the formal, public proclamation of the Christian faith."

3) Theology can be understood as "the proclamation and transmission of the official and authoritative public teaching (*publica doctrina*) of the church..."

"Christ is the subject matter of theology," said Luther. Theology is not about archeology, studies of religion as sociological phenomena, or creative speculation, but it is the authoritative, orthodox interpretation of the Word of God.

Francis Pieper explains that "theology" has four specific meanings drawn from Scripture:

¹ The Service of Women in Congregational and Synodical Offices, A Report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations, 1994, 4.

- 1. The special measure of the knowledge of God and the divine doctrine which public ministers in the congregation should possess... (1 Tim. 3:5, 2)....
- 2. The knowledge of God and the divine doctrine which is required of those who train the future public teachers. These "theological professors" are called theologians in a special sense. *Timothy performed the work of a theological professor* when he committed the things he had learned from the Apostle Paul "to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2).
- 3. The knowledge of God and the divine doctrine possessed by all Christians....
- 4. The knowledge and doctrine of certain parts of the Christian religion, namely, of the deity of Christ and, respectively, of the Trinity....We may use the terms *theology* and *theologia* in this fourfold sense, since the matter itself is found in Scripture. But it is an unscriptural use of language when men define theology as a knowledge of God and divine things which, it is claimed, reaches farther than faith in the Word of Scripture and expands faith into scientific comprehension. This is the $\pi\rho\omega=\tau ov \psi\epsilon=\upsilon\delta o\omega of$ modern theology in all of its various forms. And we have to keep on insisting that when men imagine that their theological knowledge rises above faith in the written Word, they are deluding themselves; their alleged knowledge is ignorance.² (bold emphasis added)

If a professor's teaching and preaching lacks theological content, he ought not be considered a professor of "theology." If that theological content does not proclaim the Gospel, then it ought not be considered Lutheran. These statements also apply to curriculum or course content, to determine whether they deserve the appellation of "theology."

If a professor's preaching and teaching is not anchored in and drawn from the Word of God, he can easily meander into "philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ" (Col. 2:8 NASB). Philosophy and human speculations about God are not "theology."

I disagree with the CTCR's Response at three crucial points:

1) The Commission interprets 1 Tim. 2:12 to mean *only* that "women are not to hold the pastoral office or carry out its distinctive responsibilities."

That is an overly narrow reading of this passage. In fact, it falls prey to exactly the error Paul was combating—a Gnostic tendency toward dualism—in his first letter to Timothy.

Martin Franzmann³ explains the epistle's context:

² Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics* (Saint Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), 1: 42-44.

³ The Commission points Dr. Franzmann as an example of a "lay" teacher of theology, a debatable point in itself.

Gnosticism is not so much a system as a trend or current of thought which produced a great variety of systems, often by combining with some already existing religion. It was therefore present and active as a corrupting force long before the great Christian-gnostic systems of the second century appeared....

Basic to all forms of Gnosticism is a dualistic conception of reality, that is, the view that what is spiritual, nonmaterial, is of itself good and what is material or physical, is of itself bad. This view affects man's whole attitude toward created things....

The Law becomes the arena of speculation and vain discussions, not the voice of God which calls the sinner to account and condemns him. ... Where knowledge is made central in the religious life of man and self-redemption by way of ascetic exercise is made in the way of salvation, there is no possibility of that pure Christian love which "issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith" (1 Tim. 1:5). A narrow and sectarian pride takes its place (1 Tim. 6:4,20; cf 1:3-7). Where the teaching office becomes a wordy, speculative, disputatious purveying to a select coterie of initiates, it is bound to become corrupted; it appeals to the pride, the selfishness, and the mercenary instincts of men, and the teacher becomes that ghastly, demon-ridden caricature of the true teacher which Paul has described in 1 Tim. 4:1,2.4

The connection between life and knowledge ("gnosis") is essential (see Appendix A). To fence off the worship life of the church from the teaching of the church is to create a false "wall of separation." Furthermore, the Scriptures clearly teach that certain attributes of the teacher must be considered relevant and connected to the content of the teaching.

