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# **Is There a Doctor in the House?**

The Doctor of the Church in John Calvin's Theology for  
Presbyterian Churches in the United States of America

By  
Austin Andrews Hess

A Thesis Submitted to  
the Faculty of Covenant Theological Seminary  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts in Biblical & Theological Studies.

Saint Louis, Missouri

2022

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Dr. Timothy R. LeCroy  
Faculty Advisor

---

Dr. Lowell Robert Griggs  
Second Reader

---

Dr. David W. Chapman  
Director of MABTS Program

---

Mr. Steve Jamieson  
Library Director

---

## Abstract

I examine John Calvin (born Saturday, July 10, 1509 — died Wednesday, May 27, 1564) and his doctor of the church as it applies to Presbyterian Churches in the United States of America today. I believe Calvin's construction of the church better serves God's people by placing skilled teachers of doctrine into church leadership, thereby letting pastors focus on the care of souls. The first chapter presents a cursory overview of the topic. The second chapter provides two important historical overviews: a biography of John Calvin and a history of European theological education. In addition, a brief portrait of higher education—Calvin's Academy of Geneva—will be provided to observe his doctor of the church in practice. The third chapter will expound on Calvin's main literary works that discuss the doctor of the Church: Romans 12:4-8, *Draft of Ecclesiastical Ordinances*, 1 Corinthians 12:28-31, Ephesians 4:11-14, Acts 13:1-3, and his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1559). The final chapter will explore three American Presbyterian denominations—Presbyterian Church (United States of America), Orthodox Presbyterian Church, and Presbyterian Church in America. Their various books of church order will be reviewed, along with their respective institutions of higher education—Princeton Theological Seminary, Westminster Theological Seminary, and Covenant Theological Seminary. Finally, I will offer a review and set of recommendations for these denominations to adopt.

To Sandra, who willingly sacrificed countless hours away from me as I

read countless books and articles  
studied for multiple exams and quizzes  
listened to hundreds of hours of lectures  
wrote tens of thousands of words in papers  
(and graciously listened to and proofed them before submission)  
and many hours of conversations working out what I was learning

אִשְׁת־חַיִל מִי יִמְצָא     A capable wife, who can find?  
וְרַחֵק מִפְּנִינִים מְכָרָה:     *Sandra* is far more than precious pearls.

כָּטַח בָּהּ לֵב בְּעֵלָהּ     My heart trusts in her;  
וְשֵׁלֵל לֹא יִחָסֵר:     I will not be devoid of gain.

גָּמְלָתְהוּ טוֹב וְלֹא־רָע     *Sandra* repays *me* with good, and not evil  
כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיהָ:     all the days of her life.

... ..

רַבּוֹת בָּנוֹת עָשׂוּ תָּוִל     Many women have done well.  
אִתָּךְ עָלִית עַל־כָּלֵנָה:     But you surpass all of them.

— Proverbs 31:10-12, 29

Next come pastors and teachers, whom the church can never go without. There is, I believe, this difference between them: teachers are not put in charge of discipline, or administering the sacraments, or warnings and exhortations, but only of Scriptural interpretation—to keep doctrine whole and pure among believers. But the pastoral office includes all these functions within itself.

—John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, IV, iii, 4

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## Preface

The motivation for this project comes from a deep desire to serve both the church and the academy. As I began my Bachelor of Arts in Pre-Seminary and Bachelor of Arts in Biblical Studies at Lancaster Bible College in 2016, my passion was to serve in the church in pastoral ministry. In 2019, however—thanks to probing mentors, challenging ministry courses, and internship experiences—my assurance in this calling waned. Pastoral ministry is not a vocation to pursue lightly, as pastors are under-shepherds of Jesus, caring for the souls of others.

The first job I took was in an academic affairs department where I learned about the academy: my passion turned to serving God and his people in this area as I helped others teach the Bible, theology, ministry, and leadership. In addition, I secured a year-long teaching assistant position that whetted my appetite for teaching in the academy. This new job market seemed to match my skills, interests, and desires more than pastoral ministry. However, despite these invaluable experiences, a nagging voice kept steering me back to pastoral ministry. The question I continually encountered was this distinction between the church and the academy. What is the distinction? Why does it exist? Is it arbitrary or vitally important? How do they come together—if they do at all?

I have come to the somewhat unrefined conclusion that the church and the academy should have a closer relationship than they currently do. What this relationship looks like for the 21<sup>st</sup> century landscape is vague and complex, but it is a vitally important question that should not be answered by one person. However, I hope to be among a chorus of voices seeking to address this question, especially as I seek to embody this *ethos* as a support staff member at a theological seminary, adjunct faculty at a Bible

college, under-care and intern in a PCA presbytery and church, and assisting in small-town/rural church plants in the PCA.

Therefore, this thesis is hopefully the first in a series of many writing projects that explore the relationship between pastoral ministry and theological education as God continues to build his kingdom on earth through his servants—in both the church and the academy.

## Acknowledgements

I would first like to thank Dr. Timothy LeCroy for graciously supervising me through this process. His course on Ancient & Medieval Church History at Covenant Theological Seminary transformed how I approached historical theology. The final unit on "The High Middle Ages - University, Scholasticism, and Reformation - 1250-1550" jump-started this project after a couple years of ruminating on this and related topics. I am glad that he could continue teaching me by guiding me through this research process. In addition, I would like to thank Dr. Robbie Griggs for jumping in to be my second reader and showing keen interest in the subject matter.

Next, I would like to thank two colleagues at Lancaster Bible College for engaging in many lengthy discussions on theological education and the church: Eric Brandt and Mark Draper. Both of them have helped mature and shape my thinking on Christian higher education, sending me down this delightful path of research. I also thank the countless other faculty members I have talked to about this topic, in one way or another.

As my wife—who is the ghost editor for most of my projects—can attest, my writing is only clear and organized after several rounds of edits. Therefore, I want to thank Joshua Novalis for editing my thesis. Due to the importance and length of this topic, I needed someone who had as much attention to grammar and mechanics as I wish I could have.

In addition, I appreciate my colleagues at Westminster Theological Seminary, especially Laura Leon and Justin Rainey, who showed interest in this project and

graciously allowed me to take time off during a busy season of work to research, write, and conclude my thesis and coursework.

I am thankful to my church families for their prayer, financial support, and interest in my studies during my time at Covenant Theological Seminary: Wheatland Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Lancaster, PA and Oakwood Presbyterian Church (PCA) in State College, PA. Your support and encouragement during this challenging but rewarding season continually motivated me to put my studies in perspective as I served the Lord and his people through many avenues. Not only that, but your encouragement and prayers during my studies reinvigorated a desire to serve the church in pastoral ministry.

Finally, I am grateful to my family—Grandma, Pap, Mom, Dad, Meredith, Adam, Noah, Abby, Kristin, and, most importantly, Sandra—for their continued support during this extended season of study. Your encouragement, fun study breaks, and support enabled me to keep pursuing my Master of Arts, even when my motivation waned. I am especially grateful for their support as Sandra and I moved during my next-to-last semester to serve in ministry in small towns and rural areas in central Pennsylvania—we could not have done this without you all.

## Abbreviations

1 Cor.	1 Corinthians
BO	Book of Order
BCO	Book of Church Order
BPC	Bible Presbyterian Church
CC	Covenant College
CTS	Covenant Theological Seminary
Eph.	Ephesians
<i>Institutes</i>	<i>Institutes of the Christian Religion</i>
OPC	Orthodox Presbyterian Church
MA	Master of Arts
MDiv	Master of Divinity
PCA	Presbyterian Church in America
PC(USA)	Presbyterian Church (United States of America)
PTS	Princeton Theological Seminary
RPCES	Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod
Rom.	Romans
WTS	Westminster Theological Seminary

# Chapter 1

## An Introduction to Calvin's Doctor of the Church

Every other year, Ligonier Ministries and LifeWay Research conduct a survey of the theological literacy in the United States of America to assess what people believe concerning theology. They co-publish their findings in a report entitled "The State of Theology." The 2020 results are staggering:<sup>1</sup>

- 55% believe that "Jesus is the first and greatest being created by God," compared to 30% who disagree with the statement.
- 51% believe that "Jesus was a great teacher, but he was not God," compared to 37% who disagree with the statement.
- 59% believe that "The Holy Spirit is a force but is not a personal being," compared to 24% who disagree with the statement.
- 65% believe that "[e]veryone sins a little, but most people are good by nature," compared to 28% who disagree with the statement.
- 66% do not believe that "[e]ven the smallest sin deserves eternal damnation," compared to 25% who agree with the statement.

For each of the 35 statements, one might be surprised in several different ways by the various responses people submitted, especially when one drills down into the specific demographic and theological details. Indeed, biblical and theological education have fallen on hard times.

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<sup>1</sup> "The State of Theology," 2020, <https://thestateoftheology.com>. The 2014, 2016, and 2018 results are also available.

While the current state of theological education among Christians in the United States is cause for lament, this issue is not new to the history of Christianity. Over the centuries, the Western Roman Catholic Church grew steadily in power and authority. During this period of growth, only the clergy were trained in Latin—not the laity—and as a result, only those who had training could read, understand, and exposit the Scriptures. In addition, the church services themselves were in Latin, which created a difficult learning curve for God’s people to understand their methods of worship.<sup>2</sup>

Theological education has had its times of glory, though. For example, the scholastic period from the 12<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> centuries provided the major theological foundations and catalyzed the shifts that serve as the foundation for theology today. One of the foremost innovations, covered more thoroughly in the next chapter, is the *sic et non* method of theological inquiry.<sup>3</sup> The foremost work that utilizes this method is Peter Lombard’s *Sentences*. Although modified throughout subsequent centuries to deal with more theological questions, this method of inquiry produced an outline upon which many systematic theologies today are founded.

Perhaps theological education never flourished as much as in the time of the Reformation. Martin Luther, though he set out to reform the practice of indulgences when he nailed his 95 Theses to the door of Wittenberg Church, slowly expanded his scope

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<sup>2</sup> The perception of this situation could be that churchgoers were totally ignorant of what happened in the church services because the services were not in their language. However, the *admonition generalis* argued that churchgoers should be instructed in the meaning of the prayers each week. If the prayers do not change from week to week, then participants will begin to understand the prayers. Now, this clarification does not mean that it is not helpful to have worship services in one’s own tongue.

<sup>3</sup> Peter Abelard, *Sic et Non: A Critical Edition*, ed. Blanche B. Boyer and Richard McKeon (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977).

over the years to include educating the laity through his sermons and lectures.<sup>4</sup> He set forth an intellectual tradition that carried on to his contemporary: John Calvin.

Although Luther did not have the time to formalize church structures himself, Calvin articulated a four-fold office of the church that looks much like modern-day Presbyterianism and does not reflect the seven orders structure of the Western Roman Catholic Church.<sup>5</sup> He simplified the medieval church structure and made explicit an office focused on education. This church structure, he believed, adheres to biblical norms, and serves God's people in an effective way. While most church structures tend towards either a three-fold office—pastors, elders, and deacons—or a two-fold office—elders and deacons—Calvin's four offices were pastor, elder, deacon, and doctor.<sup>6</sup> This extra office of doctor is unique to Calvin's ecclesiology and is one of the many contributing factors that enabled the Reformation to take root in the church. It allowed for more regular instruction that pastors could not deliver on their own.

This thesis will explore Calvin's doctrine of the doctor of the church and its subsequent impact on his ecclesiology and the Reformation. Following this exploration, brief consideration will be given to how Calvin's doctor of the church assists Presbyterian and Reformed Churches today in pursuit of theological education among the laity. This thesis will argue that a fresh consideration of Calvin's office of doctor, to be considered

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<sup>4</sup> Mark A. Noll, "The Earliest Protestants and the Reformation of Education," *Westminster Theological Journal* 43, no. 1 (Fall 2018): 97–131.

<sup>5</sup> Jeremiah Donovan, trans., *The Catechism of the Council of Trent* (Baltimore: Lucas Brothers, 1829), 216; Justo L. González, *The History of Theological Education* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2015), chap. 8.

<sup>6</sup> For an exegetical approach to church structure, see George W. Knight, "Two Offices (Elders/Bishops and Deacons) and Two Orders of Elders (Preaching/Teaching Elders and Ruling Elders): A New Testament Study," *Presbyterion* 11, no. 1 (Spring 1985): 1–12; Thomas Forsyth Torrance, "The Eldership in the Reformed Church," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 37, no. 4 (1984): 503–18.



as a sub-order of the office of pastor, will benefit Presbyterian churches today as they seek to equip God's people to know, love, and serve God and neighbor.

### **Calvin's Doctor of the Church**

The primary role of Calvin's doctor of the church is the preservation and propagation of sound doctrine through skilled scriptural interpretation.<sup>7</sup> One might note that this function is accomplished by pastors today, and that would be correct. However, while, in Calvin's ecclesiology, the function of doctor *can* be subsumed by the pastor, the pastor's primary role is the care of souls through the preaching of the Word, the administration of the sacraments, and the exercise of church discipline. The three functions of the pastor are not to be taken up by the doctor, but the sole function of the doctor can be taken up in the pastorate: "There is, I believe, this difference between them [pastors and teachers]: teachers not put in charge of discipline, or administering the sacraments, or warnings and exhortations, but only of Scripture interpretation . . . But the pastoral office includes all these functions within itself."<sup>8</sup>

Some may object that if the office of doctor can be carried on by the office of pastor or elder, then there is no need for it, especially since it has not stood the test of time.<sup>9</sup> However, as Robert W. Henderson, author of *The Teaching Office in the Reformed Tradition: A History of the Doctoral Ministry*, responds, "although the churches of the

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<sup>7</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion: Volumes One and Two*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, The Library of Christian Classics (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1960), 1057.

<sup>8</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 1057; Robert Waugh Henderson, *The Teaching Office in the Reformed Tradition: A History of the Doctoral Ministry* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2014), 30–31.

<sup>9</sup> Henderson, *Teaching Office in the Reformed Tradition*, 11. Henderson's work was formally his Doctor of Philosophy thesis completed at Harvard University and is footnoted in the *ICR* by McNeill.

Reformation may have allowed one formal teaching office to atrophy, they have not thereby been able to exorcise the 'memory' of such an office from their midst."<sup>10</sup>

Pragmatically, though the function of the doctor can be carried on in the office of pastor, a fresh reconsideration of the office of doctor will allow Presbyterian churches to better steward the giftings of their officers to serve God's people.

### **The Importance of the Office**

Unfortunately, Calvin's understanding of the doctor as someone who contributes to the flourishing of the church has fallen out of usage in most Protestant circles. The doctor is relegated to the academy as "Professor of Bible" or "Professor of Theology" or similar titles. Their bearing on the church is limited to the instruction of Bible college students in required classes, potential ministers in seminary, the teaching of Sunday School lessons in churches, preaching occasionally, or writing monographs for laity. For most Protestant churches, the function of doctor is absorbed by the pastorate as he proclaims God's Word to God's people regularly.

As will be argued through this thesis, the doctor is primarily responsible for preserving and propagating scriptural interpretation. While pastors certainly do this preservation and propagation as they prepare their sermons, the demands of ministry often consume them and prevent them from the actual process of ensuring scriptural interpretation passes from Christian to Christian. This is especially apparent in

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<sup>10</sup> Henderson, *Teaching Office in the Reformed Tradition*, 11. An astute reader who picks up Henderson's volume will note that this thesis's structure aligns with Henderson's work at many points. This similarity is purely coincidental, but I take comfort in the fact that this work was finally acquired towards the end of the writing process; I must be on the right track in terms of structure and organization.

