

A Minority Opinion
to the
CTCR'S Response to Questions from BHE/CUS on Lay Teachers of Theology

We agree with the CTCR's response to the two questions in this request when the answers given repeatedly tie "the proclamation and transmission of the church's authoritative 'public teaching'" to the one divinely-given ministry or office of the Gospel. We do not agree, however, that the Synod's official university system could responsibly aim in its theology courses at anything other than "the proclamation and transmission of the church's authoritative 'public teaching.'"

The CTCR's Response to the first question cites as an example of "a wider sense" of the term "teach," Col. 3:16: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as you teach (*didaskontes*) and admonish one another in all wisdom." What is clearly meant here is the mutual edification among Christian brothers and sisters, not the relation between public teachers and their hearers or students.

The same Response goes on to talk about "the broader task of instruction and explanation of theological matters," which then may be carried out by persons not in the public ministry of the Gospel. That "broader task," however, is left totally undefined. Either this "broader task" involves "the proclamation and transmission of the church's authoritative 'public teaching'" or it does not. If it does, it is clearly the responsibility of properly called and ordained ministers of the Gospel. If it does not, what rightful place can it have in the Synod's official educational or university system?

Whatever may be said, prudentially, about various more or less ancillary courses, actual theology—the transmission of the divinely revealed evangelical truth or doctrine—ought to be entrusted to those who through "prayer, study, and affliction" (Luther) have received theology as "God-given practical aptitude"¹ and have been recognized by the church as "able ministers of the New Testament" (2 Cor. 3:6).

The CTCR's Response to the second question attempts to show that "teacher of theology" could refer to something "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...." This is to mix apples and oranges. Christian education in the congregation is the responsibility of the local pastor. As for secular universities, virtually "anything goes" in their "theology" or religion departments. Any faithful Lutheran man or woman who can competently teach in such a setting deserves our utmost admiration and support. Nor are "church-affiliated universities" the point at issue. "Affiliated" suggests no more than a loose connection, and actual examples of such universities are not encouraging. Some of the most prestigious secular American universities were once "church-affiliated" (James Burtchaell, *The Dying of the Light: The Disengagement of Colleges and Universities from Their Christian Churches* [Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans, 1998]). If the LCMS wished to follow the general plunge into secularization, it could hardly do better than to replace "the authoritative

¹ Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), 1:46-51.

transmission of the church's public teaching" with a free-lancing sort of theologizing by private individuals.

Further, contrary to the CTCR's Response to the second question, the example of Aquila and Priscilla, who "expounded (*ektithemi*) to him (Apollos) the way of God more accurately," is not relevant to the issue of public teaching in universities owned and operated by the church. The NIV translates Acts 18:26, "...they invited him to their home [literally: took him to (themselves)] and explained to him the way of God more adequately." Any informed Christian could and should do this sort of thing. The term for "expound" or "explain" used here means "set out" or "set forth" (It is used literally in Acts 7:21 of the putting out or "exposing" of the baby Moses.).

Finally, the CTCR's Response cites the examples of Philip Melanchthon and Martin Franzmann. The case of the former was unique. Despite Luther's urging, he did not join the theological faculty, but remained on the liberal arts faculty. As for Dr. Franzmann, he was listed on the synodical clergy roster and was finally ordained in Cambridge, U.K. If our Synod is to resist the tide of secularization, it needs to hold on to its historic practice of making use of God's gift of the Gospel-preaching ministry for the authoritative transmission in its institutions of higher learning of "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3).

Signed:

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