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“Luther and the Work of the Pastor”  
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**Luther and the Work of the Pastor:  
The Pastor as Evangelist**

+ In Nomine Jesu +

“ . . . if these become silent, the stones will cry out!”  
(Luke 19:40)

**Introduction**

It is a great privilege to speak to this World Conference on the theme: The Pastor as Evangelist. My prayer is that God will bless this reflection.

This paper is based in the Holy Scriptures<sup>1</sup> and the Lutheran Confessions,<sup>2</sup> in relation to the practice and reflection that we have developed in our context: The Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Republic of Chile (IELCHI).<sup>3</sup>

In the New Testament the word *evangelist* appears three times. The first is in Accts 21:8, where Phillip, who had been elected as one of the seven deacons in Acts 6, receives this title; the second time it is mentioned is in Ephesians 4:11, where the apostle Paul designates evangelists as being given by Christ himself “to perfect the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edification of the body of Christ” (v.12); and the third time it is mentioned is when the same apostle, exhorting his spiritual son, Timothy, to do the work of an “evangelist,” that is, to preach the Gospel (2 Timothy 4:5).

*Euangelistes* (εὐαγγελιστής) literally means “messenger of good” (*eu*, good; *angelos*, messenger).<sup>4</sup> This substantive is derived from the Greek verb *euangelizo* (εὐαγγελίζω), which means “to announce the gospel or the good news (*angelioneu*);” therefore, the evangelist is he who announces the good news of God (Mark 1:14). Christ is the good news of God, since the appearance of Christ is the gospel, and this is the

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<sup>1</sup> *Norma Normans*

<sup>2</sup> *Norma Normata*

<sup>3</sup> The IELCHI has been in Chile for fifty years. It arose as a spontaneous work of the Gospel, and has the characteristic that none of her members come from a Lutheran background, nor are they descendents of Germans, but rather they are the product of evangelistic work (The Mission of God) established in its beginning from educational institutions, which now have specific missionary strategies. The slogan of the IELCHI for the 2003-2004 period is “Christ, an Open Door for All,” having as a central objective a commitment to the Mission of God (as her reason for being), motivating all the congregations to be protagonists in the growth of the church, preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ appropriately in the context of each community, knowing that the Holy Spirit will do the work by means of the Word.

<sup>4</sup> Vine, W. E., *Vine Diccionario Expositiva de Palabras del Antiguo y del Nuevo Testamento Exhaustivo*, (Nashville: Editorial Caribe) 2000, c1999.

power of God for all who believe (Romans 1:16-17). Thus, to evangelize in the wide sense is everything that the church and her members do and say to proclaim the good news of salvation in Christ in response to the commission to “preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15); in other words, everyone who preaches the Gospel is an “evangelist.”

Normally, when we hear about “evangelists” in our context, we think of campaigns or crusades where “well-known” preachers make the multitudes shake with their eloquent messages and finally make an appeal to “make your decision for Christ.” At the same time, the term “evangelism” signifies, in this context, different coercive methodologies to “take a person to the feet of the Savior,” trying to do so in one way or another, by emotion or by reason, but not by faith through coming into contact with the precious Word of God. These movements have influenced many Lutheran churches, whether it is with different terminology from the abundant literature in existence in our context, or in the methodologies that contradict our biblical-confessional principles. In Chile we speak of the “evangelical” church, grouping together all denominations that are not Roman Catholic, identifying the adjective “evangelical” with charismatic movements, with all the implications regarding the public image concerning their methodologies. From this confusing panorama it is necessary to clarify the terminology in order to advance in this reflection.

We have preferred to speak with other terms that do not distort the true concepts rooted in the Word. We choose to speak of “mission” and not of “evangelization,” of “missionaries” and not “evangelists,” focusing first on the action of God and secondly on the ecclesiastical action. There exists much discussion regarding these terms, where historically the word “mission” is applied to the expansionist work among the poor, immigrants and other marginal ethnic groups; and “evangelism” is applied to methodological action of presenting Christ to the sinner, related normally to the verbal forms of “proclamation.” In order to outline the theme from a wider perspective, we prefer a union of the terms, as Orlando Costas and David Hesselgrave have done: “Mission and evangelism are, then, the two sides of the same coin. The coin is God and His redemptive activity for all humanity,”<sup>5</sup> in order to communicate the idea that the two go together and speak of the same thing.<sup>6</sup>

## **1-The Concept of Mission-Evangelization**

The modern concept of Mission is substantially different from what Luther worked with in his time, for although he spoke and wrote about ideas that are rooted in the Mission, he did not develop a “Lutheran” mission theology as has been constructed in recent years, but rather he concerned himself more with recuperating the message of God in Christ and putting it in its rightful place, placing a strong emphasis on the teaching-learning of it.