Presbyterian churches, as many often pride themselves on their educational endeavors and ministries. As the pastor prepares a sermon for Sunday morning, perhaps another sermon for an evening service on Sunday or Wednesday, a Sunday School lesson, personal discipleship, and more, it is easy for him to be consumed in the actual transmission of biblical knowledge without ensuring its integrity. This topic will benefit Presbyterian churches specifically and the academy by reimplementing an office that has been lost. Doctors can provide a valuable assessment to Presbyterian churches by taking the time required, free of the many demands of ministry, to contemplate the deep things of God and build others up in their biblical and theological knowledge.

## **Literature Review**

Now that the office of doctor has been defined and its importance outlined, what are the various positions on this study, and why is this study needed?

### *Positions*

There are no clear-cut positions on this topic. It would be dishonest to say that Calvin did not have a fourth office in his ecclesiology.<sup>11</sup> Practically, however, towards the end of Calvin's life, these offices did seem to be combined to a degree in his mind.<sup>12</sup>

There are two ways that the doctor of the church can be incorporated into church structures: the professor in the academy and the doctor in the church. The primary way is

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<sup>11</sup> This affirmation means that there can be confusion between offices due to the close similarity between the doctorate and the pastorate.

<sup>12</sup> W. Stanford Reid, "John Calvin, Pastoral Theologian," *The Reformed Theological Review* 42, no. 3 (September 1982): 66, 71.

the professor in the academy. Although there are many types of professors—some covering history, psychology, philosophy—the professor of Bible, theology, or like titles are often viewed as ones who serve the church indirectly and specially. Their knowledge of theology and skill with biblical hermeneutics and exegesis assist students to grow in their understanding of God's Word. As a result, those students develop into future Sunday school teachers, small group leaders, pastors, ministry directors, and scholars.

The secondary way is the doctor in the church. As a recognition for the ministry they have in the preservation and promotion of sound doctrine, they are ordained in the church. Often, their titles are "teacher" or "scholar" or simply "pastor" as they focus on teaching. As a result, they often perform many of the same duties of pastors, though they may be more focused on educational ministries or public output.

It is easy to misinterpret what Calvin is proposing. Through a cursory reading (as will be explained below) of his commentaries, the *Institutes*, and *Ecclesiastical Ordinances*, they can be perceived as one and the same, since the function of doctor can also be subsumed under pastor. However, given the distinctions Calvin does make in his writings, this misinterpretation seems to resemble an unrefined view of the doctor that Luther articulated.<sup>13</sup>

### *Need for Study*

This topic deserves inquiry for two reasons. First, while much consideration is given to the office of pastor in the church, with its importance and effects, attention is limited when it comes to the purpose of the doctor in the church as it relates to

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<sup>13</sup> Noll, "Earliest Protestants," 108.

theological education. Sustained focus should be given to this small but important doctrine, as this thesis will argue that the office will help promote biblical and theological education in the church among God's people.

Second, due to declining attendance in both the church and the academy, Christian institutions over the past several decades have reinvented themselves to survive. For example, Bible colleges are turning into universities to bolster student enrollment by offering a smorgasbord of degrees. One can find a similar situation in many seminaries that are now offering other professional degrees. Many churches have left common "high church" models at the turn of the millennium for "seeker-sensitive" approaches, to draw more people. If churches and academies are to endure in the years ahead, the solution is an integration between the church and the academy. The doctors of the academy must be more heavily involved in the church, and the pastors of the church must be more heavily involved in the academy. Through partnering together, God's people will be mutually blessed by their ministries of care and education. As a result, they will be committed to the cause of God's mission.

## **Methodology**

The main source materials for this study will come from Calvin's commentaries and theological works. However, secondary literature will be critical when it comes to understanding Calvin's historical context, his exegetical and theological method, and the history and philosophy of higher education, especially around the time of the Reformation. The source material will be strictly literary.

This thesis will examine the method of Calvin's exegesis of key passages in his historical context and hermeneutical method: Acts 13:1-3; Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12:28-31;

and Eph. 4:11-14. These passages, in one way or another, discuss the office of pastor or doctor.<sup>14</sup> Calvin's understanding of the doctor will be drawn out, and points of similarity and difference will be identified between the pastor and the doctor, and a taxonomy of Calvin's church structure will be articulated, based on critique from personal arguments and secondary literature.

Finally, Calvin's theological arguments will be examined, especially book 4, chapter 3 of the *Institutes*. In this work, Calvin argues for his structure of the church and dedicates space to a discussion of the offices of doctor and pastor. This portion of the *Institutes* will give a clear understanding of the nature, purpose, and function of these offices.

## Organization

The second chapter will explore the historical context of Calvin by sketching a biography of his life and career. Following Calvin, a brief history of theological education in the early and medieval church will be given, as well as a description of their functions and relationship to the Reformation church. Finally, a brief history of the church from the time of the Church Fathers to the Reformation will be given. Each of these threads will frame the reader's understanding of Calvin's articulation of the office of doctor as it relates to his life, the academy, and the church.

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<sup>14</sup> The Hebrew and Greek words: תַּלְמוּד; תַּלְמִי; תַּלְמִי, תַּלְמִי, διδάσκω, διδάσκαλος, διδαχή, διδασκαλία, διδακτός, νομοδιδάσκαλος, διδακτικός, ἑτεροδιδασκαλέω, θεοδιδάκτος, καλοδιδάσκαλος, and ψευδοδιδάσκαλος. Since Calvin's writings are in Latin (as well as French), the following Latin words were used to determine which passages were most relevant for this study: *doceō*, *docibilis*, *docilis*, *doctor*, *doctrīna*, *doctrīx*, and *doctus*.

The third chapter will explore Calvin's exegesis of the key passages mentioned above. Since Calvin was a prolific writer for most of his adult life, there is no doubt that his thinking matured and refined throughout the years and decades of not only writing but regularly teaching and preaching. Therefore, the passages listed above will be explored chronologically rather than canonically to better understand how his understanding of pastor and doctor developed. Then, this exegesis will be reconciled with his theology and present a full picture of the doctor of the church as Calvin argues for it.

The final chapter will be a series of three case studies in American Presbyterian and Reformed churches: the PC(USA), the OPC, and the PCA. Their respective books of church order will be examined for their understanding of the doctor of the church (if there is one), how the doctor of the church relates to their respective seminaries (if there is one), and how Calvin's articulation can help their pastorates flourish as they minister to God's people, both in the academy and the church.

## Chapter 2

### The Context of Calvin, the Church, and the Academy

To properly understand Calvin's doctor of the church, it is important to know Calvin himself and to situate him in his proper historical, cultural, ecclesiastical, and academic contexts. Therefore, this chapter will provide a brief biography of Calvin, an overview of relevant church history, and an exploration of the academy to accurately situate his doctrine in its historical context.

#### Biography of Calvin<sup>1</sup>

John Calvin was born in Noyons, Picardy on Tuesday, July 27, 1509. His father was Gérard Calvin, and his mother was Joan Franc. The community highly valued Gérard, and he held prominence in Noyons. As a result of his elevated reputation, Gérard ensured Calvin would be broadly trained so that he might maintain a good reputation within his town. Calvin rose to the challenge, and many teachers affirmed that he was an excellent student to have in their classes.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Although there are many biographies of Calvin, such as Herman J. Selderhius's *John Calvin: A Pilgrim's Life*, W. Godfrey's *John Calvin: Pilgrim and Pastor*, and Derek Thomas's *John Calvin: For a New Reformation*, I have opted to use Theodore Beza's biography "The Life of John Calvin," in *Tracts and Letters: Tracts, Part 1*, ed. Henry Beveridge, vol. 1, 7 vols. (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2009), xix–c. I have chosen Beza due to his proximity to Calvin historically, professionally in the academy, and personally as a friend. However, proximity can also taint one's perspective of the situation. Therefore, to offer correctives when needed, I will also use T. H. L. Parker's *John Calvin: A Biography* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1975).

<sup>2</sup> Beza, "Life of Calvin," xxi.



After finishing his liberal arts education, Gérard intended Calvin to go to the University of Paris to study theology.<sup>3</sup> Calvin studied three disciplines: logic at the University of Paris, law at the University of Orleans and University of Bourges.<sup>4</sup> In addition, he also closely studied the classics in his spare time.<sup>5</sup> Calvin exhibited religious zeal, and his father, desiring to preserve his revered status within his town, wished for Calvin to enter the priesthood.<sup>6</sup> While most commentators are unsure what happened during this period of time, undoubtedly Peter Robert Olivet, who translated the Old Testament from Hebrew to French, wielded significant influence over Calvin.<sup>7</sup> Calvin began to study the Word of God on his own and come to understand key reformational truths.<sup>8</sup>

However, part of the way through Calvin's theological studies, Gérard also expressed his desire that Calvin study law.<sup>9</sup> Calvin ended up going to study at the University of Orlèans because the curriculum included the Bible and other primary

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<sup>3</sup> Beza, "Life of Calvin," xxii.

<sup>4</sup> E. Harris Harbison, *The Christian Scholar in the Age of the Reformation* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956), 144; W. Stanford Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," *Westminster Theological Journal* 18, no. 1 (November 1955): 4.

<sup>5</sup> Harbison, *Christian Scholar in the Age of the Reformation*, 144; Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," 4.

<sup>6</sup> Beza, "Life of Calvin," xxii; Greta Grace Kroeker, "The University of Paris during Calvin's Life," in *John Calvin in Context*, ed. R. Ward Holder (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 31.

<sup>7</sup> Beza, "Life of Calvin," xxii.

<sup>8</sup> Beza, "Life of Calvin," xxii; Parker, *Calvin*, 17–18. Beza is strong on this point. He writes that Calvin begins to disdain the Roman Church.

<sup>9</sup> Beza, "Life of Calvin," xxii; Parker, *Calvin*, 13. No one seems quite settled on the cause of this change. Beza equates the sudden change to financial gain. However, as Parker notes, Gérard was a father—why would he suddenly shift his thinking? More than likely, as Parker concludes, the church was seen as an uneventful career path—but one suited for a boy who studied theology. At least, this was true before the Reformation took the church by storm.

theological sources. While the university did not specifically advocate reformational ideals, it did not prohibit students and faculty from studying them.<sup>10</sup> During his studies in Paris, Calvin encountered the Reformed faith.<sup>11</sup> At the University of Orléans, Calvin studied under Peter De l'Etoile and quickly became skilled in law, rapidly progressing through the curriculum.<sup>12</sup> In fact, Calvin possessed such skill in law that the faculty regarded him as "a teacher [rather] than a pupil."<sup>13</sup> The faculty at the university granted him a doctorate upon his departure for his contributions to the school.<sup>14</sup>

Calvin then studied law at the University of Bourges under Andrew Alciat. It was in Italy that Calvin befriended the German Melchior Wolmar, who was a professor of Greek.<sup>15</sup> Thus, Calvin unintentionally encountered both Hebrew at the University of Paris and Greek at the University of Bourges, laying the groundwork for him to carry forth the Reformation under the banner of *ad fontes*—back to the sources.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Beza argues that Calvin went on to study law, but not for material gain. While true, he misses part of the point. In fact, Gérard threatened to cut off Calvin financially for this decision.

<sup>11</sup> Beza, "Life of Calvin," xxii; Kroeker, "University of Paris during Calvin's Life," 31.

<sup>12</sup> Beza, "Life of Calvin," xxii.

<sup>13</sup> Beza, "Life of Calvin," xxii–xxiii.

<sup>14</sup> Beza, "Life of Calvin," xxiii.

<sup>15</sup> Beza, "Life of Calvin," xxiii.

<sup>16</sup> Arguably, Calvin would not have been able to pursue these studies at these prestigious universities if it were not for his father's economic status and the use of "benefices." When economic turmoil hit the Calvin family after his father was censured and excommunicated, the Mommon family received them into their family. Not only that, but Calvin and his brother Charles proved delinquent in their duties as chaplains. After being reprimanded several times, the cathedral chapter assigned them to the Mommon family. Supposedly, a reason was found: *Condemnatio Joannis Calvini*. Thus, receiving the privileges and benefits of being a Mommon. As a result, Calvin was able to study with their children at these prestigious places. However, Calvin did renounce his benefice (and other benefices that supported him) after his conversion. González, *History of Theological Education*, chap. 8; Parker, *Calvin*, 18–19.

Sadly, Gérard passed away suddenly when Calvin turned 24 years old. As a result, Calvin returned to Paris, though he continued studying and writing more public works such as his commentary on *De Clementia*. Even though Calvin possessed a liberal arts education and was an expert lawyer by studying under the two greatest lawyers of his day, he returned to the previous discipline that he began at the University of Paris: the study of God. During this time, Nicolas Cop, rector at the University of Paris, gave a speech on All Saints Day that Calvin wrote which pushed forward the Reformed Faith.<sup>17</sup> An intense wave of persecution rose up against the Reformers, which required Calvin to flee to Saintonge. Calvin worked as an assistant in Saintonge publishing small works so that the laity may be brought up in the Reformed faith.<sup>18</sup>

After the persecution subsided in Paris, Calvin returned to deal with another matter in 1534: Michael Servetus's heretical teachings on the Trinity.<sup>19</sup> However, "a mere sight of Calvin was more than he could bear," so Servetus fled from Paris.<sup>20</sup> Once again in France, persecution arose against the Protestants, and Calvin fled once more.<sup>21</sup> On his journey, Calvin's servants stole from him, and he had to stop midway through, since he did not have the resources to continue. He spent some time in Strasbourg and Bâsle, where he rededicated himself to the study of Hebrew. It was also there that he published

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<sup>17</sup> Beza, "Life of Calvin," xxiv.

<sup>18</sup> Beza, "Life of Calvin," xxv.

<sup>19</sup> Beza, "Life of Calvin," xxvi.

<sup>20</sup> Beza, "Life of Calvin," xxvi.

<sup>21</sup> Beza, "Life of Calvin," xxvi.

the first edition of his most popular work, if not the most popular theological textbook of all time: the *Institutes*.<sup>22</sup>

After persecution subsided in France once again, Calvin concluded what obligations he had in Paris and made plans to return to Strasbourg and Bâsle with his brother Anthony Calvin. However, the roads back to those locations were often closed due to war. As a result, he went through Geneva, Switzerland.<sup>23</sup> Geneva was in the area of Savoy,<sup>24</sup> and it was here that Calvin encountered the work of William Farel and Peter Viret.<sup>25</sup> Calvin did not intend to stay permanently, but upon his departure, Farel rebuked him.<sup>26</sup> This rebuke was enough to convince Calvin to stay in Geneva and assist the work of the Reformation in that city. Calvin's first job in Geneva was as "teacher of the gospel" who lectured on the Bible during August 1536.<sup>27</sup> Calvin eventually gained the title of "pastor" in Geneva after he taught the Scriptures for some months as "teacher of the

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<sup>22</sup> Beza, "Life of Calvin," xxvii.

<sup>23</sup> Beza, "Life of Calvin," xxviii.

<sup>24</sup> Karin Maag, "Reformed Education and the Genevan Academy," in *John Calvin in Context*, ed. R. Ward Holder (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 111.

<sup>25</sup> Beza, "Life of Calvin," xxviii.

<sup>26</sup> Parker, *Calvin*, 53. "Farel, who burned with an extraordinary zeal to advance the gospel, immediately strained every nerve to detain me. . . [H]e proceeded to utter the imprecation that God would curse my retirement and the tranquility of the studies which I sought, if I should withdraw and refuse to help, when the necessity was so urgent. By this imprecation I was so terror-struck, that I gave up the journey that I had undertaken; but sensible of my natural shyness and timidity, I would not tie myself to any particular office."

