

Session #2: Ecclesiastical Supervision  
The Reformation Foundation

In this respect the early church thought and lived not as hyper-independent [congregations] but as a total church. The church lives from the gospel. The church is healthy where the gospel is rightly taught. It is ill where the gospel is adulterated.

*Alert The Visitation Office in the Church's  
Reorganization Page 7*

Luther then proceeds to show how the office of overseer of the bishops and archbishops gradually was lost, as they in their place had come to serve their own selfish interests. Indeed, he blames the entire decay of the Christian church, which made the Reformation necessary, on the failure of the office of the visitor.

Luther to Spalatin January 1529 “Moreover, conditions in the congregations everywhere are pitiable, inasmuch as the peasants learn nothing, know nothing, never pray, do nothing but abuse their liberty, make no confession, receive no communion, as if they had been altogether emancipated from religion. They have neglected their papistical affairs to such extent that it is terrible to contemplate the administration of the papal bishops.”

Concordia Triglotta page 67

In brief this is what befell so worthy an office and nothing remained of it except the burdening and banning of people because of money, debts, and temporal goods and the making of a divine order out of the bellowing of antiphons and versicles in churches. No attention is paid to how one teaches, believes, loves, how one lives a Christian life, how to care for the poor, how one comforts the weak, or punishes the unruly, and whatever else belongs to such an office.

Now that the gospel through the unspeakable grace and mercy of God has again come to us or in fact has appeared for the first time, and we have come to see how grievously the Christian church has been confused, scattered, and torn, we would like to have seen the true episcopal office and practice of visitation re-established because of the pressing need.

We yet hope that all devout and peaceable pastors who find their sincere joy in the gospel and delight to be of one mind with us will act as St. Paul teaches in Phil. 2[:2], and will heed our prince and gracious lord. We hope they will not ungratefully and proudly despise our love and good intention, but will willingly, without any compulsion, subject themselves in a spirit of love to such visitation and with us peacefully accept these visitors until God the Holy Spirit brings to pass something that is better, through them or through us.

While His Electoral grace is not obligated to teach and to rule in spiritual affairs, he is obligated as temporal sovereign to so order things that strife, rioting, and rebellion do not arise among his subjects.

- The Doctrine
- The Ten Commandments
- The Human Order of the Church
- True Christian Prayer
- Tribulation
- The Sacrament of Baptism
- The Sacrament the Body and Blood of the Lord Daily
- True Christian Penance
- True Christian Confession
- True Christian Satisfaction for Sin
- The Human Order of the Church
- Marriage
- Free Will
- Christian Freedom
- The Turks
- Daily Worship in the Church
- The True Christian Ban
- The Office of Superintendents
- Schools—The Divisions

This pastor (*Pfarrherr*) shall be superintendent of all the other priests who have their parish or benefice in the region, whether they live in monasteries or foundations of nobles or of others. He shall make sure that in these parishes there is correct Christian teaching, that the Word of God and the holy gospel are truly and purely proclaimed, and that the holy sacraments according to the institution of Christ are provided to the blessing of the people. The preachers are to exemplify a good life so that the people take no offense but better their own lives. They are not to teach or preach anything that is contrary to the Word of God or that contributes to rebellion against the government.

If one or more of the pastors or preachers is guilty of error in this or that respect, the superintendent shall call to himself those concerned and have them abstain from it, but also carefully instruct them wherein they are guilty and have erred either in commission or omission, either in doctrine or in life.

First, he shall summon each pastor... and require him, above all to give him an account of his teaching, in particular whether he present to the church committed to him the chief articles of our holy Christian faith in accordance with the prophetic and apostolic Scripture and the Augsburg Confession.

If this fails once more to help, then the third time...  
both superintendents shall deliver the whole case in  
writing into the hands of our consistory.

| <u>District</u> | <u>Pastors/Specific visitor</u> | <u>Pastors/General Visitor</u> |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Wolfenbuttel    | 15-26                           | 107                            |
| Boekenem        | 18-27                           | 93                             |
| Alfeld          | 9-17                            | 54                             |

Article I: Of the Lord's Supper: The pure and true  
Doctrine of our Churches on the Lord's Supper

Article II: Of the Person of Christ: The pure and true  
Doctrine of our Churches on the Article of the  
Person of Christ

Article III: Of Holy Baptism

Article IV: On Predestination and the Eternal Providence  
of God

In these last times of this transitory world almighty God in his immeasurable love, grace, and mercy toward mankind has permitted the pure, unalloyed, and unadulterated light of his holy Gospel and of the Word that alone brings salvation to appear to our beloved fatherland, the German nation, and to light its way out of papistic superstition and darkness.

I therefore beg of you for God's sake, my beloved brethren who are pastors and preachers, that you take the duties of your office seriously, that you have pity on the people who are entrusted to your care, and that you help me to teach the catechism to the people, especially those who are young. Let those who lack the qualifications to do better at least take this booklet and these forms and read them to the people word for word in this manner:

Luther- Preface Small Catechism