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Synodical Franchise and the Diaconate

From the letter of April 16, 2016, the Rev. Bill Ney asks,

> *The Survey respondents, while reaffirming our historical practice that each congregation of Synod will cast two votes at a Convention (currently at District Conventions), also suggest a change in the manner in which the votes may be cast. As you are aware, our position since the days of C.F.W. Walther has been that only congregations have vote and that one vote be cast by the congregation's pastor and the other by a lay person. The suggested change is as follows: **One vote is to be cast by ONE OF ITS ROSTERED CHURCH-WORKERS, and ONE TO BE CAST BY A LAY PERSON.** The Survey also noted that the desire is to have every congregation of Synod represented at Synodical Conventions.*
>
> *The CCMS therefore requests your opinion regarding whether or not such a change would be possible without negatively affecting our understanding of the Office of the Pastoral Ministry and its relationship to the Office of Deacon in Lutheran Church-Canada. We are requesting your input on these issues because whatever restructuring changes the CCMS will eventually put forward to the church, we do not want to go against any clear biblical/theological/confessional positions of our church body.*

Concordia Lutheran Seminary, Edmonton's response

The Function of the Franchise

Voting is a simple quantitative process of gathering decision points from a number of people and using the numerical count to determine the outcome. Ideally, the issue on the table should be considered thoroughly *before* the vote is cast, but sometimes there are limits to the amount of discussion and range of issues that can be considered exhaustively. We also note that voting is only one of *many* ways to make decisions; it has been in place for years as a manner of gathering input from large numbers of people fairly efficiently, in both the civil and ecclesiastical realms.

Voting is intended to give equal input to as many people as possible using a reasonable process. A critical component for this discussion is determining how to gather the best and broadest representation of informed and reasoned input toward a decision. At the core, the question is how best to make decisions that are the most inclusive of all facets of consideration, under God's direction.

Power and Authority in Scripture

Collective decision-making is rooted in the biblical concepts of **power** and **authority**. The overarching message of the Scriptures demonstrate that ultimate power resides in the Godhead. *Power (dynamis)* is the sheer force or ability to control and cause change. *Authority (exousia)* is the sanctioned permission for someone to use that power as an extension of God's presence and will.

God's power is demonstrated in judgment and in grace. In Deuteronomy 32:39 Moses sings about God's power to kill and to bring life. The Gospel, described in Romans 1:16, is the "*power* of God unto salvation" (*dynamis).* Power belongs to the Godhead; Christ has the right to use it (Matthew 9:6). In the Upper Room, the resurrected Jesus authorizes the Church to use a distinct office, the Office of the Keys, as *the* channel for God's power, the *exousia* of the Church. The Keys hold the ultimate power: to forgive and retain sins. God's power, given to the Church (where two or three are gathered in my name and He is in their midst), is authorized for use throughout the Kingdom of the Right Hand, not just for the Apostles or to Ministers of Religion-Ordained, it is given to His Church. Some decisions are clear for those having *exousia* to make; other decisions are not as clear and must be determined from diverse viewpoints. A vote, using proper *exousia*, is a means for the Church to make decisions and follow a direction.

Although we might desire a clean distinction between the two kingdoms in decision making, Romans 13:1-7 reminds us that the Kingdom of the Left Hand is also under God's care. When Jesus said, "give unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's," He was acknowledging Caesar's authority to rule. Power is delegated from God to the earthly ruler who is *authorized* (given authority) in place. This role is established and guided by God to manage God's will and power. The Kingdom of the Left Hand resides *underneath* the Kingdom of the Right Hand in authority but is also fully God's.

Historically, Church governance has been seen as a unique blend of the Kingdom of the Right interacting through the functions of the Left Hand. It is possible that in some cases, the balance of power between clergy and laity is misunderstood as a necessary means to foster a healthy tension between the clergy (representing the Kingdom of the Right Hand) and the laity (representing the Kingdom on the Left Hand). Some discussions have functioned under this false dichotomy that pits clergy against the laity as if they were at enmity or monolithically opposed in different camps. There is no biblical or theological source that suggests this tension. Members of the laity and clergy are both sinful and saints; both are capable of living according to theological direction on a less spiritual discussion. There are biblical *delineations* of the priesthood of all believers and the office(s) of the ministry. There is a similar (though somewhat unfounded) dichotomy between *ministry* and *administration.* Both have a shared outcome in Church settings. This plays out in different *authorized* settings in Christian history.

In Romans 13, no earthly **structure** for exercising authorized rule is presented as the *preferred* model; the emphasis is upon the authorized use of divine power, making good earthly decisions that serve God and His will. In line with the Fourth Commandment, all in **authority** stands in the place of God and His power and thus, authorities are to be treated with respect and obeyed as an extension of God's authority and power. All earthly authority structures come from God and are accountable to God.

Thesis 1: The ultimate goal of the Franchise is to make the best and most godly decisions that serve God and gives Him glory in the Church's functions within both of the Two Kingdoms. In order to reach the best decisions, God's Word is the primary power and authority; God also authorizes human reason and discourse as a foundation for making sound decisions. The Franchise should not promote a sinful or false dichotomy between clergy and laity if both seek God's will and guidance from Scripture and are using sanctified authority to serve Him and His will.

Polity should reflect the use of Legitimate Authority to make Decisions

The best decisions should be guided by applicable biblical and theological principles, understanding that some issues are clearly theological, but others are adiaphora or fall under Christian liberty. All decisions require leaders to be fair, wise, and diligent in matters of life and business, but especially when decisions are not clearly under the spiritual realm. In the context of care and common concern for the mission and ministry of the Church, God's power … through authorized structures, should seek out good reason and biblical principles to guide the Church. In our sinful world, all parties are tainted by sin, and any process equally culpable, as individual power traces back as a core vulnerability of original sin.

Proper use of Power and Authority culminate in choices and decisions. There is no clear singular Biblical method of making good decisions. Decisions – and direction for God's people – have come through a variety of processes. God spoke to Moses directly, and Moses made good and poor decisions *and* implementations. A majority vote among the Twelve Spies made a poor decision. Good and bad kings ruled and made both good and bad decisions. The Sanhedrin was representative of Priests, Levites, Rabbis, Pharisees, and Sadducees; in other words, both church professionals and businessmen: the ruling council made good and bad decisions. The Twelve chose Mathias by casting lots. The Jerusalem Council initiated a forum of discussion and a consensus decision was given by the ruling member (James). Hence, Walther's first Presidential Address indicates that the form of government in a church body is adiaphora.[1] However, there is often a need for a humble servant who "presides" over the flow of discussion that guides a group toward a decision, regardless of the form or process that decision stems from.