<sup>27</sup> Peter Y. De Jong, "Calvin's Contribution to Christian Education," *Calvin Theological Journal* 2 (November 1967): 166; Beza, "Life of Calvin," xxix. "Professor of Sacred Literature." Calvin, in his reply to Sadolet, writes, "In that Church I have held the office first of doctor, then of pastor."

gospel."<sup>28</sup> During his tenure, he published a short doctrinal statement with a catechism.<sup>29</sup> Catechisms to Calvin were a dialogue between pastor and catechumen in the presence of God.<sup>30</sup> Calvin did not seek to merely transfer theology to catechumens but to see them transformed.<sup>31</sup>

Additionally, while in Geneva, Calvin wanted the city to stand fast against the papacy. The people did renounce the Roman Church publicly on Tuesday, July 20, 1537.<sup>32</sup> While it seemed like the situation was improving for Geneva's Reformation, controversy and rebellion broke out against Calvin, Farel, and their compatriots.<sup>33</sup> It degraded to such a point that the ecclesiastical leadership refused to offer the Lord's Supper to the laity.<sup>34</sup> As a result, the city voted to exile Calvin and others from the city with 48 hours' notice. Calvin landed in Strasbourg, where he chaired as professor of theology for the duration of his exile.<sup>35</sup> During his exile, Calvin published perhaps his most famous letter, the letter to James Sadolet (1539), an expanded edition of the

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<sup>28</sup> De Jong, "Calvin's Contribution to Christian Education," 166; J. K. S. Reid, ed., *Calvin Theological Treatises* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1954), 222; Henderson, *Teaching Office in the Reformed Tradition*, 41.

<sup>29</sup> Hastings Rashdall, *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, vol. 1, Salerno, Bologna, Paris (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1895), 7.

<sup>30</sup> De Jong, "Calvin's Contribution to Christian Education," 183.

<sup>31</sup> De Jong, "Calvin's Contribution to Christian Education," 168.

<sup>32</sup> Rashdall, *Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, 1, Salerno, Bologna, Paris:7.

<sup>33</sup> Beza, "Life of Calvin," xxxi.

<sup>34</sup> Beza, "Life of Calvin," xxxii.

<sup>35</sup> Beza, "Life of Calvin," xxxiii.

*Institutes*, and his commentary on Romans.<sup>36</sup> He also married Idellette.<sup>37</sup> Most importantly, during this time, Calvin developed a formalized structure of the church and the academy.<sup>38</sup>

During Calvin's time at Strasbourg, he became close with Martin Bucer. When Calvin later returned to Geneva, much of his thinking was indebted to Bucer's influence. When it comes to the academy, though, Bucer's influence was John Strum. Strum believed that students best derived knowledge from the ancient sources—*ad fontes*—which was a central tenet of Renaissance Humanism.<sup>39</sup> Strum believed that Christians should present their knowledge both "eloquently and effectively." As a result, Strum believed that there should be a system of gradation so that the subject matter would best be suited to a student's particular skill level.<sup>40</sup> The first level in Strum's academy is kindergarten for those under six years old. The second level is the *gymnasium*, for those between six and 15 years old. Strum's *gymnasium* focuses on "linguistic studies." The final level in Strum's academy is the *hochschule* (high school) for anyone 16 years old and older. Strum's *hochschule* focuses on "theological training" in "Greek, Hebrew, philosophy, mathematics, physics, history, law and theology." In the end, Strum's academy never materialized.<sup>41</sup> However, Bucer organized the academy in Strasbourg.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Beza, "Life of Calvin," xxxiv, xxxv.

<sup>37</sup> Beza, "Life of Calvin," xxxvi.

<sup>38</sup> Henderson, *Teaching Office in the Reformed Tradition*, 37.

<sup>39</sup> Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," 5.

<sup>40</sup> Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," 5–6.

<sup>41</sup> Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," 6.

<sup>42</sup> Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," 5.

Bucer believed "that true piety could never flourish in ignorance."<sup>43</sup> Strum's *hochschule* is like Bucer's *seminaire*.<sup>44</sup> Calvin learned much from the models of Bucer and Strum during his exile from Geneva.<sup>45</sup>

In 1541, Geneva recalled those whom they expelled so that they could settle the theological controversies that arose during their absence, seemingly ignoring what they did to them some years ago.<sup>46</sup> Calvin graciously returned on Monday, September 15, 1541, to assist in the work of the church in Geneva.<sup>47</sup> The ensuing years were not easy, for controversy after controversy arose, tragedy after tragedy, each year progressively getting worse until 1548. Although Calvin had to work through many controversies and disasters, he maintained his rigorous study and output: commentaries on six Pauline epistles, *Interim*, and a comprehensive methodology for church renewal.<sup>48</sup> Unfortunately, at the end of 1548, Calvin "sustained a grievous domestic calamity, in the death of his most excellent wife [Idellete]."<sup>49</sup> Thankfully, even if for a short respite, the controversies and tragedies seemed to stop for two years (1549-1550), allowing Calvin and the church

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<sup>43</sup> Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," 5.

<sup>44</sup> Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," 6. Interestingly, the Roman Catholic Church seems to combine these, calling high school for potential priests "seminary."

<sup>45</sup> De Jong, "Calvin's Contribution to Christian Education," 179; Maag, "Reformed Education and the Genevan Academy," 116.

<sup>46</sup> Beza, "Life of Calvin," xxxvi, xxxvii.

<sup>47</sup> Beza, "Life of Calvin," xxxvii.

<sup>48</sup> Beza, "Life of Calvin," liii.

<sup>49</sup> Beza, "Life of Calvin," liv. In the following year, Calvin and Beza came into contact and became close friends.

to recover and make innovative progress that was not merely polemical. Unfortunately, this peace came to an end in 1551, when theological controversy resumed.<sup>50</sup>

In 1558, Calvin contracted "a quartan fever" which proves fatal to most elderly people.<sup>51</sup> For Calvin, this diagnosis proved much worse in his younger age, due to fatigue from overworking himself. The disease ailed Calvin for eight months, but he did eventually recover from it. However, his recovery was at the loss of his usual strength and vigor. Too weak to maintain his breakneck pace, Calvin had to give up some of his regular duties and responsibilities in preaching and teaching (though he maintained his regular writing output through scribes).<sup>52</sup> In 1563, Calvin had become so weak that "it almost [seemed] impossible to believe that so strong and noble a mind could be any longer confined in a body so fragile, so exhausted by labour, and, in fine, so broken down by suffering."<sup>53</sup> Calvin continued to teach the church in whatever ways he could, though his physical body was falling apart. On Wednesday, February 5, 1564, Calvin delivered his last sermon to the public.<sup>54</sup> Even in the midst of his suffering, like Job, no one heard Calvin deplore his condition; he would regularly utter "O Lord, how long[?]"<sup>55</sup> At one point, when prompted whether he should rest from his output, Calvin responded, "What ... would you have the Lord to find me idle?"<sup>56</sup> Throughout the winter of 1564, Calvin

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<sup>50</sup> Beza, "Life of Calvin," liv–lvi.

<sup>51</sup> Beza, "Life of Calvin," lxxvi. Calvin would have been 49 years old when he contracted the fever.

<sup>52</sup> Beza, "Life of Calvin," lxxvi.

<sup>53</sup> Beza, "Life of Calvin," lxxxii.

<sup>54</sup> Beza, "Life of Calvin," lxxxii.

<sup>55</sup> Beza, "Life of Calvin," lxxxiii.

<sup>56</sup> Beza, "Life of Calvin," lxxxiv.



said many good-byes, knowing that death was near.<sup>57</sup> Briefly, it seemed as if Calvin's condition was improving, but on the evening of Wednesday, May 27, 1564, he took a turn for the worse; he passed away at sunset.<sup>58</sup>

Calvin's impact endures some 458 years later. Through his prolific writings, sermons, and teachings, he set forth an intellectual and spiritual tradition in the Reformed faith that carries on to this day. He inhabited both the office of pastor and doctor, seeking to build up the church in the knowledge and love of God their Savior.

## **History of the Church's Theological Education**

Next, a brief history of theological education is necessary to understand the impact of education on the church and to properly contextualize Calvin's teaching.

### *Ancient Church*

A primary method of educating God's people in the early church came through their worship services. The reading and preaching of the Word, the liturgy, and the sacraments served to educate and form God's people. However, to read the Word, one also had to explain it to people who did not have it in their hands. This process of explanation required pastors to be trained in how to read and how to interpret what they read. At the beginning of the early church, there were no Christian schools to provide this training; therefore, many pastors had to learn in pagan schools.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Beza, "Life of Calvin," lxxxii.

<sup>58</sup> Beza, "Life of Calvin," xcvi.

<sup>59</sup> González, *History of Theological Education*, chap. 1.

One of the first schools founded for instruction in the Christian faith was in Alexandria around 190 AD. It is important to note that this school was not founded for the explicit purpose of training pastors for ministry, but nevertheless, many pastors either instructed in these schools or attended themselves to learn more about Christianity. Eventually, as the church matured in its theological education, the teachers in these ancient catechetical schools, while primarily instructing students, would often travel to other geographical regions to help settle theological disputes.<sup>60</sup>

Although not specific to this period, catechesis was one of the primary ways leaders in the early church would transmit sound doctrine and liturgy, as well as form the catechumenate morally. In the early church, the process of catechesis took on many formal liturgical functions, culminating in baptism on Easter Sunday. Although no formal institution of higher education was devoted to the preparation of ministers or general biblical and theological studies among the laity, catechesis served this purpose. Catechesis was the only educational requirement of the church, of pastors, and of laity. However, the difference between pastors and laity were that the pastors would often continue studying the Christian faith after baptism, whereas this continuing education was not expected of the laity.<sup>61</sup>

This tradition carried on through the Reformation, as Calvin and subsequent Presbyterians employed catechisms to help others learn the basics of the faith.<sup>62</sup> In fact, before Calvin's Academy of Geneva was realized, he employed catechisms to instruct the

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<sup>60</sup> González, *History of Theological Education*, chap. 1.

<sup>61</sup> González, *History of Theological Education*, chap. 2.

<sup>62</sup> Margaret P. Cowan, Roger P. Ebertz, and Mary E. Shields, "The Vocation of Teaching: Themes and Models from the Presbyterian Tradition," *Teaching Theology and Religion* 5, no. 3 (2002): 153.

churchgoers of Geneva.<sup>63</sup> He believed one of the church's main responsibilities was to instruct covenant children in the knowledge of God and to help them memorize the Christian faith in a question-and-answer format.<sup>64</sup> Although the lack of formal educational requirements in the ancient church can be seen as a hindrance, the function of catechesis produced some of the greatest theologians of the Church: "Athanasius, Eusebius of Caesarea, Basil the Great, John Chrysostom, Jerome, Ambrose, and Augustine."<sup>65</sup> Many of these men are recognized as doctors of the Roman Catholic Church for how they advanced the Christian faith intellectually.

### *Medieval Church*

Once the church found societal favor, conversions began to multiply, increasing the demands on pastors to catechize more converts. Additionally, now that children of first-generation Christians were being born, more of an emphasis was placed on catechizing children than adults.<sup>66</sup> When it came to a learned clergy, pastors began to write manuals to instruct them in their calling and practice. One such man was Magnus Aurelius Cassiodorus, who formalized the framework of the liberal arts in the *trivium* and *quadrivium* based on the classical Greek and Roman system.<sup>67</sup> This served as the basis

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<sup>63</sup> Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," 7.

<sup>64</sup> De Jong, "Calvin's Contribution to Christian Education," 164.

<sup>65</sup> González, *History of Theological Education*, chap. 3. To view the lack of formal educational requirements as a hindrance to the church is to suppose the superiority of formal theological education. This emphasis is a form of "chronological snobbery," in the words of C. S. Lewis. Now, these men did receive education in the classical Roman and Greek schools, though not in the Christian religion.

<sup>66</sup> González, *History of Theological Education*, chap. 3.

<sup>67</sup> González, *History of Theological Education*, chap. 4.

for the medieval educational curriculum. The first part of medieval educational curriculum was the *trivium*: grammar, rhetoric, and logic.<sup>68</sup> The second part of medieval education curriculum was the *quadrivium*: arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music. Once a student mastered the *trivium* and the *quadrivium*, he would pursue studies in medicine, law, or theology.<sup>69</sup> Medieval educational philosophy also finds its foundation in Thomas Aquinas.<sup>70</sup> Aquinas dubbed theology as "the queen of the sciences" because it considered spiritual matters rather than earthly.<sup>71</sup>

Europe came under siege by the Vikings during the eighth century.<sup>72</sup> In order to preserve the Christian faith by protecting it from these Viking invasions, monastic schools were established. These schools were designed for men in order to educate children in religion to either enter the ministry or civil government. They also copied manuscripts so that knowledge could be shared and distributed, as well as preserved important works in the event of an invasion of the monastery by the Germanic people.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Originally, the *trivium* contained grammar, *astronomy*, and rhetoric. However the 1325 council in Segovia required that the curriculum be modeled after grammar, *logic*, and rhetoric. González, *History of Theological Education*, chap. 8.

<sup>69</sup> Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," 2. At least, this was the ideal. The *quadrivium* was never really adopted in Western education like the *trivium*.

<sup>70</sup> Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," 1.

<sup>71</sup> Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," 2.

<sup>72</sup> González, *History of Theological Education*, chap. 5; Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," 2. That being said, the Germanic people migrated at least since the fifth century AD, going all the way back to 100 BC.

<sup>73</sup> González, *History of Theological Education*, chap. 5.

Ministers attempted to train the laity through their personal catechisms.<sup>74</sup> However, the purpose of catechesis was no longer to prepare Christians for baptism but to wean Christians from the simple to the more complex so that they could answer others for their confidence in the faith using the Word of God.<sup>75</sup> Through the catechesis of the laity in order to mature them in the Christian faith, cathedral schools were established as pastors "established programs of education and sometimes of examinations to be given to candidates for ordination."<sup>76</sup>

As the church instructed Christians through subsequent generations, medieval educational philosophy began to change. The most prominent men for setting forth this newfound "scholasticism" were Anselm, Abelard, Hugh of Saint Victor, and, perhaps most importantly, Peter Lombard.<sup>77</sup> Hugh of Saint Victor argued that "all knowledge comes from God and that therefore all knowledge leads to God."<sup>78</sup> As he structured knowledge, he viewed theology as the primary discipline, followed by philosophy and the liberal arts.<sup>79</sup> Lombard's seminal work, the *Four Books of Sentences*, established a framework for how theology would be structured and organized for centuries to come: "God and the Trinity (book i), creation and sin (book ii), the incarnation and the ethical

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<sup>74</sup> De Jong, "Calvin's Contribution to Christian Education," 164.

<sup>75</sup> De Jong, "Calvin's Contribution to Christian Education," 175. 2 Pet. 2:2, 3:15, and 4:11.

<sup>76</sup> González, *History of Theological Education*, chap. 5.

<sup>77</sup> González, *History of Theological Education*, chap. 6.

<sup>78</sup> González, *History of Theological Education*, chap. 6.