Luther explains 1 Tim. 2:12 as follows:

Where there are men, she should neither teach nor rule. She rules in the home and says: "Be quiet," but she is not the master. ... They should be with all submissiveness. Then comes the teaching, and Paul does not entrust the ministry of the Word to her. He considers this the greatest thing that goes on in the church. You must always understand this with the condition that men are present. Paul says this that there may be peace and harmony in the churches when the Word is taught and people pray. There would be a disturbance if some woman wished to argue against the doctrine that is being taught by a man. The method of 1 Cor. 14 has now perished. I could wish it were still in effect, but it causes great strife. Where a man teaches, there is a well-rounded argument against a man. If she wishes to be wise, let her argue with her husband at home.⁵

Teaching theology in a synodical institution of higher education, like teaching Sunday School or Bible Class in a congregation, must be recognized as exercising a function of

⁴ Martin Franzmann, *The Word of the Lord Grows* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1961), 152-54.

⁵ Martin Luther, "Lectures on 1 Timothy," *Luther's Works*, American Edition (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1973), 277.

"the ministry of the Word." 1 Timothy 2:12 relates those functions to the gender of the teacher and the students.

2) The Commission looks to the example of Priscilla explaining to Apollos to say:

In Acts 18:26 it was commendable that a woman, Priscilla, had an excellent understanding of the word and "expounded (*ektithēmi*) to him (Apollos) the way of God more accurately.

Clear definitions of key words are crucial to properly understand this text:

- προσελάβοντο, proslambánō; from Greek 4314 (pros) and Greek 2983 (lambáno);
 to take to oneself, i.e. use (food), lead (aside), admit (to friendship or hospitality):
 receive, take (unto). Here the verb means "to take to the side".
- ε϶κτι/θημι, *ektithēmi*, "to place out": The verb literally means "to set or place out," and signifies to bring out the latent and secret ideas of a literary passage or a system of thought and life.
- διδα/σκω, didáskō, "to teach": The usual word for "teach" in the New Testament signifies either to hold a discourse with others in order to instruct them, or to deliver a didactic discourse where there may not be direct personal and verbal participation. In the former sense it describes the interlocutory method, the interplay of the ideas and words between pupils and teachers, and in the latter use it refers to the more formal monologues designed especially to give information (Matthew 4:23; Matthew 5-7; Matthew 13:36f; John 6:59; 1 Cor. 4:17; 1 Tim. 2:12). A teacher is one who performs the function or fills the office of instruction. Ability and fitness for the work are required (Romans 2:20; Hebrews 5:12).

Proslambano makes it very clear that Aquila and Priscilla "took Apollos aside," admitting him into their friendship and quite possibly (according to many interpreters) into their home. That means the "teaching" of Priscilla and Aquila was private and personal, not public and general. This was a private conversation, not a gathering of the "church that meets in their home."

The "teaching" they did was also "*ektithēmi*" rather than "*didaskō*." At most, this example suggests that a woman may "*ektithēmi*" (tutor?) a man on an individual basis regarding the Christian faith. It does not contradict the normative declaration of 1 Tim. 2:12, which establishes that a woman may not "*didaskō*" (teach authoritatively and publicly in monologue or an interlocutory manner) a man in the Church.

Finally, notice that Priscilla is accompanied by her husband Aquila everywhere her name is mentioned in the Scriptures (here in Acts 18 as well as Rom. 16:3-4, 1 Cor. 16:19, and 2 Tim. 4:19). Some citations list her first, indicating that she was a woman of admirable talent and devotion.

3) The Commission concludes that a woman may serve as a "teacher of theology"

in the sense of providing "instruction" or "explanation" analogous to the instruction that takes place in, for example, theology departments in

secular or church-affiliated universities or in congregational Bible classes or Sunday School classes.

No, she may not. The "instruction" the Commission would improperly permit here is "didasko", not "ektithēmi." As explained above, the latter word suggests that a woman might tutor theology in such contexts, especially in the company of her husband.

As the Commission acknowledges, synodically-affiliated universities are entities in and of the church. The teaching that occurs there is (and must be) understood as the teaching of the church, and the professors answer to the church and its pastors for what is taught. Congregational Sunday School and Bible classes are forums in and of the church, and the teachers answer to the church and its pastors for what is taught. Theological education at a "higher level" is different in degree, but not in kind. 1 Timothy 2:12 clearly states that a woman may not teach a man publicly in the church.

