

*The
Government Chaplaincy
An Appraisal*



F. R. Kuske

*The
Government Chaplaincy
An Appraisal*

*by
Prof. Carl Schweppke*

*Published by resolution of the
Ev. Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin
and Other States,
convened at Watertown, Wisconsin,
August 4-11, 1943,
for distribution to all delegates.*

**Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Library
11831 N. Seminary Drive. 65W**

Madison, Wisconsin

The Government Chaplaincy

In dealing with the problem of providing the men and women in the Armed Forces of our Country with the Word of God, we are well aware of our obligation to "preach the Gospel to every creature." We are not only conscious of this obligation, but we are eager to meet it, and to meet it as fully and as extensively as our Christian consciences and as our means will permit.

We are also cognizant of the fact that this preaching of the Gospel need not and can not always be done orally, by a man in the public ministry who has personal contact with the one to be taught. Sometimes such preaching is impossible or impracticable. Epistles, printed sermons or correspondence will then have to serve and may then serve very satisfactorily.

Neither must we forget that the office of the ministry is not absolutely necessary in the sense that without it no one can be saved. The incumbent merely administers the means through which grace and forgiveness are offered to, and conferred on, men. These means are effective "without benefit of clergy." The power to save resides neither in the person nor in the office, but in the means of grace. (Rom. 1:16.)

In attempting to provide the men and women in the Armed Forces with the Word, it must be our object to bring the Word to as many as possible. It must be the Word in all of its truth and purity (we dare preach no other), and the means of conveying it must be in keeping with the "call" which the Lord gave us to preach the Word. If one of our pastors can do that in person without being hindered or restricted in the proper ministrations of this office, we should be glad and willing to have him serve in this capacity. If we find that he can not serve without such qualifying restrictions, we must content ourselves with other means of preaching. Our chief concern must be the conveying of the Gospel and not the vehicle by which it is conveyed; and whatever vehicle

*use many of
be hindered
+ restricted i
various wa
is essential
- do we, they
can preach*

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Library

11831 N. Seminary Drive. 65W

Madison, Wisconsin

we employ must be in keeping with the Scriptures and with the tenor of the Scriptures.

One of the methods of preaching that we must consider in this instance is that made possible through the Army and Navy chaplaincies. This should be a consideration free from all sentimentalism and personal bias. It must be carried out on the basis of the Scriptures and the regulations laid down for chaplains by the War and Navy Departments. The latest of these, so far as we know, is designated as TM 16—205, dated April 21, 1941. (Hereafter simply called the Manual.)

We must assume that the regulations mean what they say, that they were intended to be understood as they were written, since we have no printed evidence that they are to be interpreted in any other way or that certain chaplains are exempt from any one of them. Until we have such official evidence, we must take the Manual as it reads. This is obligatory for us also because when we were asked to recommend men for this office, we had no notification to the effect that these regulations would not apply in full also to our chaplains. Any other assumption or hope on our part would therefore be unwarranted and delusive.

Neither are we facing the issue squarely if we support the office, sponsor it, and then seek to justify such attitude and action by merely adding that "in the work of the Army chaplain there are many dangers of becoming lax in practice — that the chaplain will have to wrestle with many problems and difficulties in order to comply with both the Army regulations and the Word of God (Isn't this a suggestion that the chaplain is confronted with the problem of serving two masters?) — that on account of the new situations which a chaplain will frequently face the questions of casuistry will be many — that the danger of acquiring unionistic leanings also seems great."

The question we face is a very pointed one: Are the Lutheran ministry and the office of a chaplain in the Armed Forces compatible? Let us look at the problem from the angle of THE CALL.

A

What Is Expected of the Chaplain?

From the Manual we note that the chaplaincy is a religious ministry created and instituted by the government (Page 3, Sec. 3). It not only makes room for the Church to administer the means of grace in the Armed Forces, but it also lays down the duties of this ministry, on the performance of which hinge the appointment to and the continuance in this office.

With respect to the chaplain's duties, the Manual makes several sweeping statements. One of these is found on Page 6, Sec. 10, where we are told about the school for chaplains. "The mission of the school is to give chaplains such special training as may be calculated to fit them to minister in a comprehensive, liberal, and efficient way to the moral and religious needs of the military service." On Page 9, b, we read of the chaplain, "He should be devoid of mannerisms and fads, should be broadminded and sympathetic."

In these sections the general policy according to which chaplains are to operate is laid down. Liberal — Broadminded! When those gentlemen say that, they know what they mean, and we know it. At least we have known it. These terms are commonly used in and about various churches in America; their practice is cut to that pattern, as is also their preaching. When a chaplain is told that he is expected to conduct his office in that fashion, he is expected to know what that means.