As stated earlier, the real question is not about the franchise as a vote, but the ultimate goal is establishing ***a process of making good clear, biblical decisions***. In a sinful and fallen world, *perfect* decisions are impossible, and even those carefully and fervently prayed over will be tainted by sin. It seems fair to say that God condescends to the process that man (the Church) has chosen, and both can and does work through these fallen processes. But if decision making is part of the Kingdom on the Left Hand, there is cause to ensure that it submits to the Kingdom on the Right Hand. And a vote can be that means.

The relationship of Decision Structures and Polity

In the historic sense that identifies many polity issues an "adiaphora," the Church should be able to freely consider whether or not deacons (both teachers and those in DPS roles) can have a *legitimate* say in decisions. The pre-question is to ask *how can the structure nurture the greatest chance of a God-pleasing decision and outcome.* That is the ultimate goal.

In addition to the question of deacons, it is also a fair and open question to consider whether those in active ministry but not serving parishes have a voice in the ministry of the church. And a further free choice is how to treat those who are rostered but not serving (retirees). Outside of higher costs and expenses, it seems reasonable – even necessary – to improve the way to have at least some representative voice for each of the classifications comprising LCC (active pastors serving parishes, DPSs, Rostered Lutheran Teachers, active pastors not serving parishes, and the laity). In an era where information and communication are readily available, thorough biblical and theological study and effective articulation of the key issues seems a more important issue than simple balance of power. There is a biblical precedent for all stakeholders to have a vested interest and voice toward a decision.

The most important component of healthy decisions is careful study and clear discussion of the issues at stake, including biblical, theological, and practical considerations. A convention process should consider ways that will allow a healthy and thorough process that articulates aspects of the decision in the most objective manner possible.

Thesis 2: **From the Early Church on, the Franchise was not as much about the power of the vote or a demand for equal representation as it was finding a process that represented the *whole* view of the *whole* church. If the view of the whole church is important, then there should be a means for each category of partner in mission and ministry of LCC to have input into the decision-making process. If voting is that structure, there should be representation for all *voices*.**

[1] Walther, C.F.W. First Inaugural Address.

Decision Making in the Early Church

In Luke's description of the first Jerusalem Council in Acts 15, there is a repeated reference to three "classifications" of those involved in the council: Apostles, Elders, and the Brethren. Although there were Deacons already serving in the early church (see Acts 6-8), Deacons are not mentioned distinctly as participants in that first Council. When the decision was sent back to Antioch, two of the Brethren were sent to accompany Paul (Apostle) and Barnabas (Elder?) with the decision of the Council.

There appears to be conformity in the voice and unity of this decision, yet it is unclear if there was a distinct philosophy or practice regarding a need for the balance of power. Part of this may reside in the *structure* of decision making. There is no indication that a *vote* was cast for this decision, but an outcome was reached by consensus.

It appears that the first Early Church had no single process for making decisions. In *practice, even if not by formal structure,* she made decisions by casting of lots (the vote for Matthias' election to the Twelve in Acts 1) and by consensus, as we see in Acts 15. Consensus is both formally and informally elsewhere in Acts. In a consensus, deliberate and careful conversation, followed by wise summarization, carried the weight of a decision without evidence of a *vote*, or its connection to any assigned role in the Church.

This represents a fairly broad understanding of power and authority: in Acts 15, each *voice* is more important than a *vote*; the balance of power follows free discourse representing a broad set of perspectives on the issue, inclusively, until the **presider** "announced" the decision (James made sure to receive input from all sides; everyone attending the council could hear them; and then James made a summary that everyone agreed with by consensus). The Church has authority to delineate how God's powerful message of salvation would play out. The structure of the deciding body and the process it used was not as important as its conformity with God's will.

Thesis 3: The Early Church strove to listen to God directly (by lot) or in indirect decision-making process, to hear all perspectives before drawing the conclusion.

The Early Lutheran Settlements and Functionalism

In many of the early rural North American settlements, there was little structure, organization, or planned direction among the churches. Clusters of like-minded believers formed house-churches, who sought a pastor to serve their spiritual needs. There is little known about consistencies in their level of organization or decision-making structure. In times of pastoral shortage (most of those early years in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries), circuit-riding clergy would provide the Official Acts of the Church. In an isolated world for both clergy and the laity, confessional pastors would be asked to serve confessional gatherings and house churches. The structure was a means of drawing strength and support from one another in the unity of faith, as well as sharing commitments and costs for filling pastoral vacancies that included training ministers, as well as engaging in external mission work. There was ministry in the church long before there was a formal institutional structure to support it, or a clearly articulated vote or decision making process.

The Church, where two or three were gathered in Christ's name, had a simple structure; often one head of household contacted the minister, arranged for neighbors to come to that house or community, and provided provisions and a place for the minister to stay. Without a formal Church structure, the Church still existed because two or three were gathered in Christ's name. It appears that many decisions in these groups were made informally, not through an authorized structure. Life was functional: believers gathered to draw upon the Gospel and its saving power, but understood that the Church and her ministers were the context into which its distribution was duly authorized. This is part of Christ's Church, but without the structure. Both the Church and the Ministry were critical; there was no true power residing in either one but both together. The Church functioned without a formalized structure or details about who had a voice in decisions (and it appears unlikely that there was a formal vote).

In the very early North American settlements, Lutherans who might have enough believers to form a Church would desire a pastor, often needing to "send back to Europe to request missionary pastors" to serve them. Requests often went many years without being filled.[2] The influx of the Loehe men were confessional mission-hearted pastors with a significant influence on the growth of confessional Lutheranism. The formal structures were necessary in larger immigration groups, especially in light of problems that occurred when individuals made solitary decisions.

The larger clusters of early immigrants to North America tended to have more resources. The Saxon immigration was unique in that one of the first things it did was establish a seminary, so that men could be trained for ministry close to the need.[3] From that premise, many seminary students were recruited from North America and trained on North American soil for service in North America (and later, Brazil and Argentina).

There was a seminary in the Saxon colony, as well as mission work, *before* the LCMS came into being. The structures grew out of a desire for broadening *unitas* and *concorde*. Pastoral shortages were frequent; Lutheran foreign missions *from* North America began as early as 1821, when to others (like Loehe) it was still a mission field.[4] For these reasons, missions and seminary training (not other items on the LCC list of responsibilities) are the most important longstanding reasons for the "walking together" of a synod.

Because of the Stephan failure under an episcopal structure, the Missouri Synod was organized with a congregational structure.[5] This was a cause of concern for Loehe, who saw Missouri's polity as "mob-rule," siding more with Grabau. In 1847 Loehe wrote, "we fear certainly with a perfect right, that the fundamental strong mixing of democratic, independent, congregationalistic principles in your constitution will cause great harm, just as the mixing in of princes and secular authorities in our land has done."[6] Polity was a divisive component in those early years. Even though the Buffalo synod originated with four clergy and 18 lay "delegates," Grabau promoted a very strong high-clergy role where "congregations owed obedience to its pastors in all things not contrary to God's Word."[7] The Iowa Synod was comprised of pastors who left Michigan (where Missouri was popular among the Franconians) because they adhered to Loehe's higher clerical role.