Teaching, preaching and the administration of the sacraments are not "portions" of the Gospel somehow incomplete by themselves. Each delivers the full gifts of Christ in the Gospel. For this reason, many believe that theological professors at our colleges and seminaries can and should be considered in the *Predigtamt* or preaching office, which is the one office of the Holy Ministry.

According to the CTCR's 1981 report *The Ministry: Offices, Procedures, and Nomenclature*, "an office is not defined solely by what one who holds it does (function) but by the duties, responsibility, and accountability assigned to it." To determine if the "function" of "teaching" is an "office" or not, therefore, we look to see if there are:

- **Duties**: an expectation of tasks to be performed and objectives achieved
- **Responsibility**: those tasks and objectives will not be performed or fulfilled if this person does not participate in them, and
- **Accountability**: this person answers to others for the manner of performance, efficiency, effectiveness, and results

Where these three are present—duties, responsibility, and accountability—we may with confidence conclude that an "office" exists.

Presumably, the professor of theology at a Concordia University or seminary has assigned duties. The subject matter of his courses is somehow circumscribed by the expectations of the President, the Dean of Faculty, his department chair, his colleagues and his students.

How could the Scriptures, Confessions and Catechism be publicly taught (*didaskō*) in an LCMS congregation by a Bible Class leader or Sunday School teacher without responsibility and accountability for what is taught? How much more inconceivable is this for a professor of theology at a synodical school?

To be "the teacher" is to exercise the functions of the office. If the one asked, invited, recruited or hired to each is not "holding" the office, he (or she) is certainly sitting in it.

⁶ The Ministry: Offices, Procedures and Nomenclature, A Report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations, 1981, 19.

Remember that more than anything else, Martin Luther was a professor of theology. Through his academic writings and disputations, the Reformation he launched began first in the university. It spread through the other faculty at the University of Wittenberg and to its students, and then to other universities before it ever reached local congregations to any significant degree (see Appendix B).

If one wanted to bring about significant change in the theology of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and the practice in its congregations, one might begin by changing the professors of theology at our institutions of higher education.

Cultural forces in America put strong pressures upon all institutions of higher learning in our country. Most secular institutions have no means to resist them, but Christian universities can stand upon the Word of God and the historic teachings of the Church.

As the Board for Higher Education grapples with this question regarding teachers of theology at our Concordia Universities, the cultural influence of feminism cannot be ignored. It must be recognized as a hostile thought system that is implacably opposed to orthodox biblical Christianity. The seminaries and universities of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod must resist this force, not accede to it.

Appendix A

The Office of Teacher In the Ancient Church

Herman Sasse delivered this, his inaugural lecture, as professor at the University of Erlangen, on May 18, 1946, thirteen years after it was supposed to have been presented. (He had to flee the Nazi regime shortly after his appointment in 1933).

Sasse undertook to explain the essence of the office and assess its history. He demonstrated that the three offices of apostle, prophet and teacher were intertwined with one another – different manifestations over time of one office. The *didaskalos* or doctor/teacher was the expositor of God's written Word in the Bible. Then he explained what this teaching in the church involved:

Two important ideas connected with the office of the ancient Christian teacher are explained by this connection: the ideas of tradition and succession. ... Paul says, I made known to you, brothers, the Gospel which I have proclaimed, which you also have received. ... I have first of all handed over to you (paredoka) what I also have received (parelabon), that Christ was killed for our sins according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor 15:1-3). Parelabon-paredoka: These are the technical terms of the Oriental tradition, in which an authoritatively given teaching of a great master or a teaching of practical wisdom for living or a godly revelation would be handed down from one generation to the next.

... the *parelabon-pardedoka* goes back into the thought of the apostle. When Paul spoke of the institution of the Holy Supper, he introduced his report with these words: "I have received it from the Lord, what I also have handed over to you" (1 Cor 11:23). However this "from the Lord" may be understood,

whether in the idea of "directly from the Lord" or in the idea of a handing over, the Lord stands at the beginning. The crucial thing is this, that the apostle regards it as his task to pass on the content of the revelation which has been given to him, undiminished and unaltered, without reduction and without ornamentation.

In the evening of his life he urged his spiritual sons Timothy and Titus to truly hold fast the *paradoke*, the doctrine handed down. This outlook, is no other than that of his early time in the apostolate. "Hold fast to what has been handed down (*paradoseis*), which you have learned, whether it was through my word or through a letter from us" (2 Thess 2:15).