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<sup>5</sup> Orlando E. Costas, *La Iglesia y Su Misión Evangelizadora* (Editorial Aurora), 1971, p. 27.

<sup>6</sup> David J. Hesselgrave, *Plantar Igrejas: Um guia para missões nacionais e transculturais*, (Edições Vida Nova), 2da edición 1995, p. 23.

For Luther, the initial point is “what God has done in Jesus Christ for man. Here begins all theology and all mission. God wants to be God.”<sup>7</sup> Man and woman do not have hope in and of themselves, so that “mission is never a matter of the organization of a missionary society, nor of a bureaucratic apparatus with a large budget. If the mission does not begin in God, nothing will happen.”<sup>8</sup> Mission-evangelization is the loving action of God toward men and women. This intervention has as a central point the incarnation of Christ, God becoming flesh, walking together with men and women, giving himself in the most excellent expiatory sacrifice, rising as first fruits of true life, thus overcoming sin, death and the power of the devil, to reconcile man and woman with himself. Human action is condemned to failure, because salvation is by direct, divine intervention when we are justified freely. This is the gospel that carries out the mission, the mission of God.

Mission-Evangelization arises from the heart of God (*missio Dei*); it is His initiative, the purposeful action of this loving God who reveals Himself to man expressing to him His great love, by which action sense is made of everything that happens in the world. This initiative of grace is necessary because of the total inability of man and woman in and of themselves, before the world, and fundamentally in relation to their Creator. The mission of God, which began before the creation of the world, and is centered on the work of His Son Jesus Christ, will be consummated with the second coming of the Savior.

We affirm with Dr. Eugene W. Bunkowske, that Mission:

. . . is God’s way of looking at humanity through the eyes of grace. It is the plan and design of God to close the gap between himself and humanity. In basic terms it is the objective of God for all of theology, as also his objective for all history. **It is the reason for being**, not only in this world, but **especially for the church**, missions and theological education.<sup>9</sup>

From a holistic perspective, we understand Mission as the eyeglasses<sup>10</sup> to see the action of the triune God, who,

. . . **through his Church** . . . , in a variety of ways and through a variety of institutions ordained by God and developed by men, **communicates** by means of His oral, written and visual (sacramental) **Word** the message of the law and the gospel **about human sin and the grace of God in Jesus Christ for significant understanding** to people in every condition and context of life, for the whole world, so that they can be reconciled with Him—reconciled by receiving

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<sup>7</sup> Sydney H. Rooy, *Lutero ayer y hoy: Lutero y la Misión*, (Editorial Aurora), 1984, pág. 223.

<sup>8</sup> Sydney H. Rooy, *Op. Cit.* p. 225.

<sup>9</sup> Eugene W. Bunkowske, en *Primer Simposio Internacional de Misión : Educación teológica y misión*, (Erni Walter Seibert (Coordinador), *Primer Simposio Internacional de Misión*, (Centro Internacional de Entrenamiento Misionero), 1999), p. 142.

<sup>10</sup> In the case of God, they are his own “eyes.”

forgiveness of sins, the gift of eternal life en Jesus Christ, a new life of worship to His glory, nutrition and equipping to unite with Him in the work of going and making disciples of all nations.<sup>11</sup>

God is the first missionary, the only one who is concerned for the sinner, and the only one who did and does everything for him or for her from whom nothing can be expected, since he or she is dead in “trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2:1). In spite of human corruption, God has used men and women as his instruments since the beginning in the history of Salvation, and he continues do so today, since through his intervention, man is simultaneously saint and sinner.

Luther, in his commentary on Romans 10:14, 15, affirms that the apostle Paul mentions four attitudes that can be seen in the action of God, when he writes:

. . . it is impossible that someone can **preach**, unless he has been **sent**. From this it follows that it is impossible that they, to whom no one has been sent, can **hear**. The next step: those who do not **hear** cannot **believe**. And from there it follows that those who do not believe cannot **invoke** God. And finally: it is impossible for those who do not invoke God to be saved. Thus: the root itself and the origin of salvation rest in the fact that God **sends** someone.<sup>12</sup>

It is God who sends; thus, the theology of mission begins there.<sup>13</sup> Those who are sent are those who do mission, guided by the same Holy Spirit, as Luther affirms in his Large Catechism: “. . . the Holy Spirit has called me by the gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, has sanctified and kept me in the true faith, just as he calls, gathers, enlightens and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth and preserves it united to Jesus Christ in the one true faith . . .”<sup>14</sup> Mission is carried out by the Holy Spirit.<sup>15</sup>