There were teachers present in the Missouri Saxon immigration and among many other synods, yet there was no vote given to the teachers in early Missouri. This is likely due to the fact that ***most clergy also served as teachers in those little Lutheran schools***. Dividing the vote would have been unnecessary in those days; the original context didn't have the division, thus, no need for delineation in the vote.

This also may be related to the requirement that any congregation interested in joining the first synod (Missouri, Ohio, and other States) was *required* to have a Lutheran school – it was part of the ministry of the church and under one membership under the leadership of the ordained pastor. Over time, as Lutheran teachers, received their own separate theological training (but chose not to be ordained or called as

[2] Nelson, E. Clifford. (1980) The Lutherans of North America. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, p. 19
[3] Nelson, ibid, p. 181
[4] Nelson, ibid, p. 200
[5] Nelson, ibid, p. 180
[6] Nelson, ibid, p. 181
[7] Nelson, ibid, p. 177

preachers), their voice was expressed *through the pastor*. There is little evidence that lack of a vote was an issue of lack of voice among those early teachers. Teachers were granted an advisory role just as non-delegate pastors and other laity were allowed presence and voice but no vote.

The original model of determining who had the franchise had a different context in other areas: for example, in those early years, pastors rarely retired; if they were healthy they served a parish, hence they had a vote. Faculty served dual appointments as members of the faculty and service to a parish (Walther, served four parishes while Seminary President and Synodical President). Thus the context was different, though congregational-based votes kept decision-making rooted in congregational service. As the faculties grew and became seminary-based rather than parish based, they were expected to have voice in guiding the information that pastors and people read in preparation for decisions; for example, the seminary faculty had significant influence on theological decisions by offering opinions (before the days of the CTCR). The context was different, yet the franchise was clearly granted to the congregation, to be divided between its pastor and a lay person. But others were, by design, granted a voice. The structure may have allowed a voice, but the voice is no longer the same. One of the key issues is ensuring that the system hears all significant voices.

Thesis 4: The system has changed; the Franchise should represent the setting and the intent (the spirit of the practice), not the basic historical process (the letter of the practice).

Rev. James Gimbel, Ph.D.
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Early Discussions of the Franchise in the LCMS

The formation of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod involved the creation of a new type of Lutheran ecclesiology with the creation of lay voting delegates at the conventions. This development, however, was not without theological and even practical precedent. Yet the polity enshrined in the LCMS constitution was also a product of compromise with the goal of balancing two different sets of concerns and to do so in a biblically sound manner.

At the time of the Reformation, with the formation of distinctly Lutheran churches, lay involvement in church governance was already begun. Luther advocated lay involvement with the call of a pastor,[8] furthermore Luther argued in numerous places that the laity have a right to judge their pastor's doctrine.[9] Following Luther, many of the earliest Lutheran consistories included laity as treasurers and deacons, or

[8] Luther, Martin. 1883. D. Martin Luthers Werke : Kritische Gesamtausgabe. Weimar: Hermann Böhlau: 1883-, 17/1:360.
[9] See as examples Martin Luther, "That a Christian Assembly or Congregation has the Right and Power to Judge all Teaching and to Call, Appoint, and Dismiss Teachers, Established and Proven by Scripture," in *Luther's Works: American Edition* Volumes 31-55: Edited by Helmut Lehmann (Philadelphia/Minneapolis: Muhlenber/Fortress, 1957-86), 39: 305-14 and Martin Luther, "Concerning the Ministry," in *Luther's Works*, 40:31-32.

"church fathers."[10] At the formation of the Missouri Synod Walther drew heavily on Luther in this regard.[11]

C.F.W. Walther laid down the theological rationale for giving the franchise to laity very clearly in *Kirche und Amt* Thesis X: "To the preaching office [*Predigtamt*], according to divine right, belongs also the office [*Amt*] to judge doctrine, but laymen also possess this right. Therefore, in the ecclesiastical courts [*Kirchengerichten*] and councils they are accorded both a seat and a vote together with the preachers [*Predigern*].[12] Walther's summarizing statement is "there can be no doubt that in the ecclesiastical courts and synods laymen should have a seat and a voice together with the public ministers of the church." [13] He then goes on to point to Scripture,[14] The Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope,[15] and Luther[16] to show the laity's right to judge doctrine. After this he shows that other Lutheran Church fathers, including Johann Gerhard and Johann Andreas Quenstedt and even the ancient church father Tertullian advocated lay involvement in the running of the church.[17]

It is interesting that in Walther's 1848 Presidential Address he even directly responded to the challenge that this new constitution brought secular elements of democracy into the Church, creating a possible lordship of the people and even papacy of the people. In response to this, he argued "how can it be an ungodly rule by the people, the people which uses its God-given rights?"[18]

Walther, representing the Saxons, was clearly influenced by his concerns of clerical overreach as shown first in the Stephan debacle and then in the Buffalo Synod. In the aftermath of the Stephan debacle, two lawyers from the Saxon immigration, Dr. Carl Vehse and Dr. Franz Marbach argued "As spiritual priests, laymen have the right to judge all doctrine and supervise all the activities of the clergy."[19] This put pressure on Walther to devise a church polity that included the laity in matters of church government.[20] At this same time, in his *Hirtenbrief*, Johannes Grabau argued that the laity's judging of doctrine only went as far as notifying other pastors of the improper doctrine of a given pastor.[21] Gotthold Loeber responded to this for and with C.F. Gruber and Walther arguing forcefully that judging the doctrine of pastors by the laity is not only permitted, but "also seriously and eagerly cultivated, and congregations are

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[10] Luise Schorn-Schütte "Church Offices: Lutheran Offices," Tr. Jeff Bach in Hillerbrand, Hans Joachim. 1996. The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation (New York: Oxford University Press), 333.
[11] C. F. W. Walther and Matthew C. Harrison, *The Church and the Office of the Ministry, the Voice of Our Church on the Question of Church and Office : A Collection of Testimonies Regarding This Question from the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church and from the Private Writings of Orthodox Teachers of the Same* (St. Louis: Concordia: 2012), 332-40.
[12] Walther and Harrison, *The Church and the Office of the Ministry*, 330.
[13] Ibid., 331
[14] Ibid., 331.
[15] Ibid, 332.
[16] Ibid., 332-40.
[17] Ibid., 340-348.
[18] Author's translation from C.F.W. *Synodalrede* in *Synodal-Bericht der deutschen Ev.-Luth. Synode von Missouri, Ohio u. a. Staaten vom Jahre 1848* (St. Louis: Druckerei der Synod von Missouri, Ohio und andern Staaten, 1876), 36.
[19] Vehse, Carl Eduard., *Die Stephan'sche Auswanderung Nach Amerika: Mit Actenstücken* (Dresden: Verlagsexpedition des Drer Wochenblattes, 1840), 61-61.
[20] Zersen, David John, "C F W Walther and the heritage of pietist conventicles." Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly 62 (1989): 21.
[21] Johannes A. A. Grabau, *Hirtenbrief*, trans. William Schumacher in Thomas Manteufel and Robert Kolb eds., *Soli Deo Gloria: Essays on C.F.W. Walther in Memory of August R. Suelflow* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2000), 151-52.