<sup>79</sup> González, *History of Theological Education*, chap. 6.

life (book iii), and sacraments and eschatology (book iv)."<sup>80</sup> He invited others to correct his work, but he hoped that his work would also serve as a sounding board for further theological inquiry (as Calvin did in his *Institutes*). Lombard's *Sentences* served as the main theological textbook for years to come—even to the point where the Universities of Paris and Oxford required their students to study the *Sentences* and write a commentary on his work for their master's degrees to be conferred.<sup>81</sup>

Universities, as they are understood today, grew out of the educational innovations of scholasticism and Lombard, as well as Peter Abelard and Alexander of Hales.<sup>82</sup> Teachers and students self-organized into guilds to ensure the quality of their instruction and learning.<sup>83</sup> These guilds eventually turned into universities, with the first university being the University of Paris, which focused on the study of theology.<sup>84</sup> The term "university" is from the Latin *universitas magistrorum*, referring to "all the masters." In Europe, the three marks of a university were that they drew students from varying places geographically, would enable the study "higher Faculties" such as "Theology, Law, Medicine," and were taught by many "Masters."<sup>85</sup> As these guilds formalized, they

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<sup>80</sup> González, *History of Theological Education*, chap. 6. This framework helped structure many of the disciplines of systematic theology today: bibliology, theology proper, anthropology, hamartiology, Christology, soteriology, pneumatology, ecclesiology, and eschatology, followed by philosophy and ethics. Additionally, Calvin largely follows Lombard's structure in his *Institutes*.

<sup>81</sup> González, *History of Theological Education*, chap. 6.

<sup>82</sup> González, *History of Theological Education*, chap. 7.

<sup>83</sup> González, *History of Theological Education*, chap. 7; Henderson, *Teaching Office in the Reformed Tradition*, 18; Rashdall, *Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, 1, Salerno, Bologna, Paris:17.

<sup>84</sup> González, *History of Theological Education*, chap. 7.

<sup>85</sup> Beza, "Life of Calvin," xxix.

formed three predominate institutions in Europe: the University of Paris studied theology, the University of Bologna studied law, and the University of Salerno studied medicine.<sup>86</sup>

The typical instructional method employed by teachers was the lecture, and the main content would be the text.<sup>87</sup> Teachers would provide commentary on a particular text during the class.<sup>88</sup> The students, in response, would copy down both the text and their teacher's comments.<sup>89</sup> After some time in the university, students would present a thesis in front of the public and defend their idea. Based on the thesis and the defense, the university granted an appropriate degree.<sup>90</sup> The university curriculum started with the liberal arts—the *trivium* and *quadrivium*.<sup>91</sup> After successfully passing their examinations, students would be conferred a bachelor's degree.<sup>92</sup> There were several types of further bachelor studies: biblical bachelors would lecture on the Bible, devoting a year of study to a book in the OT and a year of study to a book in the NT; sententiary bachelors

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<sup>86</sup> Beza, "Life of Calvin," xxx.

<sup>87</sup> Olaf Pedersen, *The First Universities: Studium Generale and the Origins of University Education in Europe*, trans. Richard North (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 250.

<sup>88</sup> Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," 2; González, *History of Theological Education*, chap. 7; Henderson, *Teaching Office in the Reformed Tradition*, 46; Pedersen, *First Universities*, 255, 256, 258–61. Professors would also employ debate as a form of instruction where a thesis was proposed, opponents would present their arguments, proponents would present their arguments, and the professor would offer a final analysis. In modern terms, the lecture is seen as pedagogically inferior since it is a passive instructional technique. In ancient terms, the disputation was considered pedagogically inferior, as it often took quotes of other authors out of context, resulting in misinterpreted arguments and sources.

<sup>89</sup> Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," 2.

<sup>90</sup> Pedersen, *First Universities*, 264; Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," 2.

<sup>91</sup> González, *History of Theological Education*, chap. 7; Rashdall, *Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, 1, Salerno, Bologna, Paris:465.

<sup>92</sup> González, *History of Theological Education*, chap. 7; Rashdall, *Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, 1, Salerno, Bologna, Paris:464.

commented on Lombard's *Sentences*; formed bachelors would teach under an official professor for no more than five years.<sup>93</sup> After this long period of study, if a student's efforts and character proved worthy, they would become either a master or a doctor.<sup>94</sup>

These educational developments had a great impact on the Reformation. The Reformation was as much a university movement as it was an ecclesiastical movement—while the Reformation focused on the church, its origins date all the way back to the start of the medieval university. Luther sought to reform the practice of church indulgences, but his ideas came from his academic study of the Scriptures at the University of Wittenberg. Heinrich Bullinger in Zürich emphasized the humanistic motto *ad fontes*. He argued that the theological curriculum of universities should include the study of the original languages, which would lead to the study of the early church fathers as well.<sup>95</sup> Without the study of these languages, many of the influential sources of reform would be lost to the reformers. The Reformation depended on these educational developments, for ministers would be exposed to the light of the gospel, thus preaching the pure gospel to their laity.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> González, *History of Theological Education*, chap. 7; Rashdall, *Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, 1, Salerno, Bologna, Paris:465, 467.

<sup>94</sup> González, *History of Theological Education*, chap. 7; Pedersen, *First Universities*, 264–65; Rashdall, *Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, 1, Salerno, Bologna, Paris:463.

<sup>95</sup> González, *History of Theological Education*, chap. 10.

<sup>96</sup> Henderson, *Teaching Office in the Reformed Tradition*, 43; Reid, “Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva,” 1.



## Portrait of Higher Education

The final piece needed to contextualize Calvin's doctor of the church is the academy. The "official" beginning of higher education, as it is now known, is highly contested. Some point to Israeli synagogues as an institution of higher education. Yet others point to Plato and Aristotle's schools as institutions of higher education. Although debating the official beginning of higher education in world history is outside the scope of this thesis, most agree that the founding of the universities in Bologna and Paris mark the official beginning of Western higher education as it is known. While both institutions are significant to the history of Western European education, for the purposes of this study, Calvin's academy of Geneva will be examined as a model for Reformation-era universities.

### *History of the Academy of Geneva*

Although Calvin founded the Academy of Geneva in 1559,<sup>97</sup> several other figures before him attempted to establish one. Emperor Charles VI issued a proclamation to establish the University of Geneva in 1365—nothing materialized out of it. François de Versonnex donated money to the city of Geneva to establish a school in 1429. However, the first physical part of the school was not built until 1494. The first actual class was held in 1502—73 years after the initial donation and 137 years after the proclamation classes were finally in session.<sup>98</sup> The only types of schools were "vernacular schools

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<sup>97</sup> Beza, "Life of Calvin," lxxviii.

<sup>98</sup> Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," 6.

(usually private run, accessible to both boys and girls) or ... Latin school[s] (either private or city-run, in practice only open to boys).<sup>99</sup>

There are many factors that contributed to the delay from 1365 to 1502. No matter the reason, education was clearly not a high priority for the city. This low prioritization of schools is evident in the meager pay given to teachers in Geneva.<sup>100</sup> This devaluation means that the most qualified and knowledgeable teachers would not consider teaching in the city; they would simply teach elsewhere for better pay. As a result, students lacked quality instruction. Rather than starting with a somewhat knowledgeable population, Calvin started with "an abysmal ignorance" in the citizens.<sup>101</sup> In fact, many pastors were imported into Geneva because the current pastors could not meet the educational requirements of "advanced training, at the university level, if possible, including instruction in Greek and Hebrew."<sup>102</sup> The short supply of qualified teachers created a vicious cycle of perpetuated ignorance. One cannot teach ignorant students if they do not have teachers, and yet, one cannot have more teachers if the students remain ignorant. As

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<sup>99</sup> Maag, "Reformed Education and the Genevan Academy," 112.

<sup>100</sup> Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," 7.

<sup>101</sup> Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," 7; González, *History of Theological Education*, chap. 10. It appears that this "abysmal ignorance" was not uncommon during the Reformation, especially during the time of Luther and Melancthon. In 1527, John of Saxony commissioned competent pastors and professors to visit churches to ensure "they were fulfilling their mission, that their account and administration were in order, and that the true doctrine of the gospel was being taught." However, what they found was "abysmal ignorance": they accepted faith because that's what they were told to do, they did not understand salvation nor ethics, and they regularly pronounced heresy. This "abysmal ignorance" led Melancthon (though commonly believed to be Luther) to compose the *Instructions for the Visitors of Parish Pastors in Electoral Saxony*, in which a plan was laid out to correct these errors. Bullinger in Zürich identified many of the same issues and proposed similar educational solutions.

<sup>102</sup> Mark J. Larson, "John Calvin and Genevan Presbyterianism," *Westminster Theological Journal* 60, no. 1 (1998): 49; Reid, *Theological Treatises*, 63. Like OT sacrificial law, Calvin set the ideal of what teachers a school should have and provided varying designations to ensure Genevan citizens were instructed—he desired a professor of OT and a professor of NT at least.

older teachers retired or passed away, there were no new teachers to fill the gaps, causing the cycle to continue.

Calvin could not find other partners who wanted to serve in his academy.<sup>103</sup> However, by God's providence, he eventually discovered a trove of qualified teachers. To the north, authorities in Berne stirred controversy with Lausanne.<sup>104</sup> As a result, many professors began to resign from their posts and seek out new teaching opportunities.<sup>105</sup> Calvin encouraged these professors to come teach at his new academy in Geneva. Some accepted, and Calvin opened the doors to the academy on Friday, June 5, 1559.<sup>106</sup> At the helm of academic leadership were Theodore Beza, who served as the rector, Antione Chevalier, who served as professor of Hebrew, François Beraud, who served as professor of Greek, and Jean Tagaut, who served as professor of arts.<sup>107</sup> Though it took 18 years to come together, the little school of Geneva had an enrollment of 1,500 students by 1564, many of which furthered the ideals of the Reformation in subsequent generations.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," 7, 10.

<sup>104</sup> Beza, "Life of Calvin," lviii; Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," 10.

<sup>105</sup> Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," 10.

<sup>106</sup> Maag, "Reformed Education and the Genevan Academy," 111; Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," 10.

<sup>107</sup> Maag, "Reformed Education and the Genevan Academy," 117–18; Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," 10.

<sup>108</sup> González, *History of Theological Education*, chap. 10.

## *Educational Philosophy of the Academy of Geneva*

The continuation of the Western educational tradition outlined above is found in the Academy of Geneva.<sup>109</sup> The Academy of Geneva brought together the low tier and upper tier into the same institution, similar to the Academy of Lausanne, Strasbourg Gymnasium, and Université des Arts et Collège.<sup>110</sup> Although Calvin united the upper and lower schools into the same institution, the Academy still had a dualistic boundary between them.<sup>111</sup> The first school of the Academy was the *schola privata*: children up to 16 years old being trained in the *trivium* and *quadrivium*.<sup>112</sup> The lower tier of the Academy of Geneva focused specifically on religious instruction of children.<sup>113</sup> The second school of the Academy was the *schola publica*: children 16 years and older being trained in the medicine, law, arts, and theology.<sup>114</sup> The upper tier of the Academy of Geneva did not focus much on religious instruction, though they required strict adherence to their confession of faith.<sup>115</sup> The Academy of Geneva enabled students to learn about the humanities, God's Word, and spiritual growth.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Harbison, *Christian Scholar in the Age of the Reformation*, 145.

<sup>110</sup> Maag, "Reformed Education and the Genevan Academy," 116.

<sup>111</sup> González, *History of Theological Education*, chap. 10; Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," 11.

<sup>112</sup> Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," 11.

<sup>113</sup> Maag, "Reformed Education and the Genevan Academy," 117.

<sup>114</sup> González, *History of Theological Education*, chap. 10; Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," 11.

<sup>115</sup> Maag, "Reformed Education and the Genevan Academy," 117.

<sup>116</sup> Maag, "Reformed Education and the Genevan Academy," 111.

The vision for the Academy of Geneva was conceived by Calvin and his company of pastors in Geneva for the express purpose of training men to be the next leaders of the church and their communities.<sup>117</sup> Like Bucer, Calvin believed that sound doctrine would produce vital faith and service in others.<sup>118</sup> In fact, Beza lectured "that they were not there solely for instruction and even less for ephemeral games, as the Greeks were accustomed to in their gymnasia, but that they had for their task, to work for the glory of God, and for their duty, to become soldiers worthy of their mission."<sup>119</sup> Education was a serious endeavor to the leadership because through it, they produced knowledge and piety of not only the Christian faith but the Reformed faith specifically, as pitted against the Roman Catholic Church.

The church and the academy partnered in this endeavor; the ministers chose the doctors and supervised their teachings.<sup>120</sup> This hierarchy meant that even though the academy had its own leadership structure, the ecclesiastical leaders had the final say in the instruction. Not only that, but the Academy of Geneva held its first service in the Church of Saint Peter.<sup>121</sup> Like every other medieval school, they started in the worship space of the church or monastery. This shared space meant that what the students and

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<sup>117</sup> Maag, "Reformed Education and the Genevan Academy," 112; Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," 8.

<sup>118</sup> Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," 7.

<sup>119</sup> Maag, "Reformed Education and the Genevan Academy," 111; Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," 10.

<sup>120</sup> Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," 8.

<sup>121</sup> Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," 10.

professor pursued in the coming years was not a mere intellectual exercise but an act of worship to God.

### *A Day in the Academy*

Calvin's curricular day started with elements of the *trivium* and the *quadrivium* and culminated in a lecture on either the Old Testament or the New Testament.<sup>122</sup> The academic year began in May and ran for 12 months. Students received only three weeks of breaks during the year. Classes in the summer ran from 6:00 AM to 4:00 PM, whereas in the winter, they were delayed by an hour. Students had two hours of break throughout the day: 30 minutes for breakfast and one and a half hours for lunch.<sup>123</sup> Every class opened with Calvin's catechism prayer, and the day ended with the Lord's prayer, the school's confession, and the ten commandments.<sup>124</sup> These bookends instilled sound doctrine into students through daily liturgy. At the beginning of the day, they would have the theology of the school instilled in their minds as a reminder of the school's purpose and their purpose within it. This prayer would orient students to the day and usher them into a meditative state amid their learning. They would conclude their day with Scripture and scriptural prayers as a reminder of their foundation for all of life and doctrine—*sola Scriptura*. They would conclude their day by dedicating their time to the Lord, placing their learning in the Lord's hands. Even as they grew in academic ability, they would rely

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<sup>122</sup> Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," 7.

<sup>123</sup> Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," 12.

<sup>124</sup> Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," 17. Intriguingly, medieval schools incorporated the daily office, but Calvin loathed the repetitive prayers he endured growing up. It seems Calvin improved on this experience without completely rejecting the system.

on God for provision. Students would be reminded of the theological dedication they made when they entered the school. Finally, as students recited the ten commandments, they would be reminded of the ethical demands placed on their life as they concluded their studies and entered back into their communities.

Three days a week, the school's schedule would culminate in a theological lecture from Calvin or Beza.<sup>125</sup> After the lecture, psalms were sung for an hour as a form of prayer and praise for hearing God's Word explained.<sup>126</sup> Both Calvin and Beza—committed to the most recent scholarship and pedagogical methods—adopted the new grammatico-historical hermeneutic that still serves as the basis of evangelical and reformed exegesis to this day.<sup>127</sup> This hermeneutical method situated the biblical text in its original context, and the grammar would be closely scrutinized in order to draw out its proper meaning. To teach, one's mind had to be clear, direct, truthful, and focused so that all people may learn.<sup>128</sup> As one reads Calvin's and Beza's lectures, they will discover a clearly organized layout and concise explanation of the text. Though other commentators may be quoted, the content of their lectures continually came back to Scripture, as Calvin and Beza sought to communicate the truth of God's Word accurately to their listeners. This fidelity modeled for students the accuracy they should have in their writing, presenting, and teaching.

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<sup>125</sup> Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," 16.