More than that, it is the outlook of Jesus Christ himself, as he speaks to us in the Gospel: "All has been entrusted to me from my Father, and no one knows the Son other than the Father alone, and no one knows the Father other than the Son alone and the one to whom the Son wants to reveal him" (Matt 11:27). The same thought is in the high priestly prayer: "The words which you have given me I have given to them, and they have received them" (John 17:8). It is Jesus, the teacher, who speaks here and thus says to his church what belongs to the office of teacher. ...

In the NT there is the idea of the *paradosis* ["that which is handed over"] of tradition, the transmission of the pure teaching from one generation to the other, from teacher to the student.

As there have been more false prophets than true, more false apostles than true, so also there have been easily more heretics than teachers of the evangelical truth. The goal to which the teacher wants to lead his students and the congregation instructed by him is the knowledge, the *gnosis*, which at the same time is life. "The words which you have given me I have given them, and they have taken them and have known truly that I have come from you" (John 17:8). "They have known"—that is the goal of teachers. This appreciation is but life. "this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and whom you have sent, Jesus Christ" [John 17:3], he says in the same connection.⁷

The characteristics and qualifications of teachers of theology are matters of no small importance.

Appendix B

The Reformation as a University Movement

In this magisterial work, Ernest G. Schwiebert (who died on March 10, 2000 at the age of 104)

presented the fruits of a long lifetime of research into

the origin and development of the Reformation in sixteenth-century Germany.

He was a Professor of History at Erlangen, Wittenberg, Northwestern, and Valparaiso.

He is perhaps best known for the monumental Luther and His Times.

⁷ Herman Sasse, *The Lonely Way: Selected Essays and Letters*, *Volume II (1941-1976)*, translated by Matthew C. Harrison (St. Louis MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2002), 206-210

The University of Wittenberg was the very core and center of the reforms instituted by Martin Luther. The Reformation was born in his heart while he was a young professor at Wittenberg, as he emerged from scholasticism in the development of his "theology of the cross." He would not rest until he has won the Wittenberg faculty to his support and, with the Wittenberg faculty, transformed the university and gained a following in a large student body, 16, 292 students, who started later reforms of the Christian church. The reformer accomplished this in spite of the bitter opposition of Rome and the empire and the hostile attacks of the universities of Louvain, Cologne, and Ingolstadt, which culminated in the condemnation of Luther's writings by the Sorbonne of the University of Paris in 1521.

Thus, in spite of all the bitter opposition, by 1536, the University of Wittenberg had risen to become the model of reforms of Christianity within the Roman church.

Church historians have often approached the German Reformation with a false set of assumptions. The common approach often has been to assume that Martin Luther, by his *Flugschriften* and tracts on the teachings of the Holy Scripture, had won whole communities of believers for gospel reforms within the Catholic church. What such an approach fails to realize is that the average believer was not reached by Luther's writings, for the Reformation was really any upper-strata movement in which professors, the clergy, and an educated laity were involved. The Reformation began in Wittenberg and from there spread to the outside world among educated classes everywhere who, by a variety of ways, started local reforms in various communities. It often started with university students who had studied with Luther and Melanchthon, or with converted clergy who urged a reform in the Roman church.

As the reforms of Luther and his followers and Luther's "new theology" spread among the intellectual classes, they enraged professors at several universities, and *Streitschriften* broke out for and against the Reformation by theologians, to which Luther and Melanchthon replied. Once the battle was on, however, other universities, like Erfurt, Tübingen, and, in time, Leipzig and Frankfurt an der Oder, became certain that Catholic reforms were necessary, and they joined in a battle for reform and the restoration of the gospel. This academic battle was but the beginning of the Reformation It was not until the Church Visitations and the work of reformers active in the field that the Reformation began, after a decade, to reach the parish and congregational level. When the common laypersons become aware of Luther's reforms and when the reformers began to establish church urdinances [sic], the Reformation become a reality and expressed itself in *Landeskirchen*."

Paul Nus April 30, 2003

⁸ Ernest G. Schwiebert, *The Reformation [Volume II: The Reformation as a University Movement]*, (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1996), 491-92.