In the second place, the Church is the instrument to carry out the Mission of God, as Luther affirms in his explanation of Psalm 87, where he writes: “But it is clear that this declaration is made in the churches, parishes and congregations of the faithful, and therefore they are the very doors of Zion, because through them all those who will be saved enter.”<sup>16</sup> This church is built on the Ministry of the Word.<sup>17</sup> The church dose not have a mission to carry out; the Mission is of God, who creates the church<sup>18</sup> to embrace

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<sup>11</sup> Eugene W. Bunkowske, *Op. Cit.* While Bunkowske’s intent in this paper was to develop a concept of Missiology and Theological Education, he also proposes a holistic concept of Mission, which is in agreement with several authors such as Rene Padilla, Orlando Costas, Jonathan Lewis and Ron Allen, among others (Cristian Rautenberg.)

<sup>12</sup> *Obras de Lutero*, (Paidós), Tomo X, 1971, p. 343.

<sup>13</sup> Sydney H. Rooy, *Op. Cit.* p. 229.

<sup>14</sup> *Large Catechism*, “Explanation of the Third Article of the Apostles’ Creed.”

<sup>15</sup> Sydney H. Rooy, *Op. Cit.* p. 230.

<sup>16</sup> Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works*, (Concordia Publishing House), Saint Louis, X, p. 176.

<sup>17</sup> Andrés. A. Meléndez (Editor), *Libro de Concordia* (Book of Concord) : Tratado sobre el poder y la primacía del papa, (Concordia Publishing House), 1989, p. 25. From now on the *Book of Concord*.

<sup>18</sup> “And we know that the church is where the word of God is taught correctly and the sacraments are administered correctly; and not among those who not only work to annul the word of God with edicts, but

the world; therefore, it is necessary to speak in terms like “the church is in Mission,” and not as if the church “has” or “should have” (a mission), since it is a creation of God for his Mission, with Christ himself as the head, to think, coordinate, establish and guide harmoniously the whole body for the purposes of the *missio Dei*.

In the third place, the Mission of God utilizes preachers. Luther affirms: “If they must hear the word, it is necessary to send preachers to the pagans, those who will take charge of announcing the word of God.”<sup>19</sup> These are those God has called and who have been ratified by communities to exercise the office of the public ministry.

In the fourth place, each Christian is an agent in the mission by living the universal priesthood of believers. God acts in daily life to promote the expansion of the gospel. Luther affirms: “The most noble work and the most important service that we can do in the world, for God, is to bring other people, and especially those commended to us, to the knowledge of God by means of the Holy Gospel.”<sup>20</sup> Through baptism, each Christian is a missionary in this life and is called by love to announce God’s works for humanity.

Mission is not only obedience to the word of the Lord, but it is participation in the Mission of the Son, in the *missio Dei*, with the objective of establishing the lordship of Christ over all creation. For Vicedom,<sup>21</sup> God does not make himself merely the sender, but also the sent one and the content of what has been sent. This means that everything sent from the divine person implies the presence of the Trinity.

By being the sovereign action of God, the *missio Dei* does not allow itself to be enjoined by anyone: religions, government, science, unbelief. The work of God is *extra nos*, as the theology of the Reformation affirms. Thus, it is a salvific work. God, through his *missio*, sustains the world and directs human beings. Therefore, the *missio Dei*, as a work of divine mercy, begun through the sending of his Son,

. . . is continued by him now by being of concern to his community, by means of his sent one, of the propagation and proclamation of his saving will. Thus, the Lord gives the missionary mandate . . . [but] this service of the Church is possible only because she has experienced compassion through the redeeming action of the Son of God and now represents the community of believers and those justified . . . . Thus, this service inserted in the action of God, the obedience of faith, is not to be disconnected from God, but to be taken by him; it is not something that is added to the action of God, but that submits itself to the work of God.<sup>22</sup>

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also submit those who teach what is right and true to torture . . .” (*Book of Concord*, Apology, Article XIV, 4, pp. 206-207).

<sup>19</sup> Cited in Sydney H. Rooy, *Op. Cit.*, p. 237; WA 52, 502.

<sup>20</sup> Cited in Sydney H. Rooy, *Op. Cit.*, p. 240; WA 37, 115.

<sup>21</sup> Georg Vicedom. *A missão como obra de Deus* (Mission as the Word of God), p.15 (World Mission Conference in Willingen, Germany, 1952).

<sup>22</sup> Georg Vicedom. *Op. Cit.* pp. 105-106.

The Mission of God is made concrete in history when God does not work alone, but in a team. God calls men and women to become involved in his mission. The *missio*, finally, to our surprise, continues in spite of our resistance, temptations, weaknesses and human defeats, because it is based on God's way of acting.