to be exhorted to them, as it the proper use of the spiritual priesthood."[22] This too seems to have given impetus for giving the laity a franchise along with clergy in the new synod. In particular, Walther advocated for equal representation of the laity in the number of voting delegate in the new synod.[23]

The other side of those who would form the LCMS also saw a place for lay involvement in an orthodox Lutheran synod. Friedrich Wyneken in his famous *Notruf* called for a new synod to be formed in American that would include pastoral and lay delegates as members that would be advisory, but also supervisory in nature.[24] In this, he appears to be calling for a formal organization along the lines of already existing informal ones, for earlier in the document he notes that there are already in the West there are informal synods with clerical and lay representatives.[25]

The Loehe men, including Wilhem Sihler and Adam Ernst brought forth recommendations for the formation of the Missouri Synod that were willing to include lay representation, yet for them the balance of power was to be more strongly with the clergy.[26]

Therefore in drawing on Luther and the Lutheran fathers, as well as reacting against abuses of that time in America, the founders of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod chose to establish a form of governance that balanced pastoral and lay power via a splitting of the franchise. This was not as novel as it might seem, because they were, in fact, formalizing a practice that was already in use by Lutherans in many areas of the Western U.S. However, certain items were left in place to make sure that the laity did not vote in improper doctrine as well, such as key offices being reserved for clergy, thereby striking a unique balance.

Thesis 5: **The founders of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod created a polity that was designed to balance concerns about giving too much power to either the laity or the clergy that was based on Luther's ideas of how the Priesthood of all believers should ensure doctrinal purity. This polity included an equal franchise between pastors and laity, yet with key offices retained for clergy.**

Rev. John Hellwege, Ph.D.
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LCC Constitution and Bylaws – the historical question.

In preparation for the formation of an autonomous Lutheran Church-- -Canada, the Fifth Draft of Proposed Constitution for Lutheran Church-Canada was submitted to the LCC convention, Nov. 10-13, 1983. 1 However, the convention passed resolution 83-08- 05 "To Proceed with Development of Constitution and By-laws for an Autonomous Lutheran Church—Canada" which rejected a sixth draft of

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[22] Gotthold Heinrich Loeber, *Evaluation of Grabau's Hirtenbrief*, trans. William Schumacher in Manteufel and Kolb, *Soli Deo Gloria*, 173.
[23] Carl S. Mundinger, *Government in the Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1947), (see note 39), 183.
[24] Friedrich Wyneken, *Die Noth der deutschen Lutheraner in Nordamerika* (Erlangen: Theodor Bläsing, 1843), 46-47.
[25] Ibid., 31-33.
[26] Christoph Barnbrock, "Composing a Constitution in Context: Analytical Observations of the First Draft of the Missouri Synod's constitution (1846)" in Concordia Journal 27 (2001): 39.

the proposed constitution and instead approved in principle the Constitution and By-Laws of The Lutheran Church-- -Missouri Synod “adapted for the Canadian situation.” 2

It should be noted that the proposed constitution and bylaws maintain the balance of the lay and clergy representation with one of each type representing the circuit. 3 Also, assistant pastors, other professional church workers, and professors at educational institutions of the body, were classified as advisory delegates, but were ineligible to be pastoral delegates. 4 Pastors Emeriti are not specifically mentioned, but the spirit of the bylaws seems to be that they would be ineligible to be pastoral delegates.

This research does not address whether the proposed change goes against any clear biblical/theological/confessional positions of our church body, but does answer a historical question. In preparation for the formation of LCC, there was no desire to depart from the norm… representation and vote by one lay delegate and one pastoral delegate serving a congregation of LCC.

Rev. Professor Jonathan Kraemer

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The Franchise in the history of Lutheran Church—Canada

As is made clear in the document that laid the groundwork for the establishment of LCC’s diaconate by convention action in 1996, the Synod understands both pastors and deacons to hold ecclesial office. That is, pastors and deacons alike serve not merely because they have personally received the necessary charismata for ministry but rather because they have been appointed to fill a pre-existing order (Amt).

On the one hand, the pastoral and diaconal offices they hold are fundamentally distinct from each other.

Only one of these, the pastoral office, was mandated directly by Christ and carries the expectation that it will exist and be filled in every assembly of Christians where the Gospel and sacraments are found (CA V). According to the Treatise, those who hold this dominically mandated office are required to “preach the Gospel, remit sins, administer the sacraments, and, in addition, exercise jurisdiction, that is, excommunicate those who are guilty of notorious crimes and absolve those who repent” (Tr 60, 61).

However, even though the diaconal office lacks the fullness of this pastoral mandate, it too traces its origins to the New Testament, where it arose through apostolic warrant, not only—and perhaps not even most significantly—through the famous incident related in Acts 6:1-7 but also, and more enduringly, through the churches established by Paul, where deacons served alongside pastors in quite a broad range of capacities (Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 3:8-13). While deacons were not responsible in these churches in all the ways that pastors were for the overall discharge of the ministry, deacons certainly served as “helpers” alongside those who did carry that overall charge (cf 1 Cor 12:28, listing both “administrators” and “helpers” among the gifts Christ gives to his people).

This, then, is the other side of the story: the mutually complementary role that the holders of both offices play in the establishing and thriving of Christ’s church. From the time it established the diaconate, LCC has held these two offices together with this careful nuance: “While the pastorate was established by

Christ for the life (esse) of the Church, the diaconate was established by the prompting of the Holy Spirit for the wellbeing (bene esse) of the Church" (1996 Workbook, G.66-72). Again: "The diaconate is not charged with the mandate of 'giving the Gospel and the Sacraments' (AC 5), but is rather called to occupy itself with those tasks and concerns which flow from this mandate, and to do so in such a way that pastors are freed to concentrate wholeheartedly on their proper work" (1996 Workbook, G.75). These points require emphasis in part because it has been easy for Lutherans to overlook the importance of the diaconate in apostolic times. The Book of Concord, for instance, mentions the diaconate only in passing (Tr 62). However, our church rightly points out that "[t]he Confessions do not deny the New Testament testimony concerning the diaconate; they simply ignore it to devote their attention wholeheartedly to the Predigtamt" (1996 Workbook, G.68).

