

‘Ordination’
Is it just for pastors, or for various ministries
within the Office of the Ministry?

In Ephesians 4 we are told, ‘It was he [Christ] who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.’

All these various people would appear to have a vital part in the ministry of the Word exercised by the Church for the growth of God’s people (including those yet to be brought into the Kingdom). They operate within the Office of the Ministry but their ministries are not the same.

Likewise in the Confessions, especially the Smalcald Articles, it would appear that different ministries are recognized within the Office of the Ministry.

In Part II, Article III.1 on Chapters and Cloisters it says, ‘They could produce pastors, preachers and other ministers for the churches. ...’ But, some would argue, it also then says ‘they could also produce essential personnel for the secular government ... as well as well-educated young women for mothers, housekeepers, and such.’ Even here though, this is in addition to the various ministers.

In Part III, Article X.1-3 under Ordination and the Call, it also speaks of ‘priests and preachers’, ‘us and our preachers’, bishops and ministers - all in the context of: preaching or teaching or baptizing or administering the Lord’s Supper or performing other work or office of the Church [related to these – one would assume from the context] All these come under ordination and the call into positions in the Church.

It would appear, wherever leadership involves public teaching, preaching or evangelizing with the Word of God, it would be regarded by the confessions as being within the Office of the Ministry, as would any public administration of the sacraments. What does this say to the view that the ordination question is only about pastors?

AC XIV Our churches teach that no one should publicly teach in the Church, or administer the Sacraments, without a rightly ordered call.

[In other words - be ordained into the Office to show the ordered call has been accepted by the Church or congregation as a gift from the Lord. (Theses on the Office of the Ministry 8, Ephesians 4.11.)

This still leaves us with the question of which ministries (if any) within the Office of the Ministry does the responsibility fall solely on men to fulfil.

And, are we consistent in our current practice across the Church in relation to all this?

Respectfully submitted
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