## **2-The Way the Mission of God Works**

The only **way God acts** has already been defined and given by Christ to His Church and is called **the Means of Grace**, Word and Sacraments.

Luther emphatically affirms in the Smalkald Articles:

. . . we should and must persevere with insistence that God only wants to relate to us men through his external Word and his Sacraments exclusively. Everything that arrogantly is said to be of the Spirit without the Word and Sacraments, is from the devil.<sup>23</sup>

The Lutheran church has emphasized that the means of grace proclaim and really confer the grace of God in Christ. The Gospel assures us that when this message of reconciliation is read or heard, or in some adequate way for persons who possess a special need, the Holy Spirit is actuating to create faith in the hearts of humans and communicate the forgiveness of sins. The Gospel is the creative and powerful message of God, concerning which we sustain as a basis of all the Scriptures, that the law produces the recognition of the lost condition of humanity, and at the same time, shows us the need of a Savior, while the Gospel grants the grace and pardon of God in Christ. The confusion of the two causes us to adopt coercive evangelistic strategies, where the cross of Christ is something of the past, that is related to the person as a memorial, but not experientially and significantly, or where believers end up being "Sunday Christians."

The Word of the Gospel offers and applies the Grace of God, works faith and regenerates man, and gives him the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:24; Romans 10:17; 1 Peter 1:23; Galatians 3:2). Baptism also is applied for the remission of sins and is, therefore, a washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Titus 3:5). In the same way, the object of the Lord's Supper, that is, the administration of the body and the blood of Christ, is not anything else than the communication and seal of the forgiveness of sins as the words say: "Given for you," and "shed for the remission of sins" (Luke 22:19, 20; Matthew 26:28) and "This cup is the New Testament in my blood" (1 Corinthians 11:23; Jeremiah 31:31-34). The Supper has the character of thanksgiving as *communio* (Table communion), with an eschatological perspective (as sign and anticipation of the eternal communion with Christ).

Since it is only through eternal means ordained by God that God has promised to communicate this grace and salvation obtained by Christ, the Christian church does not remain immobile, but it impacts the whole world with the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16).

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<sup>23</sup> *Book of Concord*, Smalkald Articles, On Confession, 10-11, p. 325.

Jesus Christ, when he ascended to heaven, left the promise of the Holy Spirit, who was made flesh (translator's note: "was made manifest"?) giving life to the Church on Pentecost, and since then continues doing it by means of the Gospel and the visible Word, the means by which he creates and strengthens faith, as is affirmed in Article V of the Augsburg Confession:

To obtain this faith, God has instituted the office of preaching (Predigtamt). That is, he has given the Gospel and the Sacraments. By means of these, as by means, he grants the Holy Spirit who works faith, where and when he wants, to those who hear the Gospel. This teaches that we have a God who is full of grace by the merit of Christ, not by our merit, if we thus believe.<sup>24</sup>

We have already noted that it is the Holy Spirit who calls, gathers, illuminates, sanctifies the church and maintains it in the true faith.<sup>25</sup>

The Holy Spirit first condemns the person of his sin and unbelief, convincing him, through the law of God, of his need for pardon (John 16:8-11). Then he presents Christ through the Gospel and permits him to trust in his word of forgiveness. The Spirit continues his work with the Word and the Sacrament to motivate, equip and give authority to all believers, being a part of the mission of God, as his instruments.

The Father send his Son to give his life for the salvation of the entire world, thus God now sends his sons and daughters to bring the message of salvation to men, women and children of every nation and tongue (John 20:21). The mandate and the entire means of mission are clearly expressed in the "Great Commission" which consists in the ministry of reconciliation:

And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20)<sup>26</sup>

Therefore if any man is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. Now all *these* things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. (2 Corinthians 5:17-20)

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<sup>24</sup> *Book of Concord: Augsburg Confession*, Article V, p. 29.

<sup>25</sup> Works of Martin Luther, *Small Catechism*, Publicaciones El Escudo. 1971. Volume V, p. 21-22.

<sup>26</sup> New America Standard Bible.

According to these words, the Christian church has an objective in all of its mission efforts, that of making disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:18-20). A disciple is simply a Christian.<sup>27</sup> This term is not utilized to distinguish between the newly converted and the followers of Jesus who might be more mature in the faith or who have become more well-known as more responsible members of the Christian community. The means by which the church must realize its purpose also is indicated clearly in the same passage: baptizing and teaching. Luke describes the content of the message that will be taught: “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem” (Luke 24:46-47). The preaching of repentance and forgiveness of sins shows the use of the Law and the Gospel in the work of making disciples, since it is only by the law that sins are recognized and confessed, and the Gospel is the only means that works conversion.<sup>28</sup> This “make disciples” implies also “teaching all things that I (Christ) have commanded.” The gerund, “teaching” (*didaskontes*), of Matthew 28:19, implies that Christian teaching is a continuous process.

