

## Blogs and Allegiances

The Church is not a business, though some aspects of business experience are helpful when managing earthly aspects of the Church.

Because of that, a Christian congregation is also not a business. Likewise, a synod or larger church body is not a business.

The business world is a bit like the military world. Decisions are made by a few, and everyone else has to follow them. Dissent is not tolerated. The leader(s) determine the principles of the organization, and anyone who contradicts them is terminated or disciplined.

This has been extended to publications. If an employee writes a book or blog that somehow comes against the principles or interests of his company, then he is in trouble. His allegiance, even in his privately published writings, is to his company. Personally, I think some companies have taken this way too far, but it's a free country. They have the right to be wrong, just like the rest of us.

In the Church, our primary allegiance is not to our own congregation, nor to our synod, per se. That would be a kind of idolatry. It would be denominationalism, like backing the Red Sox only because you live near Boston, rather than because they have any particular virtue or skill. Applied to baseball, that approach is fine. Applied to churches, it's wrong. Some churches and synods *are* more virtuous than others, because they hold to the Word of God in doctrine and practice better than others.

In the Church, our allegiance is to the Word of God. Certainly, a Christians' first allegiance should *always* be to the Word of God, even when working in a business setting. However, I'm not surprised when a business fails to respect that. As a manifestation of the Church, a Christian congregation or synod should never demand allegiance or obedience to itself before God's Word. We should know what *Sola Scriptura* means.

The issue of personal publications is also different in the Church than in the world of business. Here, we are governed by God Himself, through the Holy Scriptures. Our "ecclesiastical supervisors" may only evaluate what we write on that basis. Some may think that our allegiance to congregation or synod is not what it should be. I'm more concerned about my allegiance to God's Word.

Some may think that the words we write lack love. John wrote, "whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?" His point also applies to those who see that something should be said for benefit of others, but do not step up and say it. Love should *compel* us to write, if we can, "teaching and admonishing one another," as the epistle lesson for Visitation said.

I grant that the *de facto* situation has been different. Back when widely-disseminated publications were only in print, they were still controlled by the decision-makers in synods, because only a publishing house had the ability to print a book. There were exceptions, of course, and [they were often controversial](#).

But now, anyone with an Internet connection can publish for wide dissemination. This is a double-edged sword, because the staggering volume of online publications has devalued, or at least deemphasized, what each contributor has to say. However, the fact remains that any pastor or layman of moderate means can now publish his own church-related writings for the world to see.

When someone writes about spiritual matters on a blog to which only his name is affixed, he is writing a personal editorial. The writing exists in connection with his vocation as a Christian. I write here not because I am a pastor, nor because I am a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (despite this blog's obscure name), nor because I am a father, nor because I am a husband. I write here because I am a Christian, somewhat capable of expressing myself on matters important to me. My other vocations influence what I write, but their significance ends there.

The Internet is a big quasi-place. What I may write here should be taken for what it's worth. (Comments are welcome and encouraged.) If I contribute to other [web sites](#), [projects](#), or [discussions](#), or if I have a presence on a social networking site, or even if I have specific responsibilities [elsewhere](#), that should not really make my words any more or less credible. I hope they will be evaluated on the basis of God's Word, the Lutheran Confessions, and plain reason. Use any other criteria of evaluation at your own risk.

Posted by Jesse Jacobsen in Doctrine, Technology at 18:42