Based on these understandings, LCC has taken deliberate care to set deacons alongside pastors in a number of significant ways. Both subscribe equally to the Lutheran Confessions (1996 Workbook, G.80).

Along with the congregations they serve, both share the same "voluntary ecclesiastical bond" as members of Synod (Statutory Bylaw 1.01). Both are equally subject to the same "rules, procedures, and entitlements" established by LCC's Constitution and Synodical Bylaws (Statutory Bylaw 7.03) and, further, to the president's ecclesiastical supervision (Statutory Bylaw 7.04). District Presidents maintain an official roster for both offices (Synodical Bylaw 3.77) and care for those who hold them in identical ways (Synodical Bylaws 5.41 through 5.53). Perhaps most significantly of all, in terms of the present question, the complement of most of LCC's boards and commissions have been modified over time to allow for diaconal as well as pastoral representation. Examples include the Commission on Constitutional Matters and Structure (Synodical Bylaw 2.101), the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (Synodical Bylaw 2.105), the Board of Managers of Worker Benefit Plans (Synodical Bylaw 2.231), and the Committee for Convention Nominations (2.521).

Naturally, in keeping with the distinction between the two offices, there are still some respects in which pastors and deacons are treated differently, even with regard to these listed positions. The CCMS and CTCR, for instance, while allowing for diaconal representation, nevertheless require that at least one of the two rostered workers appointed to their membership must be a pastor. Certainly candidates for President and Vice-Presidents of the synod—and its Districts—must be pastors (Synodical Bylaw 2.501).

So must Circuit Counsellors (Synodical Bylaws 3.51, 4.11).

The reasons for these differences are in most case quite logical, even if unstated in the synod's official documents. The principle seems to be that pastors and deacons are equally eligible for service on administrative boards and committees that are not primarily (or perhaps not at all) responsible for the kinds of matters that the Confessions properly assign to the pastoral office (again, see Tr. 60, 61: preaching the Gospel, remitting sins, administering the sacraments, and exercising jurisdiction through excommunication and absolution). Where such are not in view, or only rarely so, LCC has thus far had little difficulty allowing pastors and deacons to serve on equal terms.

Even so, how this principle should be applied to the question of casting one of a congregation's two votes in convention is something of an open question. To what extent would this franchise involve the exercise of those functions that are specifically reserved for those who hold the pastoral office? Considerations that range quite a long way beyond the scope of this thesis itself would here come into play.

However, the way in which our polity handles doctrinal resolutions is suggestive, at least. Historically, our church has made a distinction between doctrinal resolutions and regular resolutions. Interestingly, however, both are adopted in exactly the same way—namely, by the voting of pastors and laypeople together on the convention floor (Synodical Bylaw 1.03b). This suggests that we have not typically recognized a need for pastors alone to be the judges of doctrine on the convention floor. The same principle applies, of course, within the membership of the CTCR, which likewise involves laypeople and, as noted above, at least allows for diaconal representation, subject to the will of the convention. Because laypeople have always been allowed to vote on doctrinal matters, both on the CTCR and in the case of doctrinal resolutions on the convention floor, there would seem to be no reason to restrict deacons from exercising one of a congregation's two votes.

Thesis 6: **Insofar as LCC has, in Christian freedom, chosen to re-establish the apostolically warranted office of the diaconate, as an auxiliary office supportive of the dominically mandated office of the pastor, and has chosen to regard deacons and pastors together as "members of Synod," it would seem permissible to allow a congregation to grant one of its votes to either of these types of "rostered workers.**"

Rev. Stephen Chambers, Ph.D.
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Faculty Conclusions

Voting is an attempt to draw upon the collective wisdom of a large group of people in a fair, reasonable, and efficient manner. Scriptures do not record the use of a vote, but the Church has used a variety of means to reach decisions, including a vote. An important consideration for voting is the determination of who is authorized to have both a voice and a vote in determining the best decisions.

Much has changed since the Early Church and early North American settlements. The makeup of the roster of LCC is different today from the LCMS and other bodies. The issue reaches beyond the heritage and history of the franchise in LCC.

The CLS faculty recommends that the restructuring process seeks the best and most efficient manner of hearing each voice and in a fair and equitable manner, strives to make and implement decisions that reflect the best direction of God's Word. We see no Biblical, doctrinal/confessional, or theological reason to exclude the deacons who are on the roster from a representative vote (as well as voice), but in fact hope that by hearing the voice of all who are led by the Spirit, God will guide and bless our Church.

Synodical Leadership: What Term To Use?

From the letter of April 16, 2016, by Rev. Bill Ney:

> *The Survey showed that a majority of the respondents preferred having the Synodical Presidency divided into two separate positons, namely, "Spiritual Leader" and "Administrator". The respondents were divided between lay opinion and clergy opinion regarding what the title of the "Spiritual Leader" should be. The lay people were very much opposed to the term, "Bishop" but the clergy were clearly very much in favour of the term "Bishop".*
> *The CCMS is therefore asking that the CTCR and the two Seminary faculties give the church guidance as to what would be the most biblical and appropriate term to use for the "Spiritual Leader", currently the Synodical President. Of course, "Synodical President" could be continued as now, but whatever term would be chosen, it must be clearly defined for the purposes of expressing ecclesiastical/spiritual leadership. It has also been suggested that a Bible Study be prepared either by the CTCR or one of the Seminary faculties which would aid the members of Synod to understand biblically how the title of the spiritual leader is to be understood in contrast to the "Administrator".*

The faculty of Concordia Lutheran Seminary held several meetings to consider this question and organized its response in four main sections. Each section was authored by a different professor and is introduced below in a one-sentence thesis, followed by support and amplification. Following the presentation of all four theses, a one-page summary synthesizes and condenses the faculty's overall answer to this question.

Thesis 1: Because both the title "bishop" and the hierarchical structure with which it eventually came to be associated emerged only gradually in the first century of Christian history, it is not necessary either to use the title at all in today's context or, if the term is used, to understand the title in a hierarchical way.

The New Testament uses a refreshingly wide range of terms when speaking of or about those who hold the pastoral office.