Beginning with justification by faith, the person is brought into the history of salvation in community, and does not only occupy himself with announcing the gospel, but also shows compassion for people who are uncared for, persecuted, or discriminated against in the world. The church works to assure that her proclamation of the Gospel is accompanied by works of love, of mercy and of justice that flow from the message that she proclaims (1 John 3:16-18).<sup>29</sup>

This perspective on the way the Mission of God works does away with many of the ideas that arise in the way the church works, where, by a “marketing” approach, “effective” methodologies are sought, incorporating elements that are completely at odds with our theology, thus abandoning the centrality of the fundamental doctrine in all the congregational activities: justification by faith, what many today have as just another, and not the fundamental, doctrine.<sup>30</sup> Many of these elements are brought into the Divine Service, making it into an attractive show, but far away from the truth of God, as also evangelistic methodologies that seek “a decision for Christ,” in the style of the awakening groups of the eighteenth century in England and the nineteenth century in the United States of America. Others understand evangelistic practice as the struggle for a better world, seeking to give answers through a social gospel. And others take refuge in methods such as the “evangelism explosion” of Kennedy, trying to purify it of false doctrines, but still they end up with problems with respect to the doctrine of “Free Will”

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<sup>27</sup> Acts 11:26; 16:1; 18:27

<sup>28</sup> “. . . and by these means, and in no other way, that is, by the holy word, when men hear it in preaching or read it, and in the holy sacraments, when they are used according to the divine word, God desires to call men to eternal salvation, to attract them to him, and convert them, regenerate them and sanctify them . . .” Book of Concord, Formula of Concord, II Solid Declaration, Article II, 50-51, p. 572.

<sup>29</sup> The function of diakonia is what differentiates us as Christian people.

<sup>30</sup> Luther, in the Smalcald Articles, defines justification as “the first and principle article . . . . . to deny this article or make concessions is not possible, even though heaven and earth would pass away and everything in it perish. For, “There is no other name under heaven, given to men, by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). (Book of Concord, Smalcald Articles, 5., p. 301).

in questions such as, “Do you wish to receive Christ as your Lord?,” or soliciting the prayer of the unbeliever as if it were a means of grace. Finally, some try to find solutions in MacGavran’s Natural Growth of the Church for the expansion of the church, loosing, many times, the dimensions of Law and Gospel, the use of the means of grace, and the centrality of the Theology of the Cross, that the Reformation brought.

### **3.- The Pastor as Evangelist**

Before seeing specifically the work of the pastor as evangelist, it is necessary to return to define the teachings on the Pastoral Office and the Universal Priesthood of all believers, since it is beginning with these, that the missionary practice of the church is affected.

On account of Christ, all believers have a “free” entrance to the throne of the Grace of God, being priests with privileges and responsibilities.<sup>31</sup> To the whole church, the royal priesthood of God, is given the power of the Office of the Keys,<sup>32</sup> that is, the power to preach the Gospel, to forgive and retain sins, and to administer and distribute the sacraments.<sup>33</sup> This means that all Christians participate in the work of the church, since the ministry is of the entire church. Some, from among the people of God, by the call of the same Lord and recognized by the church, are called to carry out specific works and functions. These are specific areas or ministries such as the spreading out (unfolding) of the only ministry that the church possesses.

Now it is necessary to distinguish between the priest or priestess and the pastorate, since the pastoral ministry was instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ himself when he called the apostles as the first ministers of his church and sent them, “As my Father has sent me, so I send you” (John 20:21); confirming then this special office to Peter “Feed my sheep . . . Feed my lambs” (John 21:15-17).

When we say *pastoral ministry* we refer to the Public Office through which the Word of God is preached and the Sacraments administered *by order and in the name of a Christian congregation*.<sup>34</sup> This office is a divine ordinance (*de iure divino*)<sup>35</sup>; that is, that the Christians of a certain place exercise the Means of Grace, where the Word of God is publicly preached in its midst, and the Sacraments are administered in accordance with the institution of Christ, by people prepared for such ministry. Luther called the Christian ministry the supreme office of the Church, because in it all other offices that are administered in it converge in it and depend upon it. Therefore we see that the pastor is teacher, prophet, missionary, evangelist, and apostle at the same time (Ephesians 4:11-12). This does not take away from the minister the possibility of delegating some functions, in order to dedicate himself with more rigor to the preaching of the Word. Luther writes concerning this: “. . . to whom the ministry of the Word is conferred, the

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<sup>31</sup> 1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 4:14-16; 13:15

<sup>32</sup> *Book of Concord: Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope*, 24, pp. 337-338.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* Augsburg Confession, Art. XXVIII, 5, p. 54.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.* p. 390.