What would we say if one of our congregations issued a CALL like that? The Lutheran Church, especially the Synodical Conference, has always been called narrow. And we are narrow; we must be. The way of life is narrow. Even the very first principle, that the Bible is the inspired, infallible Word of God, is by the masses considered narrow. Our Lutheran ministry has always trembled at the very thought of being considered liberal and broadminded, and this trembling is justified because in church circles such as ours these terms spell laxity and indifference. They mean the same thing to many non-church-men too. Since when do we sub-

scribe to these terms or at least tacitly accept them as being of no account?

When one enters on a chaplaincy, he does it with the full knowledge of what thoughts these two terms (liberal and broadminded) raise in the public mind. He also does it after knowing beforehand that this is to be his policy. It is very doubtful that he would be accepted if he, before entering on that office, would declare that he can not conform to such requirements. If everything else about the office were above criticism, how could we accept it without first making such a declaration? Or could we accept the position with the undeclared intention of not adhering to these demands? When we accept it without objection to the required liberality and broadmindedness, every one has the right to assume that we subscribe to that kind of policy and principle. The government, particularly in this instance, certainly feels that it is dealing with men who can be taken at their word.

That liberality and broadmindedness are intended is also evident from the very situation in which a chaplain will be placed — with some regiment, within a certain camp area, aboard some ship. He has men of all faiths and of none. He dare not push his denomination to the foreground; he dare not publicly find fault with any other; he must let every one think that what he has believed so far is as good as any one else's belief; he dare not become sectarian, even in the best sense of the word. If that does not demand liberality and broadmindedness what does it demand?

Some one may remark that the regulations also state, Manual Page 18, b, "It is clearly implied that their profession as clergymen obligates them to the performance of definite religious and ethical duties to be carried out in conformity with the teachings of their respective denominational beliefs." Or on Page 11, Sec. 16: "In ecclesiastical matters the chaplain conforms to the requirements and practice of the particular denomination to which he belongs."

These statements, however, must be understood in the light of all the regulations and in the spirit and the tenor of the same. The words "liberal" and "broadminded" still stand.

They precede these quotations. Should the latter not then be evaluated in the light of what precedes them? If these two words carried little or no weight, then why a special school for chaplains, a school which is to fit them "to minister in a liberal way."

Isn't it true that in ordinary times we would throw up our hands in holy horror if such conditions were laid down for our ministry? Why is it that they now seem so unimportant? Why do some now attempt to interpret them so optimistically? Has our sense of values undergone a change? Was Christ ever called liberal and broadminded? Should we, His ambassadors, permit ourselves to be so branded? Dare we, even if we as chaplains could be as narrow as the Scriptures ask us to be, publicly identify ourselves with a "ministry" that is publicly considered and asked to be both liberal and broadminded? Certainly a CALL is not divine when issued on such prerequisites.

Preaching

A CALL to the Lutheran ministry carries with it a very definite obligation. It requires the recipient at all times to perform his duties in accordance with the Bible and the Lutheran Confessions. First, he must preach the Word in all its truth and purity for the salvation of men. 2 Tim. 3:16: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." In Titus 1:9-11, we have: "Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, especially they of the circumcision; whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake." A pastor must be able to say with Paul, Acts 20:27: "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." See also Matth. 28:20 and 2 Cor. 2:2. No one among us will question these assertions.

How then can we submit to the following regulation, Manual Page 19, c, "It is usual to conduct at least two services for

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Library

11831 N. Seminary Drive. 65W

Mequon, Wisconsin

the command each Sunday, no matter what the chaplain's denominational allegiance may be. Such services as are required by the tenets of his church normally come first, and, second, such additional services of a general character as may be calculated to instruct, to give inspirational incentive, to improve the moral standards of the worshippers, and tend to inculcate in all a reverence for God and truth."

Add to this the statement in the Manual, Page 19, d 3: "The chaplain is the servant of God for all, and no narrow sectarian spirit should color his utterance, nor should his personal work assist only a special group." Evidently this is insisted upon. If it were not, why should the Office of the Chief of Chaplains reiterate it in a special bulletin, dated January 15, 1943: "The work of the chaplain is very much the same as that of a pastor of a church, with the exception that he is responsible for the religious care of all the men, regardless of denomination, instead of the men of a particular faith. The Protestant chaplain arranges for worship services for Catholic and Jewish men; Catholic and Jewish chaplains do the same for men not of their faiths. When a soldier is assigned to a permanent unit, the chaplain without favoritism because of national origin or religious denomination becomes his pastor, his confidant, and his friend."