Disregarding for the moment the Pastoral letters, Paul's correspondence suggests that leadership structures—and titles—were quite fluid in the churches to which he was writing. He refers to "co-workers and labourers" in the Corinthian church (συνεργοῦντι καὶ κοπιῶντι, 1 Cor 16:16) and to "those over you in the Lord" in the Thessalonian church (προιστάμενοι ὑμῶν ἐν κυρίῳ/,1 Thess 5:12). In the Philippian church he refers to two groups of leaders, "bishops and deacons" (ἐπισκόποι καὶ διακόνοι, Phil 1:1), but unfortunately without specifying anything further about either group. Curiously, one term Paul never uses when referring to any leaders in any of these letters is "elder" (πρεσβύτερος). None of this is surprising, however, given that Paul's letters stem from the church's first generation, and moreover from a missional and cross-cultural context in which Christians were in a very real sense "making up their structure as they went along." What is clear is that local churches were led by groups, not individuals, and that these leaders could be described in varying ways.

Our next major cluster of references comes from the pen of Luke. Although his standard term for pastors in the book of Acts is the one term Paul seems to avoid ("elder," πρεσβύτερος), the type of leadership he uses this term to describe is still quite clearly what we also see in Paul's letters, namely a collective and collegial structure. As in Paul, groups of elders are portrayed leading what we would probably call local congregations (Acts 11:30; 14:23; 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23; 16:4). Interestingly, the only time Luke uses the term "bishop" (ἐπίσκοπος) is in a speech given by Paul to the Ephesian "elders" (Acts 20:28). The interchangeability of the two terms within the same narrative context—Luke himself using the term "elders" in 20:17, then Paul calling the same men "bishops" in 20:28—shows once again that ecclesial leadership at this stage of Christian history is both fluid and collective.

Like Luke, most of the other New Testament writers seem to think of pastors primarily as "elders." This is definitely the case in James (5:14) and the Johannine letters (2 John 1; 3 John 1), and probably also in 1 Peter (5:1). Sometimes 1 Peter 5:1-2 is referred to alongside Acts 20:28 as an example of the interchangeability of the terms "elder" and "bishop," but the manuscript tradition suggests this is probably unwise. Among the earliest witnesses, only Papyrus 72 (third/fourth century) includes a verbal form of the "bishop" word-group (ἐπισκοποῦντες); both of the great fourth-century uncials Sinaiticus and Vaticanus exclude it. In any case, prior to and apart from the Pastoral Epistles, the word "bishop" is at best a secondary, rare, and ill-defined term in the New Testament.

The Pastoral Epistles reflect a changing situation both as individual congregations matured and as the leadership requirements of the whole church shifted as it grew. A comparison of Titus and 1 Timothy is instructive in showing how the leadership structure changed.

The church in Crete, as we glimpse it in Titus, seems to have been quite young. It seems to lack deacons (compare 1 Tim 3:8-13) as well as an organized group of widows (cp. 1 Tim 5:3-16). Even more pertinent is the absence of Paul's warning against allowing a recent convert to become a bishop (cp. 1 Tim 3:6). In fact, it seems from the letter to Titus that the church on Crete functioned with a relatively undifferentiated group of leaders. In chapter 1 verse 5, Titus is reminded to appoint "elders" in every town; two verses later, the qualities of a "bishop" are outlined. The context shows that the same group is being spoken of in both places (as does the repetition of the adjective "blameless" [ἀνέγκλητος] with both nouns). We seem to be encountering the same fluidity in the life of a very young Christian community which appears also in Paul's other letters.

1 Timothy, on the other hand, shows numerous signs of reflecting a more variegated, nuanced leadership structure. At first glance it might appear that the terms "elder" and "bishop" are used more or less synonymously, as we have seen in other contexts, with "bishop" dominating in 1 Tim 3 and "elder" in 1 Tim 5. However, a distinction actually seems to be arising between the two terms. In chapter 5 verse 1, "elder" obviously refers to those who are literally senior members of the church. This is the standard leadership model in most first-century contexts, whether in Greco-Roman society, in Judaism, or in the Christian communities as they have been described in the New Testament literature noted so far. At this point, however, Christian "elders" seem to be dividing into two groups. Chapter 5 verses 17 and 18 speak of a sub-group of elders: those who "rule well" (οἱ καλῶς προεστῶτες πρεσβύτεροι), namely by labouring in preaching and teaching (v.17), and are consequently paid for their work (v.18). This implies that there is another group of "elders" to whom these statements do not apply: they do not rule well, namely by preaching and teaching, and are not paid. They certainly retain their standing *as* elders—there is no hint that they are being dishonoured, demoted, or dispossessed from that status—but that is all.

If this distinction stands, a different view of the overall leadership structure reflected in 1 Timothy opens up. It is not this group who are "merely" elders, but the other group—those who are *not only* elders but who also rule well, teach and preach, and are paid for their labours—who would be the most natural subject for all of the descriptors applied to "bishops" in chapter 3. In both chapters, this group is referred to as teachers (3:2, 5:17) and as managers (3:4 and 5:17 employ the same verb, προΐστημι). The requirement in chapter 3 that they not be recent converts (3:6) makes perfect sense in light of their responsibility to preach and teach (5:17). In other words, as the duties of a "bishop" become more important, and as those elders who also qualify as bishops begin to be paid for such work, the leadership structure of the church is beginning to change. It is not yet true that bishops and elders are completely separate groups. But a distinction between them seems to be starting to emerge.

The collection of letters that Ignatius wrote to seven churches in Asia Minor about the year 117 reflect a situation in which firm distinctions had emerged between the three offices of bishop, elder, and deacon. This threefold hierarchy is obvious in many of his letters (IgnMag 2:1, 3:1, 6:1, IgnEph 2:2, 20:2, IgnTr 2:2, 13:2, etc.). In all of these churches, elders are those who we would typically call "pastors," and they clearly owe debts of loyalty and obedience to their bishops. Moreover, this is a monepiscopal system, namely one in which each city has just one bishop—a move that tended to further consolidate his grip on power.

Even so, this is not yet quite a monarchical episcopate, that is, a structure in which the bishop alone holds all power and authority, usually also within an area even larger than his own city. Instead, the Ignatian letters reveal a situation in which elders/pastors also hold authority over the people (as for that matter do deacons), and a bishop's territory is more or less restricted to his own city (IgnEph 1:3; IgnPol inscr; IgnPhd 10:1, IgnSm 11:1). To that extent, we still see vestiges in these churches of the earlier system of collective, collegial, and decidedly local leadership that dominated the New Testament witnesses. But there is no question that the trajectory toward the monarchical episcopate is well advanced, already by this point very early in the second century in Asia Minor.

It is instructive, and significant for LCC's current context, that it took the better part of a century for this relatively well established pattern of hierarchical episcopal oversight to emerge. True, New Testament writers use the term "bishop" several times when referring to spiritual overseers. But only in 1 Timothy does it appear that this term is even just beginning to describe a clear hierarchical distinction between bishops and pastors. Earlier New Testament documents, and even the otherwise very similar letter to Titus, reflect no such distinction. Prior to the letters of Ignatius, there is little reason to understand the term "bishop" as implying any hierarchical structure whatever—or, indeed, any significant distinction at all between bishops and pastors.