<sup>126</sup> Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," 17.

<sup>127</sup> Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," 16. Calvin's lectures turned into many of his commentaries. He did not want to publish them, wishing to refine his lectures later for publication. However, as he became older, his students pleaded with him to allow them to publish his lectures on his behalf.

<sup>128</sup> Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," 19.

The leadership structure in the Academy was simple but followed a more hierarchical model. The rector had a two-year term as the chief administrator, admitting students into the university and conferring degrees.<sup>129</sup> The principal—who was a teacher appointed to the position—oversaw the academic departments' work. The regents were the professors who instructed the students under the leadership of the principal.<sup>130</sup> Doctors in the Academy bore the responsibility of lecturing in theology, especially in their discipline.<sup>131</sup>

The *schola privata* had seven classes as it relates to the *trivium and quadrivium*. To graduate from these classes, students had to write an essay in French in April and then translate it into Latin. The rector would grade the essay and choose the two best students to reward publicly.<sup>132</sup> Upon successful completion, students would progress to the next level of the school.

Students had the option of 27 hours of lectures throughout the week.<sup>133</sup> This freedom runs contrary to the popular classroom schedule and structure many schools have today. However, this freedom during the week had its bounds. As previously discussed, whereas higher education at the time would graduate students based on their skill level, Calvin recognized (as influenced by Bucer and Strum) that there was a logical progression to a student's progress through the curriculum. While Calvin was not given

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<sup>129</sup> Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," 11.

<sup>130</sup> Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," 12.

<sup>131</sup> Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," 7.

<sup>132</sup> Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," 12.

<sup>133</sup> Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," 13.



over to complete libertarianism, he still enabled students to have some degree of freedom in their learning. The university student registered, signed the schools' confession, and attended lectures, whereas college students had more structure than the university students.<sup>134</sup> Outside of these requirements, the students' learning was largely in their own hands.

The arts and theology were added to the regular course of curriculum to know God through both general and special revelation and to serve him through ministry and faith.<sup>135</sup> This addition reflected Calvin's special theological emphasis through his writings. While the study of theology reveals God's special revelation to his people—things that cannot be known about God through nature—there is still a place for general revelation, for both come from God. The arts and the sciences were viewed in the curriculum as the means for understanding God through general revelation. While many wonderful works have been created in the arts, and advancements have been made in the sciences, these disciplines were not for the praise of man but for the praise of God—*solī Deo gloria*.<sup>136</sup>

As part of the requirements for attending the Academy of Geneva, on Sunday afternoons, students would sit under ministers as they expounded God's Word.<sup>137</sup> Children were required to go to every sermon at their church, "both for the Wednesday

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<sup>134</sup> Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," 13.

<sup>135</sup> Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," 14.

<sup>136</sup> Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," 18.

<sup>137</sup> Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," 16.

sermon and the two Sunday services."<sup>138</sup> Not only were these times another opportunity to learn from God's Word, but they also provided the space for students to be ministered to amid arduous studies. They reoriented students to the purpose of their studies: to serve God's people. Once a month, students would write an essay on a matter of theology related to the church sermons that the professor of theology would sustain.<sup>139</sup> These monthly opportunities integrated the work of the church and the academy. Rather than seeing them as distinct spheres, students were able to see how the church informed their studies and how their studies informed the work of the church.

According to Calvin, the purpose of education was for students to become teachers to teach other students.<sup>140</sup> This overriding purpose undoubtedly informed the Academy of Geneva as he set it up and regularly taught there. Knowledge was not to achieve some higher state of being, nor was it for the purpose of mere intellectualism. Knowledge was a gift from God;<sup>141</sup> therefore, it was to be used for God's people in whatever capacity the students were called.

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<sup>138</sup> Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," 17.

<sup>139</sup> Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," 16.

<sup>140</sup> Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," 19.

<sup>141</sup> Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," 20.

## Chapter 3

### Calvin's Exegesis, Theology, and Academy

Next, we will examine five loci (Romans 12, *Ecclesiastical Ordinances*, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4, Acts 13, and Institutes 4) to gain an understanding of Calvin's conception of the doctor of the church and evaluate his biblical exegesis, theological arguments, and doctrinal applications. The implications of his belief concerning the doctor are worked out in the context of the Academy of Geneva. In summary, Calvin's ecclesiology consisted of four offices: "(1) the preaching pastor, corresponding to the presbyter or bishop of the New Testament; (2) the doctor or teacher; (3) the deacon, who serves the sick and the poor; and (4) the governor,<sup>1</sup> who joins the minister in the government of the church and the administration of discipline."<sup>2</sup>

#### Romans 12:4–8

The first passage we will examine is Romans 12:4–8, specifically verse 7: "Or ministry, *let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching.*"<sup>3</sup>

The main point of this text, according to Calvin, is to further define what Paul meant when he limited wisdom according to the size of one's faith. The purpose of this

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<sup>1</sup> Calvin's "governor" is often what Reformed churches call today "elder" or "ruling elder." I will use "governor" to remain true to Calvin's ecclesiology.

<sup>2</sup> John Thomas McNeill, "John Calvin: Doctor Ecclesiae," in *The Heritage of John Calvin: Heritage Hall Lectures 1960-1970*, ed. John H. Bratt (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1973), 16, 17.

<sup>3</sup> John Calvin, *Commentary on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans*, trans. John Owen (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1849), 457–58. Emphasis mine in the final clause. In the Latin, "*sive qui docet, in doctrina.*"

limitation is so that God's people may be united, as symbolized by the human body. The limitations and connection of God's people are meant to cause Christians to consider their "nature, capacity, and vocation"—namely, what they are to do in this life, how much they are able to do, and how they are able to use their gifting. Each person has his own "office" and is supposed to fulfill the obligations that God has called him to fulfill; he is not to envy the offices of others or attempt to fill all of them: "[A]s the members of the same body have distinct offices, and all of them are distinct, for no member possesses all powers, nor does it appropriate to itself the offices of others; so God has distributed various gifts to us. . . ."<sup>4</sup>

The underlying virtue for each office or gift is humility: "Paul speaks not now simply of cherishing among ourselves brotherly love, but commends humility, which is the best moderator of our whole life."<sup>5</sup> Humility will enable Christians to be content in their various offices and to rely on the gifting of others. After devoting space to the purpose and function of the prophet, Calvin transitions to the office of minister and teacher.<sup>6</sup> The minister is to minister to God's people faithfully so that he may be above

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<sup>4</sup> Calvin, *Rom.*, 458. In the OPC, they call this the "General Office."

<sup>5</sup> Calvin, *Rom.*, 459.

<sup>6</sup> Calvin, *Rom.*, 459–61; Henderson, *Teaching Office in the Reformed Tradition*, 25–27. In the Greek text (United Bible Societies 5<sup>th</sup> edition/Nestle-Aland 28<sup>th</sup> edition) of Rom. 12:7, minister and teacher are separated by a comma, both start with εἶτε, and there is no further comment unlike the gift of prophecy. These three pieces with the lack of a logical conjunction indicate that a loose connection exists between these giftings; the only connection is that they are items three and four in a series of gifts. Although a strong exegetical argument, it is quite evident that Calvin drew a direct line from the office of prophet to Christ, to the office of doctor. Calvin defined the function of OT prophets in relation to doctors as "guides, expounders of the law, sowers (but not reapers [for the was the function of pastors as evangelists]) of the doctrine of the gospel, teachers whose *docendi forma* sets forth Christ; in other words, they perform a didactic office and their doctrine is based on the teachings of Moses, whom Calvin calls the chief teacher (*summus doctor*)." (Henderson, *Teaching Office in the Reformed Tradition*, 25–27.) Calvin did note a secondary function of prophet, in that they foretold future events, but this function is distinct from the office of teaching elder.

reproach: "Let him who is ordained a minister, he says, execute his office in ministering; nor let him think, that he has been admitted into that degree for himself, but for others."<sup>7</sup> The purpose of the "teacher"—or doctor—is to instruct the church by his study of the Word so that she may be more informed concerning the faith: "[A] teacher is he who forms and builds the Church by the word of truth."<sup>8</sup> What is unique about Calvin's commentary on verses 6 and 7 is that he wrestles with the overlap and distinction between the gifts Paul delineated: prophet, minister, and teacher. All three exhort in some capacity, though not all are required to exhort; one is called to minister, and yet by their building up of the church through their gifts, they all minister to Christians: "But these offices have much affinity and even connection; not however that they were not different."<sup>9</sup> He concludes that to the best of one's ability, they should fulfill their office and gift to the best of their ability and maintain the distinction so that they can "produce order in the Church."<sup>10</sup>

In summary, the minister of the Church cares for God's people whereas the teacher of the church instructs them in doctrine. Both offices are performed in distinction from one another; the minister primarily focuses on ministering; the doctor primarily focuses on teaching. Neither one should try to fulfill the obligations of the other office. This distinction is maintained through humility and reliance on one another. However

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<sup>7</sup> Calvin, *Rom.*, 461.

<sup>8</sup> Calvin, *Rom.*, 462.

<sup>9</sup> Calvin, *Rom.*, 462; González, *History of Theological Education*, chap. 1. The process of calling pastors finds its roots even in the early church.

<sup>10</sup> Calvin, *Rom.*, 462–63. Calvin concludes his commentary on this portion of text by studying "deacons" and "governors" (or ruling elders).

arbitrary this distinction may seem, it is endowed by God and should be maintained to the best of one's ability.

### ***Ecclesiastical Ordinances***

Although a shorter writing, Calvin's *Draft Ecclesiastical Ordinances*<sup>11</sup> provides an important temporal mark in his understanding of the doctor of the church. Calvin wrote the *Ecclesiastical Ordinances* for Geneva after his time in Strasbourg.<sup>12</sup> This text could be understood as Calvin creating from scratch his own church government from scratch. In essence, Calvin merely articulated church structure in the medieval church and how it could be reformed.<sup>13</sup>

In the *Ecclesiastical Ordinances*, Calvin declares that "doctors [are to] instruct the faithful in true doctrine, in order that the purity of the Gospel be not corrupted either by ignorance or by evil opinions."<sup>14</sup> Essentially, as doctors instructed Christians in truth, the place for false teachings would be filtered out because the people would no longer be ignorant. The rest of this section is devoted to the structure of schools in Geneva, which has been covered extensively in Chapter 2. In summary, the sole function of the doctor in this work "was specifically to exercise his function in the academic endeavor of the church."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> *Draft Ecclesiastical Ordinances*, Geneva, September and October 1541 as appeared in Reid, *Theological Treatises*, 58–72.

<sup>12</sup> Henderson, *Teaching Office in the Reformed Tradition*, 57; Reid, *Theological Treatises*, 56.

<sup>13</sup> Henderson, *Teaching Office in the Reformed Tradition*, 57.

<sup>14</sup> Reid, *Theological Treatises*, 62.

<sup>15</sup> Henderson, *Teaching Office in the Reformed Tradition*, 60.

## 1 Corinthians 12:28–31

Calvin's train of thought in his commentary on Rom. picks up with a similar passage from Paul in 1 Corinthians:<sup>16</sup> "And God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, *thirdly teachers*, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues."<sup>17</sup>

Paul has transitioned from speaking about gifts to the offices of the church. He once again emphasizes the good and proper order of the church.<sup>18</sup> However, he draws out more clearly than in his comments on Romans that the gifts are prerequisites for the office: "For the Lord did not appoint ministers, without first endowing them with the requisite gifts, and qualifying them for discharging their duty."<sup>19</sup> Following this order will enable the church to discern the qualifications and maturity of the person desiring the office and identify those who are seeking the office for their own pride and desiring to destroy Jesus' church.<sup>20</sup>

He begins his commentary on the text with the office of apostle.<sup>21</sup> He highlights a distinction between two types of offices in the church: some temporary for the immediate

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<sup>16</sup> Calvin, *Rom.*, 458n1.

<sup>17</sup> John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, trans. John Pringle (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1848), 1:413. Emphasis mine. In the Latin, "*tertio Doctores*."

<sup>18</sup> Calvin, *1 Cor.*, *2 Cor.*, 1:413.

<sup>19</sup> Calvin, *1 Cor.*, *2 Cor.*, 1:413-14.

<sup>20</sup> Calvin, *1 Cor.*, *2 Cor.*, 1:414. "Hence we must infer, that those are fanatics, and actuated by an evil spirit, who intrude themselves into the Church, while destitute of the necessary qualifications, as many boast that they are under the influence of the Spirit, and glory in a secret call from God, while in the meantime they are unlearned and utterly ignorant."

<sup>21</sup> Admittedly, Calvin's commentary of verse 28 is somewhat muddled as he transitions between various offices making comparisons and contrasts without much warning.

building of Jesus' church and some perpetual for the continual functioning of the church.<sup>22</sup> He assigns the office of apostle the temporary need and the office of teacher the perpetual need: "To the *first* class [perpetual office] belongs the office of *Teacher*, to the *second* [temporary office] the office of *Apostle* . . . ."<sup>23</sup> In addition, he comments that apostles are commissioned to spread the gospel across the whole earth while pastors are assigned to spread the gospel in a particular church.<sup>24</sup>

Next, he moves to the office of prophet who interprets Scripture and applies it for contemporary usage in the church according to God's will: "By this term [prophets] he [Paul] means, (in my opinion,) . . . those who were endowed with a peculiar gift, not merely for interpreting Scripture, but also for applying it wisely for present use."<sup>25</sup> He contrasts the office of prophet with teacher as this office ensures "sound doctrines [are] maintained and propagated, in order that the purity of religion may be kept up in the Church."<sup>26</sup> He highlights the similarity this office has with pastor, but he leaves it up to the reader to determine whether these offices are one and the same or the gift of teaching

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<sup>22</sup> Calvin, *1 Cor.*, *2 Cor.*, 1:414. "As to the passage before us, we must observe, that of the offices which Paul makes mention of, some are perpetual, others temporary. Those that are perpetual, are such as are necessary for the government of the Church; those that are temporary, are such as were appointed at the beginning for the founding of the Church, and the raising up of Christ's kingdom; and these, in a short time afterwards, ceased."

<sup>23</sup> Calvin, *1 Cor.*, *2 Cor.*, 1:414.

<sup>24</sup> Calvin, *1 Cor.*, *2 Cor.*, 1:414-15. "[F]or the Lord created the Apostles, that they might spread the gospel throughout the whole world, and he did not assign to each of them certain limits or parishes, but would have them, wherever they went, to discharge the office of ambassadors among all nations and languages. In this respect there is a difference between them and *Pastors*, who are, in a manner, tied to their particular churches. For the *Pastor* has not a commission to preach the gospel over the whole world, but to take care of the Church that has been committed to his charge."

<sup>25</sup> Calvin, *1 Cor.*, *2 Cor.*, 1:415.

<sup>26</sup> Calvin, *1 Cor.*, *2 Cor.*, 1:415.



is particularly highlighted: "[T]his term is taken in different senses, and here perhaps it is used rather in the sense of Pastor, unless you prefer, it may be, to take it in a general way for all that are endowed with the gift of teaching, as in Acts 13:1, where also Luke conjoins them with Prophets."<sup>27</sup> Calvin then transitions to his exposition of deacons (which he covered in Romans 12) and elders who administer the discipline of the church.<sup>28</sup>

Finally, Calvin concludes his exposition of verse 28 with "tongues"—the ones who know other languages and can interpret either direction.<sup>29</sup>

Calvin revisits the administration of the gifts and offices from God to his people in verse 29. He highlights the extraneous possibility that one may have multiple gifts and therefore is able to hold multiple offices. However, he argues that this is the exception to the rule. Rather, Paul is highlighting that even if one may have multiple gifts, that person is not able to fulfill them to the fullest capacity—let alone even if they only had one gifting. Additionally, the point of the administration of the gifts is that no one person can make up the whole of what the church needs to flourish—each member must rely on one another.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Calvin, *1 Cor., 2 Cor.*, 1:415.