This should settle the question for us. Taking all these directives into consideration, how can a chaplain preach the whole counsel of God as we want a minister to preach it and as a minister of ours must preach it? In our case, the soldiers would either be forced to accept Lutheranism from our lips, though we must step carefully that it will not be recognized as Lutheranism, particularly in the second service, or we are forced to become Methodists unto the Methodists, etc. In other words, by these regulations we are bound and limited in our preaching over and beyond the bounds set for us by Scripture, and that is something we can, under no conditions, submit to.

A certain chaplain has been quoted as having said "that it is his general custom to deliver essentially the same sermon in the general service that he delivered in the Lutheran

service, ordinarily making only such changes as are required to accommodate the sermon to the lower level of previous instruction and experience of the congregation at the general service." This chaplain is going even farther than the government expects him to. The government well knows that denominational tenets exist. It assumes that a chaplain in his denominational service will enthusiastically make full use of all his denomination stands for. It grants him that privilege, but it also knows that when he speaks at the general service, he normally needs to be warned to tread carefully and to shed his denominational garments. It appears as if a chaplain who uses "essentially the same sermon" for both services is not quite true either to his denomination or to the general congregation or to both.

It is also quite doubtful whether a Lutheran pastor can, with a good conscience, arrange "worship services for Catholic and Jewish men." This implies more than merely notifying pastors of other denominations when their services are requested by patients in hospitals. Of course we comply with such requests when these men ask for their God-appointed shepherds, but when it comes to arranging worship services for such, we are furthering Catholicism or whatever it may be. Thereby we become unfaithful to our obligation of "exhorting the gainsayers," of stopping the mouths of "deceivers" who "subvert whole houses" (Titus 1:9-11). What about the "instruction and correction" (2 Tim. 3:16) we owe those in our charge? And the regiment or whatever unit we are assigned to by the government would constitute our charge ("a servant of God for all").

In arranging such worship services for all the others, we can not help giving soldiers and the public the impression that what these others have to offer meets with our approval also. We dare not say that it doesn't; that would be sectarian. Instead of stopping other mouths, we are having ours stopped. Surely we don't fit into that kind of program. *no difference between us & them*

Aside from the denominational service which the chaplain may conduct as he sees fit, the religious mixture of his congregation in the second service and the regulations laid down

no dealing with love & fear of God - Christ as foundation & backbone is a force - see results of moralizing too - doing

with respect to it plainly tell us that all a chaplain should do there is to moralize. The entire atmosphere and background force us to that conclusion. Only that can be non-sectarian. Our ministry must always have more than that to offer.

Those of Another Flock

- except when asked personally.

By his CALL, a pastor is assigned to a particular flock in a particular community. Acts 20:28: "Take heed unto yourselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers to feed the church of God." Toward others not belonging to his flock but to the flock of another, the pastor has no responsibility nor should he assume any. A pastor who interferes or meddles with the members of another's flock is a busybody (1 Peter 4:15). A pastor has no right to minister to those who are members of other recognized churches, and an office that compels him to do that compels him to violate his divine CALL.

The chaplain, by government decree, has been made the pastor of a military or naval unit. We might say that he has been issued to that unit, like food or clothing. Every such unit contains men of many faiths and probably some of none. Our men in such units are still members of their home congregations, still Lutherans. That holds good too for the Methodists and others. Now the chaplain becomes the pastor of all of these, irrespective of their denominational allegiance. "He is the servant of God for all."

In addition to that, he is told, Manual, Page 35, Sec. 39: "Visits of a pastoral nature should be made by the chaplain to the families of all the military personnel who reside within or near the military reservation. . . . This function of the chaplain's office is frequently overlooked or slighted, but the duty is in keeping with that most important part of ministerial work, namely, pastoral calling, and should not be neglected."

These are to be "pastoral visits," not just inquiries as to health or living conditions. Again these are services he is to render to families of many faiths. Another essayist, in supporting the chaplaincy, here replied that so far as the soldiers

are concerned they are not compelled to come. Perhaps not, but we offer a further statement from the Manual, Page 35, Sec. 59: "The chaplain should also call upon the enlisted men in the barracks to keep up their interest in the religious and moral work."

If it is voluntary for men whether they want to come or not, it is not voluntary for the chaplain whether he wants to go to them or not. It is his "duty" to make these visits — pastoral visits. They "should not be neglected." He must counsel and guide them regardless of creed or sect.