<sup>35</sup> *Libro de Concordia, Treatise on the Power and Supremacy of the Pope*, 61, p. 344.

supreme office in Christianity is conferred; therefore, also he can baptize, administer the Mass (Holy Communion) and care for all the pastoral duties. But if he does not want to do this, he can concentrate only on preaching and leave the other secondary offices to others, as did Christ and Paul and all the apostles. Acts 6.”<sup>36</sup>

The term *Predigamt* is normally used in our church to describe the Pastoral Office. This Office (*Bischofswürde; Pfarramt*) is the highest in the church, and from it flow all the other ecclesiastical offices.<sup>37</sup> The complete spiritual supervision over the flock is conferred on Pastors in their congregations (proclamation of the Word, administration of the Sacraments, Biblical discipline, care for souls; 1 Peter 5:2 ff.). Where there are, associated to the Pastoral Office, other offices in the congregation, it will be the pastor who carries out general responsibility [*Gesamtverantwortung*]. (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 20:28-31; Titus 1:6-9; 1 Peter 5:1-3; Acts 13:17). As C.F.W. Walther affirms:

The highest office is the ministry of preaching, with which all other offices are conferred simultaneously. Therefore, each public office in the church is simply a part of the office of the ministry, or an auxiliary office, that converges on the ministry of preaching and depends on it.<sup>38</sup>

The Pastoral Ministry and the Universal Priesthood of All Believers exist by virtue of each other and have as the primary function serving the world in the fulfillment of the Mission of God: Both are necessary. It is God who has established the functions and the parameters of each one. To the first belong the function and the authority of the administration of the Means of Grace instituted by Christ himself, for the edification of the people of God. To the second belongs putting their gifts at the service of God and the church, bearing witness to Christ as Savior, calling pastors and caring for their well being.<sup>39</sup>

From this clear distinction we can define that a pastor is essentially an “evangelist,” since he has been called by God and confirmed by a congregation to announce the Gospel. The pastor represents Christ himself with regard to his office, as the Apology of the Augsburg Confession affirms:

Nevertheless, we grant that the many hypocrites and evil men who are mingled with them in this life share an association in the outward marks, are members of the church according to this association in the outward marks, and therefore hold office in the church. When the sacraments are administered by unworthy men, this does not rob them of their efficacy. For they do not represent their own persons but the person of Christ, because of the church’s call, as Christ testifies (Luke 10:16). “He who hears you hears me.” When they offer the Word

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.* p. 390.

<sup>37</sup> LW X:1576

<sup>38</sup> C.F.W. Walther, “Theses on the Ministry,” in *Walther and the Church*, (Concordia) Saint Louis, 1938, p. 79.

<sup>39</sup> Cristian Rautenberg. *Ministry and Mission*, Cuarto Enrete, (IBL) 2003, p. 12.

of Christ or the sacraments, they do so in Christ's place and stead. Christ's statement teaches us this in order that we may not be offended by the unworthiness of ministers.<sup>40</sup>

God manifests himself through pastors, not by virtue of individual authority, but by the Word of Christ.<sup>41</sup> Therefore, each time that a pastor, in a public or private way, announces the Gospel of Christ, he is an ambassador and instrument of Christ, and by the Holy Spirit, is the means by which God realizes the work of evangelization. The pastor is basically an **evangelist**. A pastor does not exist who does not preach the Gospel, because on the contrary he would not be a **pastor**.

Difficulties that present themselves in the practice of the church are produced by the lack of understanding of the Lutheran doctrine presented in the previous paragraphs, and they affect the Mission of God. Some of them are:<sup>42</sup>

- a) The Mission of God is affected when there is confusion between the pastoral ministry and the priesthood of believers, since they don't function for the mission, but rather as if the Public Ministry and the Universal Priesthood were ends in themselves.
- b) Beginning with confusion between the pastoral ministry and the priesthood, it is possible to believe that each can exist without the necessary presence of the other, that is, pastors without a congregation and congregations without a pastor.
- c) Pastors that do not seek to edify the people of God, through the means of grace, for the fulfillment of the Mission of God, but rather seek to "entertain."
- d) Pastors seen as "coordinators" or "organizers of events," who as the final authority for the administration of the Word and Sacraments and for the functions that he delegates to other members of the congregation.
- e) Pastors who do not seek to develop and involve the members in congregational work, who do not edify the people of God by training them for more service.
- f) Pastors who exercise authority by force and authoritarianism, rather than by the Word, who make their human words and ideas "words of God." These serve themselves and not God and the church. On the other hand, also there exist pastors who do not assume their authority and place before the congregation, which emanate from the Word of God itself.