Rev. Stephen Chambers, Ph.D.

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Thesis 2: The adoption of the term president for the head of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod came out of the German Lutheran tradition of using the title superintendent and the well-established use of the term president within American Lutheran circles, and this term was preferred because it did not have the connotation of referring to someone consecrated for life administering a top-down ecclesiastical structure.

The question of the title and even the nature of ecclesiastical supervision within the Lutheran tradition is a long and somewhat complicated matter that requires a tracing of the issue back to the Reformation. In the Reformation the Lutherans were confronted with the problem of abuses of power by the Roman Catholic bishops, including but not limited to the refusal to ordain pastors within Lutheran territories. This led to the Lutherans at some places rejecting the episcopacy outright, despite desiring to maintain unity within the Church.[27] This further led Luther to call for the establishment of *notbischöfe* (Emergency bishops). Following the initial break with Rome, the Lutheran Churches in Germany established themselves into consistories led by a *Generalsuperintendent* (General superintendent).[28] This term, superintendent, remained the standard term in Germany until after the First World War, when some of the *Landeskirchen* started to reinstate the term bishop. The story is different for the Lutheran Churches outside of Germany. Sweden and Finland never ended the use of bishops, and the office of bishop was restored in Denmark, Norway, Iceland, Transylvania, Slovakia and Hungary.[29]

As Lutheranism moved to North America, a terminological shift was put in place, ultimately leading to the adoption of the term president. When the Pennsylvania Ministerium was first established no officers were elected. It was not until the third meeting in 1750 that Peter Brunnholz was elected "superintendent." Then in 1751 John F. Handschuh was elected "president or superintendent," thereby

[27] AP XIV.2

[28] Luise Schorn-Schütte "Church Offices: Lutheran Offices," Tr. Jeff Bach in Hillerbrand, Hans Joachim. 1996. The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation (New York: Oxford University Press) 332-35.

[29] "Bishop" in Erwin L. Lueker ed. *Lutheran Cyclopedia: A concise In-Home Reference for the Christian Family* [Rev. ed.] (St. Louis: Concordia, 1975), 96-97.

first introducing the term president into usage.[30] However, this was not nailed down yet, as Henry Melchoir Mühlenberg was often referred to as "overseer," "superintendent," or "president." It was not until 1781 that the term "President" was enshrined in the first formal constitution of the Ministerium.[31] The term president was then echoed in the New York Ministerium's constitution of 1874,[32] and subsequent synods and ministeria in America, including their Canadian branches and offshoots. Even the more clerical-oriented Johannes Grabau and the Buffalo Synod used no term other than Pastor.[33]

It was into this environment C.F.W. Walther and the future Missouri Synod entered the scene. During the Saxon immigration, the group had a disastrous experience with their leader, Martin Stephan, who had taken the title of bishop during the sea voyage to America.[34] In light of the bad experiences with Stephan, and the already established practice of Lutherans in America, the Missouri Synod adopted the term president, which LCC has subsequently inherited.[35]

It seems that the Lutherans in America intentionally shed the term bishop for fear that it implied the idea that the authority in the Church descends from the Bishop to the pastors, choosing instead a title that reflects the idea that the congregations have the real power in the church.[36] Likewise, there is the question about the nature of the office that is implied by the title. Historically, bishops are consecrated to the office for life, while North American Lutherans have historically elected presidents for set terms of office.[37] Therefore, Confessional Lutheranism in North America has historically shied away from the term bishop, based largely on wanting to separate from the implied episcopal system of ecclesiology. This may have been especially true in the formation of the Missouri Synod, because Walther was adamant that the Synod was only an advisory body.[38]

Rev. John Hellwege, Ph.D.

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THESIS 3: Nomenclature should strive to fairly describe the functional expectations of the office.

Nomenclature is descriptive and resides, at least in part, upon the function and expectations that emerge from that role. President has its root in reference to the one who presides over an authorized body; a presider, who has no vote, and is a servant of the people. An *episcope* is someone who "oversees" the ministry of the church, much like a "superintendent," which is a synonym for supervisor (super = above, visor = seeing). Bishop is a unique and distinct church term that connotes spiritual oversight and specific authorized duties. Apostle is a term used for the Twelve and St.Paul. Elder suggests experience and tenure that guides the most Biblical practice on a broad scale. Deacon indicates a person who takes care of *other* administrative and service duties that free up those delegated to do the Ministry of the Word. Administration is also a potential term; the Latin prefix *ad* means "toward," indicating direction and tendency. This, indeed, should be the focus of those who serve an administrative role: to serve the church by helping other servants serve toward a stronger and healthier ministry.

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[30] E. Clifford Nelson, ed., *The Lutherans in North America* [Rev. ed.] (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980),50

[31] Richard C. Wolf, *Documents of Lutheran Unity in America* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966), 26-27.

[32] Christian Otto Kraushaar, *Verfassungsformen der Lutherischen Kirche Amerikas* (Güttersloh: Bertelsmann, 1911), 65.

[33] Kraushaar, *Verfassungsformen*, 106-114.

[34] Walter O. Forster, *Zion on the Mississippi: The Settlement of the Saxon Lutherans in Missouri 1839-1841* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1953), 278-304.

[35] Kraushaar, *Verfassungsformen*, 338-39; "Our First Synodical constitution," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 16 (1943): 15.

[36] George Drach, ""President or bishop." *Lutheran Quarterly* 3, no. 2 (May 1951), 207-208.

[37] Ibid. 211.

[38] Carl S. Mundinger, *Government in the Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1947), 187.

It appears that the most biblical terms may be "Overseer," "Supervisor," or "Superintendent" (covering all aspects, with a single person in this role); Bishop (a pastor called to guide his peers in spiritual leadership and ministry); "Deacon," or "Administrator" (focusing on the person who enables toward ministry). President or Chairman indicates a function of procedure for leading a group through decisions until a meeting concludes. Apostle has been used with a very narrow focus on the Twelve and St. Paul. Elder seems appropriate, but like Deacon and Apostle, has a more narrow and previously "assigned" meaning in the church (designating the lay spiritual leaders of a church).

Rev. James R. Gimbel, Ph.D.
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Thesis 4: The question of a change in nomenclature as a question of semantics is limited not only to the study of biblical and historical usage, but also includes contemporary meanings. In order for communication to remain clear not only within our own circles but with all of society, consideration must be given to the contemporary meanings of terms.

Relevant to this question are two preliminary realities arising from semantics.