We offer as further evidence an excerpt from an article written by Mr. Stanley High, for the American Magazine, November, 1942. Our quotation is found on Page 133 of that issue: "Aboard ship and in battle the Navy chaplain's station is with the chief surgeon. There, whatever his faith, he is expected to offer religious ministry to all those who are badly wounded. For serving men of faiths other than their own, the chaplains are given meticulous instructions."

"I am not a priest," says the non-Catholic chaplain, Protestant or Jew, to the Catholic, "but I have talked to a Father, and he asked me to say that since he can not possibly be here I should read this prayer called the Act of Contrition. Will you repeat it with me. . . . The Father also asked me to give you this rosary, which he has blessed for you, to keep, and to assure you that he grants you his blessings." X

This is not a rumor that Mr. High heard and then passed on. His article has the endorsement of the Chief of Chaplains of the U. S. Army and of the Chief of Chaplains of the U. S. Navy. Their endorsement appears on Page 132 of the same issue of this magazine. Furthermore, if this were not the expected practice, or if some chaplains can and are avoiding this practice, the public is entitled to know it. So far we have read no denial.

TIME, June 21, 1943, Page 77, offers this in speaking of the course given Navy chaplains: "Instructions range from naval etiquette to how a Christian chaplain should minister

to a dying Jew . . . Many a Navy sky pilot wonders out loud how he can go back to strictly denominational ministering after the war." TIME also says of this course that it is very broadening. No doubt. (Regulations call for broad-mindedness — Manual, Page 9, b.)

THE WANDERER, a national Catholic weekly, published in St. Paul, Minnesota, in the issue of August 19, 1943, on Page 2, brings the following: "If I had known how helpless an Episcopalian is as a chaplain, how little he can minister to his own and how little his conscientious scruples are respected, nothing could have induced me to leave my flock at home. This is quoted from the LIVING CHURCH, once organ of the Anglo-Catholic party in the Episcopal Church."

"Here are some of the difficulties specified by the LIVING CHURCH: There is the case of a camp of 70,000 men in which only one distinctive Episcopalian service is held at 6:30 A. M. In this camp there are three Episcopalian chaplains. In another camp, the senior chaplain, a Baptist, refuses to allow a Communion Service of the Episcopal Church to be advertised under any other caption than 'General Protestant Communion.' . . . In yet another camp a Methodist chaplain held a midnight 'mass,' and, under threats, ordered the Episcopalian chaplain to assist him in administering the chalice."

The following paragraph is taken from the yearbook, 1943, Ascension Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Pastor E. S. Hjortland reporting: "There are at present five chaplains here at the camp. One is a Catholic, another a Jew, and the other three are Protestants. We work together in a friendly, helpful manner. For example, Friday morning I found several Catholic boys in quarantine, and I got Catholic prayer books for them. One evening a Jewish rabbi was ill, so I preached the sermon for his men. I even kept my hat on during the sermon to conform to their traditions. This gives you an idea how adjustable we must be to meet the spiritual needs of our men."

These quotations indicate that others read the regulations just as we do, that they conform to them as we assume they

must or should, that we have in no respect stretched the letter of the regulations in our interpretation. To repeat, if there are chaplains who are exempt from all this, they owe the Church a public statement to that effect.

The argument that we should not deny spiritual counsel to a dying man would stand provided we were free to counsel him as we see fit, but these instructions, and meticulous ones at that, show that we are not free. "I am not a priest, but I have talked to a Father."

If all this is not spiritually looking after those of another flock, we should like to know what it is. Again we ask: "What about Acts 20:28 and 1 Peter 4:15?"

Burials

From the regulations it appears as if the chaplain is quite free to baptize and to administer Holy Communion according to the tenets of his church, but in the matter of burials the situation is entirely different.

We hold, and a CALL to the Lutheran ministry requires, that a pastor should not officiate at the funeral of a person concerning whom at the time of his death there was no evidence of his having been a Christian, or who at the time of his death was a member of another flock, either orthodox or heterodox. The Church teaches that a Christian is one who believes in Jesus Christ as his Savior. The Church has never disavowed such dead (Num. 20:29; Matth. 14:12). Those who have died in the Lord have not been cut off from the Church; they still belong to the Communion of Saints, and therefore the Church reverently commits their bodies to the earth. Only for such can a Christian pastor officiate.

But what choice have chaplains? Army Regulations, February 21, 1941, Page 19, Sec. 6, state: "Chaplains will conduct appropriate burial services at the interment of members of the military service, active and retired, and for the families of these when requested." Our Manual, Page 24, 6, adds, "In case relatives or friends of the deceased desire the rites of a fraternal society in addition to the military ceremony, courtesy

initially U.S. Christian Confusion & our present practice. dictates that the chaplain make preliminary arrangements for such co-operation or division of the ceremony as may seem practicable. No hard or fast rule should be adhered to. The expressed desire of the bereaved should at all times be given first consideration." *"Let the dead bury their dead"*

Note the words: "When requested" — "make preliminary arrangements for such co-operation or division of ceremony" — "first consideration."