<sup>28</sup> Calvin, *1 Cor., 2 Cor.*, 1:416-17. "By *Governments* I understand *Elders*, who had the charge of discipline. For the primitive Church had its Senate, for the purpose of keeping the people in propriety of deportment, as Paul shows elsewhere, when he makes mention of two kinds of Presbyters. (1 Tim. 5:17) Hence *government* consisted of those Presbyters who excelled others in gravity, experience, and authority."

<sup>29</sup> Calvin, *1 Cor., 2 Cor.*, 1:417.

<sup>30</sup> Calvin, *1 Cor., 2 Cor.*, 1:417. "Paul's object, however, is to show in the *first* place, that no one has such a fulness in everything as to have a sufficiency within himself, and not require the aid of others; and *secondly*, that offices as well as gifts are distributed in such a manner that no one member constitutes the whole body, but each contributing his portion to the common advantage, they then altogether constitute an entire and perfect body."

Calvin concludes his commentary on this passage with verse 31. Admittedly, the interpretation of seeking after the excellent gifts gives some cause for stumbling, especially since one is supposed to be content in their gifting and office. However, Calvin argues that Paul's main point is that the whole church should "desire to promote edification" of the people.<sup>31</sup>

In summary, for the church to be orderly, each one called to an office based on their gifts must pursue it—and that includes the doctor. To avoid pride, the doctor must possess humility in his calling to the office. This office is considered perpetual in that it was not used for the rapid expansion of the gospel in the early church but is necessary for the continuing flourishing of the church. The doctor must support and spread sound doctrine in the church. Although this function bears similarity to the pastorate, the office specifically focuses on the teaching of sound doctrine. Even though these offices are distinct, they are both necessary and dependent on each other. Although it may be possible for a doctor to be a good pastor—and a pastor to be a good doctor—this dual enrollment is the exception to the general role of one calling and one station.

### **Ephesians 4:11–14**

We will next move on to Calvin's understanding of the doctor of the church as seen in Ephesians 4:11-14: "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some,

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<sup>31</sup> Calvin, *1 Cor.*, *2 Cor.*, 1:418.

evangelists; *and some, pastors and teachers . . .*"<sup>32</sup> He connects the subsequent discussion with his commentary on 1 Corinthians.<sup>33</sup>

Once again, Paul is emphasizing how the gifts are distributed. Calvin highlights that logical order of possessing a gift before holding an office. However, he nuances this order differently than his commentary on Romans and 1 Corinthians. The office is a recognition of one's ability to exercise their gifts appropriately and effectively: "[W]hen men are called by God, gifts are necessarily connected with offices. God does not confer on men the mere name . . . but also endows them with gifts, without which they cannot properly discharge their office. . . . [F]or the divine command, and the ability to perform it, go together."<sup>34</sup>

To begin, Calvin emphasizes that the government of the church is no human construct but God's construct passed to his people through his Word: "[T]he government of the church, by the ministry of the word, is not a contrivance of men, but as an appointment made by the Son of God."<sup>35</sup> The leaders do not install themselves into these positions but are installed by the church into these positions. Since church government is derived from God through his Word, and the officers are appointed by God's people, to disobey these leaders is to disobey God. As mentioned before, the diversity of offices and gifts contributes to the unity and flourishing of the church and God's people. The gifts are

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<sup>32</sup> John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians*, trans. John Pringle (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1854), 277. Emphasis mine. In the Latin, "*alios pastores et doctores*"

<sup>33</sup> Calvin, *Gal., Eph.*, 278n1.

<sup>34</sup> Calvin, *Gal., Eph.*, 277.

<sup>35</sup> Calvin, *Gal., Eph.*, 277–78.

not meant to be a source of pride and envy but of humility and generosity: "He [Paul] therefore reminds them, that the gifts bestowed on individuals are intended, not to be held for their personal and separate interests, but to be employed for the benefit of the whole."<sup>36</sup>

However, he highlights the similarity of the pastor and doctor. Whereas in his prior commentary he leaves the similarity up to the reader, he recognizes that some believe they are one and the same.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, in this commentary he will set forth his own view. Calvin defines the office of apostles as their responsibility "to spread the doctrine of the gospel throughout the whole world, to plant churches, and to erect the kingdom of Christ."<sup>38</sup> He then defines the office of evangelists in the same way—as the office of apostles but in a more supporting capacity: "Next to them [apostles] come the *Evangelists*, who were closely allied in the nature of their office, but held an inferior

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<sup>36</sup> Calvin, *Gal., Eph.*, 278.

<sup>37</sup> Knight, "Two Offices: A NT Study," 10; Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, 1995, 271. Knight reads: "Since Eph. 4:11 omits the definite article before 'teachers,' pastors and teachers are the same class." Compare this to Wallace on the Granville Sharp Rule: "When the copulative καὶ connects two nouns of the same case, [viz. nouns (either substantive or adjective or participles) of personal description, respecting office, dignity, affinity, or connexion [*sic*], and attributes, properties, or qualities good or ill], if the article ὁ, or any of its cases, precedes the first of the said nouns or participles, and is not repeated before the second noun or participle, the latter always relates to the same person that is expressed or described by the first noun or participle: *i.e.* it denotes a father description of the first-name person."

Wallace agrees with Calvin's assessment, though not with the same argument (284): "The uniting of these two groups by one article sets them apart from the other gifted leaders. Absolute distinction, then, is probably not in view. In light of the fact that elders and pastors had similar functions in the NT, since elders were to be teachers the pastors were also to be teachers. Further, presumably not all teachers were elders or pastors. This evidence seems to suggest that the ποιμένες [*poimenas*] were a part of the διδασκάλους [*didaskalous*] in Eph 4:11. This likelihood is in keep with the semantics of the plural noun construction, for the first-subset-of-second category is well-attested in both the clear and ambiguous texts in the NT. Thus, Eph 4:11 seems to affirm that all pastors were to be teachers, though not all teachers were to be pastors."

<sup>38</sup> Calvin, *Gal., Eph.*, 279. Compare to Calvin's commentary on 1 Cor.—this office would be temporary and not perpetual.

rank."<sup>39</sup> Then, Calvin defined the office of prophets. Though there is some futuristic aspect to their work, he prefers to emphasize their interpretive gifts and application of revelation to those who would hear or listen to their word. They would also teach doctrine as needed.<sup>40</sup>

Calvin then turns his attention to pastors and teachers. He recognizes and understands the arguments others pose; namely, the syntax of the sentence in Greek does not match what precedes this clause: "*Pastors and Teachers* are supposed by some to denote one office, because the apostle does not, as in the other parts of the verse, say, *and some, pastors; and some, teachers*; but, τοὺς δὲ, ποιμένας καὶ διδασκάλους [*tous de poimenas kai didaskalous*], *and some, pastors and teachers*."<sup>41</sup> He also recognizes the historical attestation that these offices are one and the same: "Chrysostom and Augustine are of this opinion; not to mention the commentaries of Ambrose, whose observations on the subject are truly childish and unworthy of himself."<sup>42</sup> To an extent, Calvin does agree with this assessment in that the name teacher does apply to pastors. However, Calvin is convinced more of the pragmatic argument for the distinction rather than the exegetical argument for the unity. Pastors are supposed to teach, but the continual maintenance of

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<sup>39</sup> Calvin, *Gal., Eph.*, 279. Compare to Calvin's commentary on Rom. for the same explanation, though clearer in this commentary.

<sup>40</sup> Calvin, *Gal., Eph.*, 279. "I would rather define the word *prophets*, as on a former occasion, to mean distinguished interpreters of prophecies, who, by a remarkable gift of revelation, applied them to the subjects which they had occasion to handle; not excluding, however, the gift of prophecy, by which their doctrinal instruction was usually accompanied."

<sup>41</sup> Calvin, *Gal., Eph.*, 279. Before each office, the definite article in the plural, masculine, accusative is present: καὶ ... τοὺς ... ἀποστόλους, τοὺς δὲ προφήτας, τοὺς δὲ εὐαγγελιστάς. Except for the final clause, which only has it once before both nouns: τοὺς δὲ ποιμένας καὶ διδασκάλους. See above footnote for Wallace's assessment of the Granville Sharp Rule and the first-subset-of-second category.

<sup>42</sup> Calvin, *Gal., Eph.*, 279. Ambrose, Augustine, Chrysostom.

sound doctrine requires focused skills and time for interpretation, which a pastor may not always have. In the same way, a teacher may have the skill of teaching but not the ability to preach the Word in a way that convicts people of their sin, counsels them in their struggles, and proclaims the power of the gospel. In addition, pastors focus on a particular flock, whereas teachers do not. While pastors may be called teachers because they do protect doctrine to a degree, Calvin only encourages the practice in that people recognize there is still a special class of teachers who educate other pastors and instruct the laity of the church. A person may inhabit both offices, but this inhabitation does not erase the distinction in function both offices have.<sup>43</sup>

Calvin begins to summarize his commentary on verse 11 by highlighting the temporary nature of the first three offices and the perpetual nature of the final two offices, as he does in his commentary on Rom.: "It deserves attention, also, that, of the five offices which are here enumerated, not more than the last two are intended to be perpetual."<sup>44</sup> However, he concludes that the final two offices—doctor and pastor—are necessary offices for church government to exist. Calvin concludes his commentary by highlighting the complaints of the papists concerning Paul in that the *bishoprick* is not listed as an office: "Papists have some reason to complain, that their primacy, of which they boast so much, is openly insulted in this passage."<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Calvin, *Gal., Eph.*, 280. "*Pastors*, in my opinion, are those who have the charge of a particular flock; though I have no objection to their receiving the name of *teachers*, if it be understood that there is a distinct class of *teachers*, who preside both in the education of pastors and in the instruction of the whole church."

<sup>44</sup> Calvin, *Gal., Eph.*, 280. Note that the office of evangelist may come back into use when "religion has fallen into decay, ... [they] are raised up in an extraordinary manner, to restore the pure doctrine which had been lost."

<sup>45</sup> Calvin, *Gal., Eph.*, 280–81.

The purpose of these offices is for Christians to mature in Jesus. God could very well perform the duties of these offices without the help of humanity, but he uses his creation to govern his church: "God might himself have performed this work, if he had chosen; but he has committed it to the *ministry* of men."<sup>46</sup> Calvin once again emphasizes that since Jesus is sovereign over his church, he has the authority to prescribe how it is governed: "If the edification of the church proceeds from Christ alone, he has surely a right to prescribe in what manner it shall be edified."<sup>47</sup>

Additionally, these perpetual offices and their functions are to continue until the end of the believer's life or the world: "The necessity for which he had pleaded is not confined to a single day, but continues to the end. Or, to speak more plainly, he reminds his readers that the use of the ministry is not temporal, like that of a school for children, (*παιδαγωγία* [*paidagogia*], Gal. 3:24) but constant, so long as we remain in the world."<sup>48</sup> Until then, believers are bound to listen to their pastors and teachers and come together with fellow believers in unity. All instruction has its root in Christ-centered faith, for anything else would be vain and fleeting: "To the Son of God alone faith ought to look; on him it relies; in him it rests and terminates. If it proceed farther, it will disappear, and will no longer be faith, but a delusion."<sup>49</sup>

Finally, Calvin concludes this section of his commentary with an exposition on sanctification. The purpose of these perpetual offices is so that one may no longer be a

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<sup>46</sup> Calvin, *Gal., Eph.*, 281.

<sup>47</sup> Calvin, *Gal., Eph.*, 282.

<sup>48</sup> Calvin, *Gal., Eph.*, 282–83.

<sup>49</sup> Calvin, *Gal., Eph.*, 283.

child but a man (or woman) in Jesus—in short, that the Christian may be sanctified.

There are times when this growth is more evident than other times; in fact, there may be times of backsliding. However, a sure sign that a Christian is saved even though he still struggles with sanctification is their desire to continually mature.<sup>50</sup>

Calvin concludes this final section with an exposition of Paul's metaphor. In essence, if one is not rooted in God, he will be carried back and forth by the attacks of Satan through false teachers with false doctrine.<sup>51</sup>

To summarize, the gift of teaching is realized before the office is granted. The office does not grant the ability to teach but is a recognition of one's ability to teach in humility. The office of doctor is not a human construct, but like all other offices, it is ordained by God. The doctor is to promote the unity and flourishing of God's people through instruction of the Word. The maintenance of sound doctrine requires someone devoting as much time as possible to interpreting the Word and refining his hermeneutical skills. This purpose does not mean that pastors are not able to or cannot preserve sound doctrine. Rather, it is a matter of focus for each office. The instruction from the doctor is meant to continue in the life of the believer until the end of time and promote the coming together of fellow believers—instruction is necessary for

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<sup>50</sup> Contrary to Wesleyan perfectionism, it is impossible to reach full maturity in this lifetime. However, this unattainable end does not mean that one is not supposed to grow. In Chapter XIII *Of Sanctification* of the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Westminster Divines helpfully articulate this doctrine: "II. This sanctification is throughout in the whole man, yet imperfect in this life; there abideth still some remnants of corruption in every part; whence ariseth a continual and irreconcilable war; the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.

"III. In which war, although the remaining corruption for a time may much prevail, yet, through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, the regenerate part doth overcome: and so the saints grow in grace, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." (*Westminster Confession of Faith* (Glasgow: Free Presbyterian Publications, 1958), 73–75.)

<sup>51</sup> Calvin, *Gal., Eph.*, 284.



sanctification. The doctor of the church is supposed to help believers ensure they are rooted in God and his Word revealed to them so that they are not carried away by false teachings.

### Acts 13:1–3

The final pericope we will examine in Calvin’s commentaries is Acts 13:1–3:<sup>52</sup>

"And there were in the church which was at Antioch certain prophets and *teachers*: Barnabas, and Simeon, called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, who had been brought up with Herod and Saul."<sup>53</sup>

This pericope covers the narrative of how Paul became a teacher to the Gentiles:

"Here followeth an [*sic*] history, not only worthy to be remembered, but also very profitable to be known, how Paul was appointed the teacher of the Gentiles . . . ."<sup>54</sup> Up to this point in covenantal history, only the Jews enjoyed proper covenantal relationship with God. However, with the advent of Jesus and his work, now the whole world could enjoy a proper covenantal relationship with God.

Calvin begins his commentary by referencing his exegetical work in Ephesians 4 and 1 Corinthians 12, especially his discussion on the similarity between the prophets and

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<sup>52</sup> Wulfert de Greef, “Calvin’s Writings,” in *The Cambridge Companion to John Calvin*, ed. Donald K. McKim, Cambridge Companions to Religion (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 44–45. It would seem odd to some readers that Calvin’s comments on Acts are placed after Eph. since it covers before Eph. canonically—even before Rom. However, it is placed after Eph. because Calvin wrote his comments on Acts in 1552 *after* his commentaries on Rom. in 1540, 1 Cor. in 1546, and Eph. in 1548. Studying Calvin’s writings diachronically reveal how his thoughts developed over the years from 1540 to 1552, and even to 1559 when he wrote the final edition of the *Institutes*.

<sup>53</sup> John Calvin, *Commentary upon the Acts of the Apostles*, trans. Henry Beveridge, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1854), 496. Emphasis mine.