First, no one word is perfectly synonymous with another, i.e. synonyms are "not 'words which mean the same thing,' but words with many like components of meaning."[39] This means that when there is a change in name, some component(s) of meaning may be lost and some may be gained. Thus any decision must clearly define these differences in order to weigh the benefits/drawbacks.

Second, words (signifiers) and their meanings (conceptual signifieds) are not intrinsically connected. Voelz explains it in this way: "all connections between words and meanings are products of conventional agreement---agreement (whether conscious or unconscious) on the part of people in a given socio-linguistic group or subgroup---and it is the common understanding of these conventional arrangements which is the basis for communication (indeed, which allows communication to take place at all)."[40] In other words, different denominations may understand the words "bishop" and "president" differently, as they are informed by such things as their theology, and as they themselves have defined the term in their constitution and bylaws, and their publications, scholarly and popular.

1) "President" and "Bishop," a comparison

The term "president" in contemporary usage has a broader sematic range than "bishop." "President" can denote a head of state, organization, company, educational institution, company, or just the leader of a meeting.[41] "Bishop," however, has only one church-related meaning: "a member of the highest rank of clerical hierarchy in some Christian denominations, usually in charge of a diocese, and empowered to confer holy orders."[42] While "president" has a much broader semantic range and thus could apply to the leader of a church, "bishop" unambiguously refers to ecclesiastical leadership. The LCA report "President or Bishop?" also concluded: "better to call our leader 'Bishop', because 'President' is too general and too secular. You can have a President of anything from the United States to local church

[39] James Voelz, *What Does This Mean? Principles of Biblical Interpretation in the Post-Modern World.* (2d. edition. St. Louis: Concordia, 2003), 121.
[40] Voelz, 92.
[41] The Canadian Oxford Dictionary, 1145
[42] The Canadian Oxford Dictionary, 138.

committee. The specific title Bishop reminds us unambiguously that our leader is a Pastor chosen by the Church for the special task of spiritual oversight (*episcopē*) of a whole region."[43]

2) "Bishop" in contemporary church usage

Although the term "bishop" has long been used in the Roman Catholic Church, its adoption by Lutheran Churches has gradually being increasing.[44] It is clear, however, that beyond the general description of a bishop as overseer of the ministry of the church in a particular area, Lutherans diverge from the Roman Catholic understanding of the office of "bishop." The Report "President or Bishop?" to the 2013 Synod Convention of the LCA lists four provisos which summarize the differences and modify the definition of "Bishop" for a Lutheran context. The provisos are:

a) Recognition that for Lutherans there is only one pastoral office. Deacons and deaconesses hold an auxiliary office, and Bishops have this office only 'by human authority.'
b) The argument about Apostolic Succession. However, the use of biblical nomenclature does not imply support for the concept of Apostolic Succession.
c) The usage of the title 'Bishop' creates a hierarchy in the church. There is need to guard against hierarchical structures and maintain the view that there is but one pastoral office. The title 'Bishop' should promote the 'pastoral role of oversight within the one ministry of word and sacrament.'
d) Bishops in the LCA would not be elected for life but in accord with the election policy of the Church. [45]

These provisos, although not explicitly spelled out in these other documents, are apparent in the Constitutions and Bylaws of the ELCA, ELCIC, and NALC. In each case they understand the Bishop to be the chief pastor or pastor of the church, who is not consecrated/elected for life.

3) A final note

Although it is not the question asked by the CCMS, it is interesting to note how other church bodies handle the relationship between the spiritual and administrative oversight of the church.

The ELCIC is explicit that the title "Bishop" refers to the person who is both "its chief pastor and chief executive officer."[46] Thus there is one person who is the "overseer" of ecclesial and administrative matters. Since the vice-president may be a lay person, it is possible that the administrative oversight may be tasked to them. The ELCA is similarly structured but avoids calling the bishop the chief executive officer. Like the ELCIC, NALC describes the Bishop as the chief pastor and chief administrator. However, there is in NALC the additional position of General Secretary who is the chief operating officer of the NALC, managing its day-to-day administrative functions. The General Secretary is not elected, as the vice-presidents of ELCIC and ELCA are, but is rather appointed by the Bishop and confirmed by the Executive Council.

To summarize, although the title of "Bishop" does emphasize ecclesial supervision of the church, and the administrative responsibilities are primarily delegated to another, bishops do retain ultimate

[43] "Report: President or Bishop?" 2013 LCA Synodical Conference, 258.
[44] "There is an ever increasing use of the term 'Bishop' by Lutheran Churches in Europe, America, Africa, Asia and the Pacific." "Report: President or Bishop?" 2013 LCA Synodical Conference, 255.
[45] page 258 of *The Book of Reports: Convention of Synod 2013*
[46] ELCIC Constitution, Article XIII Officers

responsibility for the administration of the church as well. It is not the case that the ecclesial supervisor and the administrative supervisor are equals.

The Rev. Prof. Jonathan Kraemer

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Faculty Conclusions

The term “bishop” is used somewhat fluidly in the New Testament and only rarely connotes a hierarchical ecclesial structure. Although the Lutheran Confessions confront the abuse of episcopal power, they neither challenge nor reject the episcopacy in and of itself.

However, many Lutheran polities, especially in Germany and also in due course in North America, have avoided the use of the term “bishop.” Partly this is because the term has been tainted by a history of abuse, both in Europe and in the New World. But the avoidance also reflects distaste for two particular aspects of episcopal polity, one of them intrinsic and the other more variable. Lutheran polities that avoid calling their leader “bishop” often reject the intrinsically hierarchical structure that an episcopal system invariably creates, clinging instead to the Confessional principle that there is a *single* pastoral office (CA V). This theological principle is what has animated the search for other titles for ecclesial leaders, including the frequent use of terms like “superintendent” and “president.” The fact that bishops in many—though not all—polities are consecrated for life, also underlies many Lutheran decisions to use a term other than “bishop” for their spiritual leaders.

Ultimately, Lutheran Church-Canada is free to choose whichever term it prefers for its synodical leader. “Bishop” is the most obvious title to employ, both biblically and historically speaking, and yet even in those contexts neither the term itself nor the hierarchical structure it generally connotes are invariably present. Indeed, as the semantic and affective connotations of the term “bishop” have grown and solidified over time, the reasons to replace it with a different term have also increased. In particular, our forefathers in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod had better reasons for calling their spiritual leader “president” than is sometimes realized.

Yet other terms too are equally suitable, in and of themselves. The key consideration in our present context is, What does such a leader do? If LCC continues to have a *single* synodical leader who serves administrative as well as spiritual functions, many terms would seem to be suitable, including both “bishop” and “president.” If, however, LCC decides to divide its leadership into two separate positions, the application of the term “president” to the “spiritual” leader would likely create considerable semantic confusion because of its frequent association with the more managerial and administrative functions which would in reality be borne by the *other* leader.