On this issue, a certain chaplain, referred to once before, is reported to have replied *"He is only one of thousands"*

- 1) "That he has never been compelled to give Christian burial to an unbeliever since the regulations do not so provide."
- 2) "That the regulations call for an appropriate ceremony and that it is left to the chaplain to decide what is appropriate in every case." (We thought that the expressed desires of the bereaved should at all times be given first consideration.)
- 3) "That he has conducted a number of soldier burials, the ceremony being usually restricted to a few words at the grave in the presence of less than half a dozen men, and that at such funerals was never asked to and never did speak of the glorious hope of the resurrection as we do at our burial services."
- 4) "If a chaplain would consider it appropriate to omit all reference to religion and simply have a patriotic address of a few minutes it would fully satisfy the regulations."

We agree with the chaplain's interpretation of the regulations. We had never read them in any other way. We also thank him for assuring us that a chaplain does function at military funerals when requested. At one time such a statement on our part was challenged. But both he and the one who quoted him missed the point. We never quibbled about what kind of burial service a chaplain offers. Our point was

that he buries his men, irrespective of creed or denominational affiliation or a complete absence of both. Apparently then there are no burials at which a chaplain can not function, because he can always conduct himself in a manner he considers appropriate under the circumstances, which at times might restrict him to a patriotic address.

We are astonished by the complacent confession of this chaplain and much more by the attempt that has been made to defend such practice. If a chaplain at such burials can not conform to the Word of God, what is he conforming to? For the moment, while he is officiating, he must cease to be a pastor. That can't be done. The pastor represents the Lord and His Church, also at the grave. Otherwise there would be no reason for his being there. He surely doesn't think that the bereaved will be comforted and satisfied merely by his presence. His being there and his speaking there, regardless of what he says, assure the bereaved that the Church buried their man, that a preacher spoke at the funeral, and that thereby both the preacher and the Church publicly expressed approval and agreement with the life and faith of the deceased. If you doubt that, ask the public.

If a chaplain tells himself that at a particular burial he is not functioning as a Christian pastor, the truth is not in him, and, besides, he is misleading the bereaved, who want him there for no other reason. If it were not for that, the undertaker, or, in the case of the army, a corporal or sergeant could serve just as well. Either of the latter doubtless have known the deceased better than did the chaplain, and either could add the necessary dignity to the procedure.

That any Lutheran pastor (and chaplains are pastors with divine calls — so we are told) can conduct burials in the prescribed and described manner is something we can not harmonize with our conception of the Christian ministry, nor were we ever before asked to harmonize it. In fact, pastors who conducted such burials only once spent many an uncomfortable hour trying to explain to their brethren.

A Christian pastor can function only at funerals of Christians. When he oversteps that line, he both strengthens unbelief and indifference and gives serious offence. Matth. 8:22; Jer. 22:18-19. He violates his divine CALL. For this reason also the chaplaincy is not the kind of ministry the Lord prescribes.

B

Who Confers the Office on the Chaplain?

The Manual, Page 6, Sec. 12, states: "The fundamental purpose of the office of the Army chaplain may be briefly stated as follows:

- a) To provide facilities for the public religious worship of the military personnel.
- b) To give spiritual ministrations, moral counsel, and religious guidance to those under military jurisdiction.
- c) To be the exponent in the Military Establishment of the religious motive as an incentive to right thinking and right acting.
- d) To promote character building and contentment in the U. S. Army by precept and example and thus add greater efficiency to those engaged in the military defense of the country."

Thus we note that the chaplain represents "religion" in the Army, he is to preach it, to live it, to promote it (no specific religion, of course). For that reason the candidate must be "regularly ordained, duly accredited by and in good standing with some religious denomination, etc. He must be actively engaged in the ministry as the principal occupation in life and be credited with three years' experience therein." (Manual Page 7, Sec. 13.) *why was need to train chaplains first for their work??*

Since Army chaplains are expected to be people who have served in the public ministry and are looked upon by the government as such as are serving in that ministry while functioning as chaplains, we know and believe that such a man must have a divine CALL, for without it no man can be such

a minister. We can take for granted too that we are all agreed that such a CALL can issue only from the Church. God commanded His Church to preach the Gospel (Matth. 28:19-20), and only the Church, because of that command, is qualified to call and to send forth ministers of the Gospel. "Wherever the Church is, there is the authority to administer the Gospel. Therefore it is necessary for the Church to retain the authority to call, elect, and ordain ministers. And this authority is a gift which in reality is given to the Church, as Paul testifies to the Ephesians 4:8, when he says, He ascended, He gave gifts to men. And among the gifts especially belonging to men he enumerates pastors and teachers." (Smalcald Articles — Triglot Page 523.)