<sup>54</sup> Calvin, *Acts*, 1:496.

the doctors: "I have declared in the fourth to the Ephesians, (Eph. 4:11,) and in the twelfth to the First to the Corinthians, (1 Cor. 12:28,) what difference there is (at least in my judgment) between doctors and prophets."<sup>55</sup> Calvin thinks that Luke's usage of prophets and teachers point to the same thing—or office—in that the men appointed thereunto were skilled teachers: "It may be that they are in his place synonyma, [synonyms,] (or that they signify both one thing,) so that this is Luke's meaning, that there were many men in that church endowed with singular grace of the Spirit to teach."<sup>56</sup> Up to this point Calvin has not answered how a doctor may move from place to place (if at all) unlike the pastor. But here, he does finally address the question. Since the church at various times and places can have abundance or destitution, it is incumbent upon teachers to rove from time to time for those who have much to give to those who have little.<sup>57</sup> This qualification is not offered to the pastor, who is supposed to remain with his congregation through times of blessing and tribulation. The purpose of these moves are so the churches "be [like] seminaries to spread abroad the doctrine of the gospel."<sup>58</sup>

The teachers of the church in Acts not only contemplated the Word as they had it and their theology, but they also went about to serve the church publicly: "Therefore, when Luke saith that the prophets and teachers ministered to God when the Spirit spake

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<sup>55</sup> Calvin, *Acts*, 1:497. Interestingly, he does not reference his exegetical work on Rom., even when the text mentions prophets and teachers.

<sup>56</sup> Calvin, *Acts*, 1:497.

<sup>57</sup> Calvin, *Acts*, 1:498. "Lest any man should think that that church was destitute of good and fit ministers, so that God did provide for other churches with the loss of it, Luke preventeth this, and saith, that there was such store there, that though it did help others, yet did there remain sufficient for the use thereof; whereby appeareth how plentifully God had poured out his grace upon the Church, whence rivers, as it were, might be deducted and carried into divers places."

<sup>58</sup> Calvin, *Acts*, 1:498.

to them, I understand nothing else but that they were in the public action."<sup>59</sup> Interestingly, the doctors in Acts participated in fasts, and according to Calvin, the purpose of these fasts were a public proclamation that they were not controlled by any one thing when they instructed the church: "He addeth *fasting*, that we may know that their minds were then free from all impediments, that nothing might hinder them from giving attendance to prophesying."<sup>60</sup> When Paul and Barnabas are separated from the other apostles in verse 2, Calvin believes that this acts as some sort of ordination. This act of separation by God is a recognition that this appointment has been decreed by God. This act serves as a reminder that no one may enter this office without God predestining it to happen. Since God has ordained certain men to these offices, it is therefore the responsibility of the people to accept them, since it is clear from the regular exercise of their gifts: "God commandeth that Paul and Barnabas be sent, by the consent of the Church, thither whither he had appointed them to be sent; whereby we gather that there is no lawful election of pastors, save only wherein God is chief."<sup>61</sup> One also learns from this passage that the office of teaching is not a solo office but requires a team: "[H]e [Barnabas] had occasion enough offered him to speak in Paul's absence, so that they had both of them enough to do."<sup>62</sup> A teacher cannot possibly teach everyone; the teacher must rely on others to help preserve the pure doctrine of the church.

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<sup>59</sup> Calvin, *Acts*, 1:498–99. Calvin then makes note that the Papists use this passage to argue that the teachers of the church offered sacrifices, so they should offer mass. Calvin dismisses this point by lack of evidence and an erroneous understanding of the office of priest in the OT.

<sup>60</sup> Calvin, *Acts*, 1:499.

<sup>61</sup> Calvin, *Acts*, 1:499–500.

<sup>62</sup> Calvin, *Acts*, 1:501.

Finally, the teachers are prayerful, for they pray to God that his will would be fulfilled as they send out Paul and Barnabas to the Gentiles. They recognize that their source of wisdom comes not from themselves, but from God, by his Holy Spirit. They also recognize that apart from God, their labors are futile.<sup>63</sup>

In summary, a unique picture of the doctor is presented in Acts and by Calvin. The doctor is a skilled teacher who has the freedom to move from place to place for the flourishing of the church. Being a doctor does not mean one is a lone ranger but is dependent on others to fulfill their obligations. They also recognize that their work is not dependent on them but upon God's sovereign plan; they pray for wisdom and guidance as they decide important matters.

### ***Institutes of the Christian Religion (1559)***<sup>64</sup>

The final place Calvin discusses the doctor of the church is in book 4, chapter 3 of the *Institutes*. Calvin begins his presentation of the doctors and pastors of the church by inquiring as to the necessity of God's use of these offices. In essence, since the church is Jesus' possession, he has authority over it. However, since he is not present physically on

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<sup>63</sup> Calvin, *Acts*, 1:503. "[I]n appointing a public fast, which used to be done in hard matters and of great importance, they provoke both themselves and others unto an earnest ferventness in prayer, for this is oftentimes added in Scripture as a help to prayer (it was a matter of such weight to erect the kingdom of Christ amongst the Gentiles) the teachers of Antioch do not without cause earnestly pray the Lord, that he will enable his servants; and that was not the end of their prayer, that God would, by his Spirit of wisdom and discretion, govern their judgements in choosing, because all disputation or doubting concerning this matter was taken away; but that god would furnish those with the Spirit of wisdom and strength whom he had already chosen to himself, that he would strengthen them with his power against all the invasions of Satan and the world, that he would bless their labours, that they might not be unfruitful, that he would open a gate for the new preaching of the gospel."

<sup>64</sup> Though it would be helpful to note how Calvin's thinking on this topic mature over time in his *Institutes*, due to the many revisions and expansions his systematic theology underwent, the final Latin edition (1559) will serve as the best starting point to understand the doctor of the church. See also Henderson, *Teaching Office in the Reformed Tradition*, 58–59.

this earth to exercise this authority, he appoints men to exercise his authority visibly. He does not give over his authority to these offices, but they exercise his delegated authority.<sup>65</sup>

After laying out the necessity of Jesus's authority and church government, Calvin dives into a theological study of the offices largely based on his commentary in Ephesians 4. However, unlike his commentary, Calvin focuses specifically on the final two offices—pastors and teachers—in the *Institutes* because of the temporal distinction he erects between apostles, prophets, and evangelists in comparison to pastors and teachers.<sup>66</sup>

Calvin's one-sentence summary of pastors are those "in charge of discipline . . . administering the sacraments . . . warnings and exhortations . . . [and] Scriptural interpretation." Calvin argues that the office of pastor has three main functions: the proclamation of the gospel publicly and privately, the administration of the sacraments, and the exercise of church discipline. Additionally, while the pastor is assigned to a particular church, he is still free to help other churches. His assignment also does not mean that he cannot take a call from another church. The assignment is meant to hinder a pastor from moving from place to place to make his name more well-known among

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<sup>65</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.3.1. "Nevertheless, because he [God] does not dwell among us in visible presence [Matt. 26:11], we have said that he uses the ministry of men to declare openly his will to us by mouth, as a sort of delegated work, not by transferring to them his right and honor, but only that through their mouths he may do his own work—just as a workman uses a tool to do his work."

<sup>66</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.3.4. "Those who preside over the government of the church in accordance with Christ's institution are called by Paul as follows: first apostles, then prophets, thirdly evangelists, fourthly pastors, and finally teachers [Eph. 4:11]. Of these only the last two have an ordinary office in the church; the Lord raised up the first three at the beginning of his Kingdom, and now and again revives them as the need of the times demands."

others. This assignment also protects other pastors and their ministries from being ransacked by these roving pastors.<sup>67</sup>

Calvin's one-sentence summary of teachers are those "in charge . . . only of Scriptural interpretation" for the express purpose of "keep[ing] doctrine whole and pure among believers."<sup>68</sup> Calvin connects the office of teacher to the office of prophet in the OT since they are similar "in character and . . . purpose."<sup>69</sup> Although the doctor shares one function with the pastorate, that responsibility is the only assignment they have in their office. For Calvin, although each office has its specific functions and may overlap to a degree, all offices have the same sort of requirements. In short, Calvin sums up the main requirements as right doctrine and right life: "For, to be sure, learning joined with piety and the other gifts of the good pastor are a sort of preparation for it."<sup>70</sup>

Finally, according to Calvin, all officers of the church are externally called, especially pastor and doctor: "Therefore, in order that noisy and troublesome men should not rashly take upon themselves to teach or to rule (which might otherwise happen), especial care was taken that no one should assume public office in the church without being called."<sup>71</sup> The officers respond to the external call by fulfilling the obligations of the office to which they were called: "Therefore, if a man were to be considered a true

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<sup>67</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.3.7. "But to keep peace in the church, this order is necessary: that to each be assigned his task to keep all from being in confusion, at the same time dashing about aimlessly without an assignment, rashly gathering together in one place, and forsaking their churches at pleasures, because they are more concerned about their own advantage than about the upbuilding of the church."

<sup>68</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.3.4.

<sup>69</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.3.5.

<sup>70</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.3.11.

<sup>71</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.3.10.

minister of the church, he must first have been duly called [Heb. 5:4], then he must respond to his calling, that is, he must undertake and carry out the tasks enjoined.”<sup>72</sup>

Although the external call is important, this call is not to the neglect of the internal call which is also necessary to be an officer of Jesus' church: "I pass over that secret call, of which each minister is conscious before God, and which does not have the church as witness."<sup>73</sup>

In summary, the doctor's only responsibility in the church is to maintain doctrine by their expert skill of biblical interpretation. This duty is shared by the pastor. However, even though there is overlap in these functions, the doctor can only fulfill the obligation to which they were called. These two officers are both externally called, based on their skill set exercised faithfully and excellently and their internally called.

### **Comparing the Pastor and the Doctor**

The primary source material for understanding Calvin's doctor of the church comes from several places in his commentaries, a chapter in his *Institutes*, and *Ecclesiastical Ordinances*. Through our study of these texts, we have found that even though Calvin believed the office of pastor and doctor are similar in function, they are distinct in nature.

Primarily, the doctor cares for the doctrine of the church at large while a pastor cares for the people of specific churches.<sup>74</sup> The doctor's primary responsibilities are to

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<sup>72</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.3.10.

<sup>73</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.3.11.

<sup>74</sup> Harbison, *Christian Scholar in the Age of the Reformation*, 155.

preserve and propagate sound doctrine in the church. This preservation and propagation involve defending the truth from false teachers and pastors and advancing theological discussions. While a pastor's doctrine certainly informs their practice and can be a source of care, as they interact with parishioners regularly, they are more than likely to address spiritual concerns from their theological underpinnings.

In Calvin's theology these responsibilities are borne out in two ways: preaching, which reveals God to his people in the church, and the lecture, which increases one's understanding of God through his word. Though a classroom lecture may excite one to love God and neighbor more, it does not inherently reveal God to his people in the same way a sermon does.<sup>75</sup> Likewise, though a sermon proclaims doctrinal truth, it is not an outline of propositional truths and arguments. Importantly, the pastor tempers his message for his whole congregation to understand and pushes his people spiritually.<sup>76</sup> Doctors exist to push people further, especially intellectually. In a particular church, one may have a doctor of theology, mature older Christians, covenant children, new Christians, those skeptical of the faith, and everything in between. Pastors as ministers of God's word are to try to cater their messages to this vast audience. Conversely, doctors have a relatively controlled and consistent group of ability in their classrooms, so they can push their students further.

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<sup>75</sup> Reid, "Calvin," 67.

<sup>76</sup> Reid, "Calvin," 68.



Pastors administer the sacraments.<sup>77</sup> Doctors do not administer the sacraments.<sup>78</sup> Learning can certainly be a means of grace, but it is not an ordained means God uses to regularly build up his people in the faith. Although the church would certainly be at a loss if no doctors existed today, God's people would still be able to taste and see that the Lord is good to them through the sacraments of the church. Mainly, doctors are not able to administer the sacraments because they are not ordained to the gospel ministry as pastors are ordained.<sup>79</sup>

Pastors administer church discipline.<sup>80</sup> Doctors do not administer church discipline.<sup>81</sup> Again, this distinction is primarily because doctors are not ordained to gospel ministry, thus having no spiritual authority over God's people. Doctors can and should administer academic discipline upon students who do not live up to their calling as a student. For example, if a student's grades fall below acceptable standards or they cheat on assignments, they can be placed on probation or expelled from their institution. However, supposing a close relationship between the church and the academy, if a doctor identifies a sinful offense by a student, it is in their realm of responsibility as an officer of God's church to inform the elders so that they can care for the Christian through discipline.

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<sup>77</sup> Reid, "Calvin," 69.

<sup>78</sup> Reid, "Calvin," 71.

<sup>79</sup> Recall Wallace's discussion of the first-subset-of-second. Although Calvin did not make the argument in the same fashion, he reasoned that pastors are doctors, but doctors are not pastors: "Teaching is, no doubt, the duty of all pastors; but to maintain sound doctrine requires a talent for interpreting Scripture, and a man may be a *teacher* who is not qualified to preach" (Calvin, *Gal., Eph.*, 280.)

<sup>80</sup> Reid, "Calvin," 69.

<sup>81</sup> Reid, "Calvin," 71.

Additionally, pastors are disciplined by other pastors.<sup>82</sup> If doctors can be considered part of a church's ecclesiology, they should be disciplined by other pastors. This discipline can be character-focused, since they are to live up to the same high standards expected of elders and deacons in the pastoral epistles. Additionally, though a pastor's primary concern is caring for the spiritual well-being of their people, they are to be theologically sharp as they regularly study and proclaim the Word. Therefore, they are also capable of interacting with detailed scholarly issues that may be erroneous or lead to erroneous conclusions. However, if doctors have their home in the academy, they will be disciplined by their peers in much the same way.<sup>83</sup>

The passages discussed above are often referred to as the "spiritual gifts" passages. In essence, the abilities delineated are given by the Holy Spirit for the building up of God's church. The Spirit distributes a variety of gifts to God's people. The determination of who gets what gift is up to the will of the Spirit. Often, one person is specially gifted in one area, and rarely, they may be gifted in two areas. Therefore, pastors are typically gifted in caring for God's people by ministering from the Word, whereas doctors are gifted in caring for God's doctrine by studying and teaching the Word. There are many pastors who are great teachers and many teachers who are great pastors, but this overlap is not because of one's ability but because of the Spirit's equipping power. The gifts are not private in nature but meant for public good. Christians

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<sup>82</sup> Reid, "Calvin," 70. Hence, a presbyterian form of government.

<sup>83</sup> Henderson, *Teaching Office in the Reformed Tradition*, 34–35. This distinction does not mean that doctors can avoid church discipline for their behavior or beliefs if they are members of a local church. However, if they plagiarize or exhibit behavior contrary to the scholarship guild, their professional peers will remove them from their teaching posts. Calvin seemed to view the place of the doctor within the school but still under the authority of the church.

do not get a choice as to whether they will exercise their gifts—it is a requirement.<sup>84</sup>

Therefore, if one is called to care for God's people, they are not to be like Jonah and flee from their calling but pursue it with diligence. If one is called to protect and further the doctrine of the church, they should not shy away from those duties but embrace them with their whole heart.

Pastors have both an external and internal call.<sup>85</sup> The external call is when others in one's life validate their skills and disposition for ministry as well as when a church hires them for ministry. The internal call is the work of God's Holy Spirit in one's life to draw that person to ministry and develop the skills and affections in that person.<sup>86</sup>

Though this understanding is only implicit in Calvin's writings, perhaps doctors are bound by the same principle: they have an internal calling and desire as they grow in scholarship and teaching, while at the same time, the church and/or academy calls them into the office.