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<sup>40</sup> *Book of Concord*, Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article VII and VIII, 28, p. 156.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, Treatise on the Power and the Primacy of the Pope, 26, p. 338.

<sup>42</sup> These difficulties are a collection presented by Rev. Cristian Rautenberg in his paper, *Ministry and Mission*, Cuarto Enrete, 2003.

- g) Pastors who are employees at the service of the congregation, to satisfy their wishes and desires, who must report regarding everything they do and every decision they make. On the other hand, there are also pastors who simply say what people want to hear.
- h) Pastors who do not have an opinion on matters of the congregation and the life of its members.
- i) The congregational life is based on the gifts of the pastor, where the pastor dominates and understands, these things are spoken and done, whereas those things that are outside of his reach are not permitted in the church.
- j) Members who rest in the pastoral office as sufficient for the development of the Mission, and thus “pay” someone to be “Christians” for them.
- k) The conception that the person of the pastor is what gives validity to the life of the congregation, or to its practices such as Baptism, the Lord’s Supper, the Sermon, worship services, etc.
- l) An analysis of the pastoral work based on his personal qualities such as sympathy, attractiveness, etc., and not based on his function by virtue of the office.

#### **4- The Missionary Perspective of the Church**

The pastor, with the congregation, is called to observe the context where they are located with the eyes of the Mission of God. It is necessary to put every happening of the church in this paradigm, so that everything that happens is put in this perspective, giving the true sense of community life.<sup>43</sup>

To see and move every activity of the church with the eyeglasses of the Mission of God signifies that:

- a) The church is for those who are sick, for those with needs, for those who suffer in life; not for those who feel “healthy,” who believe they have the right to be better persons than others. Both the believers and the unbelievers have the same need of Christ; there is no difference.
- b) Every program of the church has the objective of seeking the lost and showing the loving God, not necessarily to feed the structural machinery that finally

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<sup>43</sup> One of the difficulties that arises when putting everything in the perspective of the Mission of God is that the pastor and the congregation may feel comfortable and satisfied with minimal cultural activities. This happens in communities where there are not great expectations for the Sunday preaching and only once in a while the Eucharist is celebrated, where there is not much interest in entering the neighborhood, where there are not expectations of expansion, where while there are economic problems or some other problem, it is said: “We have the perspective of the Mission of God.”

institutionalizes and feeds itself, as a way of calming the collective conscience because “we have many activities.”<sup>44</sup> How much of the time of our community or ecclesiastical life do we lose in administration? If we think from the perspective of the maintenance of what already exists, we will never be involved in the Mission of God.<sup>45</sup>

- c) All the activities of the church are open to whoever comes, not only in theory but also especially in practice, so that commentaries such as, “this is only for the Lutherans,” or questions such as, “What is that person doing here if he is not from here?” are not heard. We need a proper reception for the visitors.<sup>46</sup> We think of special celebrations with the participation of friends, family, neighbors, etc., and many others where we can invite our dear ones who are all around us and who do not believe in Jesus Christ. Luther wrote: “. . . open doors continuously. . . so that daily more gentiles come and go and are converted . . . this is a promise concerning the expansion of the Church. That is what it means to have open doors, that the Church attends to the work of calling sinners to repentance, of preaching, or training, of teaching, of consoling, of absolving. Men enter into this church each day, just as they enter into Wittenberg today and are incorporated into this body by the Word.”<sup>47</sup>
- d) There exists a correct appreciation for the relationship between the pastoral office and the priesthood of all believers, where both are in a healthy tension, being differentiated by their office and not by ranks, making real sense to the community of God, where all have space to serve. In some contexts, the “professionalization of the pastor” has taken away the community dimension of the church of Jesus Christ.<sup>48</sup>
- e) It is contextualized, that is, it is pertinent and effective in the preaching of the Gospel, by responding to and making sense of the life of the people, who are of or arrive to the church, where they live and as they are. The Word of God is the basis of this work and should be interpreted by contextualizing it in the *now*.<sup>49</sup> The incarnate Christ is the model of contextualization, who motivates us to revive the roots with contemporary clothing.
- f) Let us see the world as God wants us to: “The world from an erroneous perspective of the church can be seen as that enemy from which we must

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<sup>44</sup> Many churches believe themselves to be Lutheran because they have: youth, women’s and men’s groups, as well as the unavoidable choir.

<sup>45</sup> Cristian Rautenberg, *Missional Perspective of the IELCHI*, Tercer Enrete, (ILB), 2002.