To call ministers of the Gospel is not the function of the secular government or of any of its agencies. Government is the product of the creational activity of God, not a spiritual entity created by the Holy Ghost through the Gospel. It is a natural institution, not a spiritual one. Its functions therefore lie in the sphere of creation, not in the sphere of salvation. Its duty as well as its goal is the well-being of man here on earth. It is not to be concerned with the saving of souls.

In studying the Manual, however, one must definitely conclude that the "office of the chaplain" is a "religious ministry" created by the government and conferred on the individual by that same government. Our Manual, Page 7, Sec. 13, 3, states: "Complete information for prospective candidates is found in AR 605-30." In the latter, Page 8, we find this statement: "The Adjutant General will cause appointments to be rendered in accordance with recommendations approved by the Secretary of War . . . Appointees will be given a reasonable time to accept appointments and to report for duty." That place of duty the government will assign to him, not the Church. He will be placed at some Army post. He may be transferred often by the government (possibly to succeed some Methodist and then to be succeeded by a Baptist) or not at all. The government will advance him in rank if such advancement is warranted; it will pay his salary and

make sure that he understands his prescribed duties (the regulations). Where he will work, how he will work, upon whom he will work — the government tells him, not the Church.

The Manual is very clear on this point. The Adjutant General makes the selection, and the appointee, after accepting, is expected to report for duty within a reasonable time. That closes this part of the proceedings. The appointee is commissioned to go to work. Nothing further is necessary, and whatever may follow is merely incidental and not pertinent to the appointment that has been made.

The fact that candidates for this office are first endorsed by some religious denomination (merely a statement that the man is in good standing) and that for instance (See Proceedings of the 37th Regular Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, 1938, Page 159, A, 4), "after the candidate has received notification of his appointment by the government, the Commission will issue him a call," in no way alters the statement that the government makes the man a chaplain or gives him his status and his office. It corroborates it. Read once more: "After the candidate has received notification of his appointment by the government." He has the office before he has even this delayed "Call." No one can deny that.

Conf: Recommendation given by Syn. Officers does not constitute Call. Call comes fr. Christian congregation

It takes more than a stretch of the imagination or of the regulations to suppose that the chaplaincy as such is contingent on a CALL from the Church, or that a CALL, issued belatedly by the Church, in any way affects the office. The government makes him overseer over a definite flock. That is not as God intended it (Acts 20:28). On this score therefore the Lutheran ministry and the chaplaincy are incompatible, not identical, and for us impossible.

When some one in reply to this contention wrote that he "had a CALL before he had a position," he was evidently trying to circumvent the point made above that the chaplain has a position before he has a CALL. Why then give him a belated "CALL," which, to continue, would be a second one?

That kind of statement is not Scriptural and it is not Lutheran, as it is plainly shown by Walther, Past. Page 65, and Fritz, Page 62.

How is the Office Obtained?

Pastors must be called, sent — Romans 10:15: "How shall they preach except they be sent?" The emphasis is on being sent, not on arranging it so that one will be sent and not on the sending of one's self. In order to be legitimate, a CALL must come to the candidate without any solicitation on his part, or, to quote, for brevity's sake, Fritz, Pastoral Theology, Page 37, last paragraph, "without one's own initiative." At the top of the next page he quotes Luther: "Remain where you are until you are called; do not seek another CALL; do not impose yourself on others; for your proficiency is not so great that it will burst open your belly . . . If God desires to have you, He will seek you out, yea, even send an angel from heaven to lead you where He desires to have you." (Ad Ps. 8:3.)

Again Luther says, Kirchenpostille, Day of St. Andrew — taken from Fritz, Page 38: "Do not limit God in reference to purpose, time or place; for where you do not desire to go, there He will compel you to go, and where you should like to be, there you shall not be."

1 Tim. 3:1 has been advanced as support for the contention that a man may do something about obtaining a CALL. "If a man desireth the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work." That particular essayist remarked: "Where the English uses the word 'desireth' twice, the Greek first uses the word 'oregetai,' which means to reach out for something. Paul speaks of a man who desires something and tries to get it, and while Luther says that a minister should wait until God takes him away from his place, that does not mean that a minister must do nothing about it." But that is exactly what it means!

He continues: "When a minister feels that on account of circumstances brought on with or without his own fault it would be better for his congregation to have a new minister, there is nothing unscriptural in an endeavor on his part to get

another CALL." In the subject under discussion it is a particular CALL, not any CALL that the Lord may see fit to send to some pastor in distress. And 1 Tim. 3:1 does not apply here at all and can't be made to apply to a particular CALL in a particular field. That passage speaks of the ministry in general. The essayist just referred to also wrote, "I think it is hard to prove that applying for the office of the ministry is a practice frowned on by Scripture." That is beside the point. We are dealing with a specific CALL in the ministry.

Every appointee to an Army chaplaincy must first make application (isn't that soliciting?). AR 605-30, Page 2: "Application for appointment should be made on the prescribed form for application for commission in the regular Army." In the Proceedings of the Missouri Synod, 1938, Page 159, A, 1, we find this: "Every pastor desiring a chaplaincy in the Army or in the Navy must first apply to the commission for the proper application to the War and Navy Department."

We put our finger on these words: "application" and "desiring a chaplaincy." Certainly we can not ignore these assertions which mark a procedure that dare not enter into a CALL if it is to be legitimate and unsullied, and any other kind we can not support. To interpret these terms as "volunteering" smacks of an attempt to sugarcoat two very clear words, which, in any other setting or on any other issue, no one would so interpret.

Neither must we forget that a man who volunteers is judging himself fit for whatever he volunteers for. It will be most difficult to keep selfishness, a possible gain in personal prestige and prominence, and emotionalism out of such contemplation. Those who can do that are, as Luther says, rare birds.

Any one who approaches this phase of the problem with an open mind should realize that here too the Lutheran ministry and the chaplaincy are incompatible. Such steps as are required to become a chaplain are frowned on by Scripture and by the Lutheran Church, and, under ordinary

circumstances, the one so called would be subject to investigation and severe rebuke.

Who Terminates the CALL?

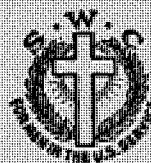
Since it is God who calls pastors, the congregations being only the instruments for this purpose, neither the congregations nor any one else has the right to dismiss them unless they preach false doctrine, willfully neglect their duties, are guilty of offensive conduct, are no longer able to perform their duties, or unless the position is terminated by the Church. Titus 1:9; 1 Tim. 3:1-7; 1 Tim. 2:2; 1 Cor. 4:1-2.

Aside from these exceptions, their CALL keeps them in their sphere of activity until the Lord places them in another through another CALL. In the first instance, the congregation acts for God in dismissing a minister, and, in the second, the congregation is the agency by which the Lord sets him to work in another field. It is the Lord who acts, through the congregation.

But what have we when the Adjutant General places a chaplain on the reserve list or discharges him from the service altogether, either because he is no longer needed or because he has failed to meet expectations, though he may have been very conscientious in adhering to the doctrines and confessions of his church?

The fact that a chaplain's CALL is terminated by the government, and not by the Lord through a congregation of believers, makes the chaplain an hireling and a servant of man. All this is contrary to the doctrine of the CALL, and any one knowingly submitting to it is guilty of such contradiction.

Viewing the entire problem on the basis of what has been shown, keeping the military setting with all its complications, implications and directions, as well as the general tenor and atmosphere of the religious program outlined in the Manual, in mind, we can not help concluding that the CALL of the chaplain is far from being a clearly divine one. So long as we can not gain the assurance that it is in complete harmony with the Scriptures, we can have no part in it.



Spiritual Welfare Commission

Ev. Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin
and Other States

1916 E. Thomas Ave., Milwaukee "11", Wis.



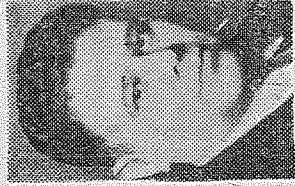
Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Library

1121 N. Seminary Drive, 65W

Mequon, Wisconsin

George E. Sokolsky— Explains The Duties Of Navy Chaplains

Some time ago I wrote a piece on Navy chaplains and brought down on my head an enormous mail in which the Navy and its chaplains were excoriated. It seemed as though instead of being men of God, the Navy chaplains had become the disciples of the devil. Having no sense of my own perfections, knowing that occasionally even I make a mistake, I felt that this matter required some further investigation.