<sup>46</sup> It is important to note that any visitor, whether Lutheran or not, should be recognized. The pastor of a sister church in the U.S.A. said that the great majority of those who feel welcomed will return to the church on another occasion.

<sup>47</sup> WA 31 II, 506.6.

<sup>48</sup> Romans 12:5.

<sup>49</sup> David J. Hesselgrave proposes, as a source of Missiology, Revelation, Investigation and Reflection, as the principal sources for the study of contextualization (David J. Hesselgrave, *Op.Cit.*, p. 29-43).

defend ourselves, therefore we tend to concern ourselves more with maintenance and increasing all that we have. God wants us to see the world as a sea of opportunities for fishing. Jesus tells us to throw the nets in. This world is loved by a God of love who does not spare resources to accomplish his rescue, giving and sending his own Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who has seeking the lost as his primary mission.”<sup>50</sup> It is necessary, when looking at the community, to see the needs from “outside,” eliminating in the perspective of daily living, the old dichotomy between the spiritual world and the material world, a dichotomy that has been brought by pietism and is reflected in charismatic groups, and many times, is planted in our communities, as also other such forms.

- g) Let us do theology in context. The unity of faith and doctrine that we possess as confessional and sister churches does not keep us from reflecting in context. Often we do theology as specialists,<sup>51</sup> where the missionary perspective does not fit, since it is a principle that is lived, not only enunciated, where communities are absent; therefore, it does not respond to the needs and questions of the context.
- h) Let us be faithful to the truth. In a postmodern world “Everything that sounds faithful to the biblical teachings will be an object to be attacked on its part. Rationalism, humanism, universalism, orientalism, gnosticism, agnosticism scientism, hedonism, materialism, naturalism, etc., etc., in their extreme versions, will undermine the fundamentals of the faith, with the effect of eliminating God and his church from the face of the land, to replace it with a “natural religion,” and “god-light,” of easy acceptance, and at the service of occult interests.”<sup>52</sup> We must raise the flag of justification by faith as the central doctrine of the Holy Scriptures, whether by preaching the love of God in Christ Jesus and administering the sacraments, or by being the prophetic voice in our environment.
- i) Let Theological Education be centered on the Mission.<sup>53</sup> In our theological institutions, normally *Theology of Missions* is one of many courses that are in the curriculum, and is usually part of the Practical Department. The present challenge is that Mission should be a part of the overarching objectives, that is, that all curricular segments would be seen from the viewpoint of God (*mission Dei*). Our world presents us with new pressures for the church and her ministries. It is for this reason that, as never before in the history of the church, Theological Education should respond efficiently, taking up the challenge of forming men and women who are capable of serving our complex society. Secondly, in its attempt to serve the church it should take up the advocacy role of accompanying it in the fulfillment of its mission. It must

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<sup>50</sup> Cristian Rautenberg, *Missional Perspective of the IELCHI*, Tercer Enrete, (IBL), 2002.

<sup>51</sup> They are necessary for the church.

<sup>52</sup> Carlos Nagel, *Mission in the Confessional Lutheran Church*, Tercer Enrete, (IBL), 2002, p. 8.

<sup>53</sup> Theological Education is a part of the Mission of God.

develop the capability of understanding the context, of understanding the symbolic systems associated with this context and of interpreting and using these for the benefit of the Mission of God, and of its instrument, the Church in the local context.

### **Conclusion**

We must continue to grow in reflecting upon our practical life in the church, forming pastors who serve under the perspective of the *Missio Dei*, as well as providing theological education for the whole church in the exercise of the Ministry of the Word. God has granted to us the privilege of serving him in theological formation and gives us the joy to do it because he has already fulfilled his Mission in us, which motivates the full life, to a theological formation and significant practical application for the benefit of His holistic mission.

I conclude with the words of my colleague in service:

Our Mission is the Mission of God, and we are an important part of it, but when we are not dedicating ourselves to the Mission of God of “seeking the lost” (Luke 19:10), and of nourishing and equipping all the disciples in Christ to “make disciples,” we lose the reason for which we were, as a church, created by God. A multitude of mission societies arise, many times, providentially to fill a void. . . . We are conscious that this is a path we cannot avoid; the Mission of God is done with us or in spite of us. A congregation that grows is centered in the promulgation of the word of God and the administration of the sacraments, be this with all the means available.<sup>54</sup>

Rev. Sergio Adrian Fritzler  
Director, Lutheran Bible Institute  
**Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Republic of Chile**  
Translated by Douglas Rutt

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<sup>54</sup> Cristian Rautenberg, *Mission Perspective of the IELCHI*, Tercer Enrete, (IBL), 2002.

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