The bills of particulars contained in this voluminous correspondence boiled down to two points: One, that chaplains of one denomination were asked to do God's ministry according to the rites of a faith in which they did not believe; secondly, that chaplains were called upon to perform tasks outside their sphere, such as the supervision of dances, advising boys regarding their love life, and so on. Ordinarily, I should have regarded these objections merely as differences of opinion as to the character of religious ministrations—a field for a vast variety of concepts. The language of these complaints, however, was unbelievably vituperative and vindictive. There-

Sokolsky fore, I looked into the matter further and found the following to be the case:

* * *
THE NAVY IS THE FLEET.
The fleet means ships. The Navy thinks in terms of a single ship. The chaplain is assigned to a ship, and that ship is a miniature America. It represents a cross section of the population. It comprises many ideologies and usually carries Catholics, Protestants and Jews aboard.

The chaplain is charged with the responsibility of serving the entire complement. His task is to inspire them by his own example, by his outlook, by his devotion to the American way of life and his love of God. He is to encourage the men to think in the terms of the highest and noblest, and is to direct their hearts to home, its virtues and its hopes. To accomplish this end a good chaplain regards all his men as brothers. He visits them at their stations on the ship, in the galley and ward-rooms. He joins the men at play and in every activity which makes up the life of his parish-ioners.

It matters not whether the chaplain on the ship is Protestant, Catholic or Jewish—he is "the" chaplain of the ship. He is the spiritual leader of this heterogeneous community. He arranges for general service on Sunday in which all could join in praise and prayer to the Father who created them all. The chaplain is required, in addition, to give particular services to the particular group which he represents. The shore stations follow the same plan. In other words, a chaplain is to be prepared to serve all in a command.

lain on a ship is Catholic, he would serve Catholics, Protestants and Jews, and in addition would serve his particular group by hearing confessions and celebrating mass. Upon arrival in port he would invite a Protestant chaplain aboard, and if none is available, a local Protestant clergyman, so that the Protestants might have a special service all their own. He feels duty bound to do that. He knows that it is his responsibility to care for the Protestant lads. He does the same for the Jewish men. What is true on a ship is true in a Marine unit in training or in action. The same principle prevails at shore stations.

Obviously, the Army does not face the same problem that the Navy does. The Army can take along a Jewish, Catholic and Protestant clergyman—all three of them—with each contingent. That would be pretty difficult on a ship and therefore the Navy has developed its own particular methods. To me, this is one of the most glorious expressions of living religion. I glory at the thought of a Jewish boy discovering that a priest or a Protestant minister can say the Kaddish for him and I glory in a Catholic or Protestant boy discovering that a rabbi can say the Lord's Prayer.

I am interested in this one additional fact: Although I often receive letters from boys in our armed services, not one wrote complaining of my article on the Navy chaplains. Apparently the sailors and Marines are satisfied with their ministrations.

(Copyright, 1944, King Features Syndicate, Inc.)

* * *
ASSUMING THAT A CHAP-

THE LUTHERAN WITNESS

The "Chaplain" on the Home Front

The man of whom we are speaking is just about the "forgotten man" of these days. No, he doesn't wear a uniform—just the ordinary clothing. Never is he given a second glance, unless he happens to be a young man, and then it is that querulous glance: "Well, why aren't you in the Army?"

This "chaplain" goes on no special maneuvers; he is in "action" all the time—in those places where he is most needed, and that despite the fact that there is less gas for the "going." He will never have the opportunity to work overseas; he must work amid the same scenery and that without benefit of transfer. Like the regular chaplain, he, too, has the care of "casualties"—broken-hearted mothers, worried fathers, lonely wives, empty homes, and the hundreds of moral "casualties." When the Army or Navy chaplain has finished his work in reporting "killed in action," this "chaplain" must carry on—in another home "left with only a memory."

He will never face the withering fire of the machine gun nor hear the drone of bombers and P-38's, but in his own "field of action" he faces the withering onslaughts of juvenile delinquency, worldliness, and greed. There are no military bands with their martial airs to spur him on—patiently, silently he goes about, battling the forces of evil.

Like his brother in the armed forces, he, too, sees his "soldiers" leave the home "camp" or finds hundreds from other "camps" coming into his "field of action," expecting and demanding his services. He is expected to be on the front line in the battle against sin; he is usually Johnny-on-the-spot in every emergency; his "duties" are multiplied over and over by the war; there is no one to relieve him when the body is wearied by the

never-ending battle to guard and protect precious souls. He is on "active duty" day and night, but few realize it. Yes, he, too, is "fighting" for "Christ and country"—but you don't hear much about him and his "action" these days. He does so much, but so little is heard about it, and less is said about it. So, when for others you are praying, pray also for the "chaplain" on the home front—your pastor!

ALBERT A. SCHMIDTKE

Glenburn, N. Dak.