Pastors bear the responsibility of educating the laity.<sup>87</sup> As iterated before, this education was especially accomplished in the regular exposition of God's Word as well as catechesis. This training is not in the fine details of theology that scholars typically cover (though it can certainly progress that way) but more in laying firm theological

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<sup>84</sup> Leonard Sweetman, "Gifts of the Spirit: A Study of Calvin's Comments on 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28; Romans 12:6-8; Ephesians 4:11," in *Exploring the Heritage of John Calvin*, ed. David Earl Holwerda (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976), 277.

<sup>85</sup> Reid, "Calvin," 70.

<sup>86</sup> Religious studies were minimized in the reformation as the humanities appealed to many pursuing higher education. This appeal drew many potential ministers away from pursuing ministerial or theological education. Thus, the pool of potential ministers was extremely whittled down by the time they made their way through undergraduate studies, making the need for ministers great. See Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Intellectual*, vol. 14, Religious Perspectives (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1965), 122.

<sup>87</sup> Reid, "Calvin," 65.

foundations for people to study God's Word and minister to others. The doctor's primary responsibility is to train other ministers and scholars and preserve sound doctrine.<sup>88</sup>

The pastor builds up the church through sound doctrine but adds exhortation to his responsibilities.<sup>89</sup> Sermons are lectures if they do not include some sort of call to action—stop doing such a thing, stop believing such a thing, do this, believe this, etc.<sup>90</sup> In short, sermons are to have some sort of application to the lives of the listeners. Lectures, by their nature, do not seek to accomplish this step but, instead, seek to simply communicate sound doctrine.<sup>91</sup>

For Calvin, pastors gave sound doctrine to their parishioners and repealed false doctrine.<sup>92</sup> Although a subtle nuance, doctors promote sound doctrine for it to be passed down through generations. Not only that, but the propagation of sound doctrine enabled others to further study what has already been established and set forth by others. It seems that though repealing false doctrine is an important role of the doctor, it is subsidiary to teaching sound doctrine.

The pastor and the teacher are not to wrestle with the minutiae or the unknowable but to clearly explain the faith to God's people.<sup>93</sup> There is a limit to how much one can

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<sup>88</sup> Reid, "Calvin," 71.

<sup>89</sup> Sweetman, "Gifts of the Spirit," 288.

<sup>90</sup> Bryan Chappell, former president of CTS and current stated clerk of the PCA's GA, in his seminal work on *Christ Centered Preaching* urges preachers to avoid the "be-s" of preaching. Essentially, he cautions orators not to place necessary legalism on their listeners.

<sup>91</sup> This truncation of lectures does not mean that they cannot or should do have application in them. In fact, as many pastors also teach in the academy, the final step of exhortation comes naturally. Plus, as many students reflect on what they hear, undoubtedly, they may draw practical conclusions.

<sup>92</sup> De Jong, "Calvin's Contribution to Christian Education," 170.

<sup>93</sup> De Jong, "Calvin's Contribution to Christian Education," 188.

know due to the creator-creation distinction.<sup>94</sup> Since creation is separate from God, it is bound by a different set of principles that do not bind God. Therefore, creatures who seek to know God will encounter limits in their knowledge that cannot possibly be explored further or wholly understood.<sup>95</sup> Rather than seeking to fully understand or explain these things, doctors and teachers should seek to rest in the mystery of God's revelation..

It is important to remember that although the doctor is to be "both learned and dedicated," he is not "infallible."<sup>96</sup> In the same way, though pastors have significant training in biblical studies, theology, and ministry, they are not infallible. Both offices and officers need to consider the inherent temptations of pride and arrogance, as well as their own dispositions. It is only when these officers are aware of these temptations that they can rely on the Spirit to keep them faithful in their office. On that note, Calvin utilized the most innovative methods in education and encouraged others to do so (as evident by his and Beza's hermeneutical method in their lectures). However, if the pastor and teacher did not depend on the Spirit, without God's blessing, their educational endeavor would fail.<sup>97</sup> The success of the doctor and the pastor rely on God, by his Son, through his Spirit. Calvin made a distinction in the office of doctor, but practically, the pastor operated as a doctor even though the doctor did not operate like a pastor.<sup>98</sup> While

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<sup>94</sup> This concept has been popularized recently by Cornelius Van Til, former professor of apologetics at Westminster.

<sup>95</sup> Some examples include, but are not limited to the following: Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper, the time before creation, the Trinity, etc.

<sup>96</sup> McNeill, "Calvin," 21.

<sup>97</sup> De Jong, "Calvin's Contribution to Christian Education," 201.

<sup>98</sup> Reid, "Calvin," 66.

doctors have been specially charged in Calvin's mind to preserve and promote sound doctrine, pastors have also been given this charge. However, doctors are not permitted to preach regularly, administer the sacraments, and exercise church discipline.

## Chapter 4

### Case Studies in North American Presbyterian Denominations

While I suspect that there is more universal applicability to Calvin's doctrine of the doctor of the church, I have chosen to focus on my own ecclesiastical context, the PCA. Since I come out of a Presbyterian denomination and Calvin is considered "the chief formulator of Presbyterianism ... [giving] its distinctive character," I will consider three Presbyterian denominations in the United States of America.<sup>1</sup> Although the formal structure of Westminster Presbyterianism is not the same as Calvin's Presbyterianism, the elements that make Presbyterianism what it is exist in both models.<sup>2</sup> The first denomination examined will be the PC(USA).<sup>3</sup> This denomination serves as the forerunner of the OPC and PCA, as well as being the oldest Presbyterian denomination in the United States, thus having a rich educational history. The OPC will be examined next, since it is the second largest conservative Presbyterian denomination in the United States and a direct descendant of the PC(USA) with its founding in 1936. Finally, the PCA will be examined since it is the largest, Presbyterian denomination in the United States and the denomination in which I currently serve. Before these Presbyterian denominations are

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<sup>1</sup> Larson, "John Calvin and Genevan Presbyterianism," 43, 44. This opinion is not universally recognized, as Basil Hall and Thomas Torrance disagree with this assessment.

<sup>2</sup> Larson, "John Calvin and Genevan Presbyterianism," 63, 69. As mentioned before, Bucer exercised a great influence over his friend Calvin. Due to their relationship, it may be that Bucer founded Presbyterianism as it is known today, but Calvin fathered it into existence.

<sup>3</sup> Some readers may have qualms about this exploration or wonder how significant a declining, mainline Protestant denomination is to this study. This denomination was chosen for its prominence, long history in the United States, its robust education wing, and its role as the foundation for two of the largest conservative Presbyterian denominations in the United States today.

considered, however, a brief historical overview will be given so that the doctor of the church in Presbyterianism may be properly situated.

## **Historical & Theological Background of the Doctor in Presbyterianism**

Presbyterianism has widely been known for its intellectual prowess in theology. The first evidence of this prowess can be found in the Westminster Assembly—namely, in the Confession of Faith and Larger and Shorter Catechisms, along with several other documents composed around 1646. As one reads through these doctrinal standards, the reader will notice that the doctor of the church is not mentioned.

However, one of the smaller documents, called "The Form of Presbyterial Church-Government," approved on Friday, February 10, 1645, dedicates a brief section to this doctrine.<sup>4</sup> Though having authority when originally enacted, the document eventually fell out of use, along with most of the others, as standards for the Presbyterian church. The exceptions to this absence are the Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms. Though there are some Presbyterian denominations that still adhere to the lesser documents, like the Solemn League and Covenant and the Directory for Public Worship as they were originally approved, adherence to these documents is uncommon in more well-known Presbyterian denominations.

As one examines the table of contents of "The Form of Presbyterial Church-Government" for the doctor or teacher, the reader will notice that it is absent. It appears

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<sup>4</sup> *WCF*, 395. The exact title of the document: *The Form of Presbyterial Church-government and of Ordination of Ministers, Agreed upon by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, with the Assistance of Commissioners from the Church of Scotland, as a Part of the Covenanted Uniformity in Religion Betwixt the Churches of Christ in the Kingdoms of Scotland, England, and Ireland: With an Act of the General Assembly, Anno 1645, Approving the Same.*



that the Westminster Divines subordinated this section to the section on "Pastors."<sup>5</sup> The first affirmation that the Divines make is that "the name and title of teacher" is scriptural, as they cited two passages already studied: 1 Cor. 12:28 and Eph. 4:11.<sup>6</sup>

The second affirmation that the Divines make is that the teacher or doctor "is also a minister of the word, as well as pastor, and hath power of administration of the sacraments."<sup>7</sup> This affirmation appears to be a deviation from Calvin's schematics for Presbyterian polity. On an initial read, it appears that the doctor of the church is ordained into the position, but not in the sense that the doctor is being ordained as a doctor. The doctor of the church is ordained as pastor, with a special focus on instruction.

The third affirmation the Divines make is that the Spirit gives various gifts to the church, and a minister may exercise multiple gifts, especially if there is only one minister. However, if there are multiple pastors in one church, it would benefit the church if each pastor had a particular area of focus.<sup>8</sup> Concerning the spiritual gifts, the Divines align with Calvin's discussion in the previous chapter. However, what is innovative in this affirmation is that the Divines make an explicit recognition that the pastor assumes the role of the teacher if he is the sole minister. If there are multiple ministers, then churches can make a distinction between the senior pastor and his associates, where one of the associates will be a doctor or teacher. The modern-day equivalent would be an associate pastor of Christian education.

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<sup>5</sup> *WCF*, 396, 401.

<sup>6</sup> *WCF*, 401.

<sup>7</sup> *WCF*, 401. Interestingly, the Divines do not offer any scriptural support for this affirmation.

<sup>8</sup> *WCF*, 401, 402.

The final affirmation the Divines make is that doctors are "of most excellent use in schools and universities."<sup>9</sup> Whereas the previous affirmation recognizes the place of the doctor in the church, the Divines believe that the doctor serves best in the academy. No pragmatic reason is given for this placement, other than the OT school of prophets and NT schools modeled after Gamaliel's ministry as recorded in Acts.

### **Presbyterian Church (United States of America)**

"The 'high priests' of religious education had had their day, and now the churches know that they 'must teach or die,'" reads the *Christian Faith and Life* curriculum of the PC(USA).<sup>10</sup> At face value, this statement seems unnecessarily inflammatory by creating a false crisis. However, could there be a hint of truth to this slogan? To assess the value of the doctor of the church in the PC(USA), I will begin with an examination of their latest addition to their BO for references to the teaching ministry or educational ministry of the church. From there, I will launch into a discussion of how the doctor functioned in the academy by considering one of their premier institutions of higher education—Princeton. Finally, a summary and recommendation will be provided.

### *Book of Order*

Even though the PC(USA) is a Presbyterian church, it is important to evaluate their form of government with the Westminster Standards. The primary starting place is BO G-2.0102: "Ordered ministries described in the New Testament are . . . deacon, ruling

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<sup>9</sup> *WCF*, 402.

<sup>10</sup> Henderson, *Teaching Office in the Reformed Tradition*, 5.

elder, or minister of the Word and Sacrament (also called teaching elder) ."<sup>11</sup> In this introductory section, one finds the affirmation of deacons and ruling and teaching elders. However, BO G-2.0102 also specifies that "[t]he existence of these ordered ministries in no way diminishes the importance of the commitment of all members to the total ministry of the church."<sup>12</sup> While the BO recognizes that a scriptural basis exists for these offices, equally as important is the priesthood of all believers—a reformational notion argued prominently by Luther.

Some confusion in this discussion arises from the existence of "teaching elders." It appears that if the elder is primarily teaching, then he (or, in this instance, can include she) is fulfilling the function of doctor. BO G-2.0501 reads that "[m]inisters of the Word and Sacrament . . . shall in all things be committed to teaching the faith in word and deed and equipping the saints for the work of ministry (Eph. 4:12)."<sup>13</sup> In the prior section and this section, the PC(USA)'s BO calls teaching elders "ministers of the Word and Sacrament." The function of the office is taken up in the title. Therefore, the PC(USA) primarily sees the function of pastors as those giving the Word to God's people with baptism and the Lord's Supper. Though they teach, the importance of the office is placed in the Word and sacraments.

Now, this emphasis does not mean that the PC(USA) does not view the teaching function of the pastor as unimportant. BO G-2.0501 continues "When they serve as preachers and teachers of the Word, they shall preach and teach the faith of the church, so

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<sup>11</sup> Presbyterian Church (United States of America), *The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Part II: Book of Order 2019-2023* (Louisville: The Office of the General Assembly, 2019), 25.

<sup>12</sup> Presbyterian Church (United States of America), *BO PCUSA 2019*, 25.

<sup>13</sup> Presbyterian Church (United States of America), *BO PCUSA 2019*, 29.

that the people are shaped by the pattern of the gospel and strengthened for witness and service."<sup>14</sup> Again, as argued before from Calvin, the purpose of the doctor is to preserve and propagate sound doctrine. While there can be discipleship aspects and implications to it, this is not the primary purpose of the doctor. The minister's involvement in the Word is to encourage people in their faith rather than to communicate and defend sound doctrine as Calvin argued.

An interesting development in the PC(USA)'s constitution happens in BO G-2.1103, "Christian Educators." In section a, the BO reads, "Certified Christian educators are persons certified and called to service in the ministry of education in congregation or councils. They shall have skills and training in biblical interpretation, Reformed theology, worship and sacraments, human development, faith development, religious educational theory and practice, and the polity, programs, and mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)."<sup>15</sup> In other words, certified Christian educators are called to teach others biblical studies, theological studies, psychology (presumably counseling education), education, and church history. This office is a serious expansion upon Calvin's primary purpose of preservation and propagation of sound doctrine. According to BO G-2.1103 b, the presbytery establishes minimum requirements for these positions, and certified Christian educators are subject to the presbytery and may have a voice at presbytery meetings (unless they are ruling elders, in which case they can vote, too).<sup>16</sup> Although a novel title, there is a recognition in the PC(USA) that these officers hold an important

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<sup>14</sup> Presbyterian Church (United States of America), *BO PCUSA 2019*, 29.

<sup>15</sup> Presbyterian Church (United States of America), *BO PCUSA 2019*, 40.

<sup>16</sup> Presbyterian Church (United States of America), *BO PCUSA 2019*, 40.

position as a type of presbytery but not to the extent of a minister of the Word and sacrament or a ruling elder.

BO W-5.0203 spends several paragraphs on Christian education, too. Christian education is rooted in the teaching ministry of Jesus and the imperative for the church to carry forth this teaching ministry. The primary time when this is carried out is on the Lord's Day through the Word preached and sacraments administered. The responsibility for educating others is rooted in baptism—a novel idea not covered in Calvin's articulation.<sup>17</sup> As the church covenants to train up a child in the way he or she is to go, so it bears the responsibility to carry out this obligation. This authority ultimately resides in the session, as they administer the curricular programs of the church.<sup>18</sup> However, certified Christian educators are recommended as they "bring special skills and expertise in teaching to the church's ministries of nurture and formation."<sup>19</sup> While a formal position, church sessions are also expected to train other laity in Christian education and assist parents in educating their children.<sup>20</sup>

### *Princeton Theological Seminary*

While the doctor of the church finds significant usage in the church, as mentioned before, this role largely works itself out in the academy. Following a similar direction as

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<sup>17</sup> Presbyterian Church (United States of America), *BO PCUSA 2019*, 112. Though Calvin did not make this connection explicit, he clearly saw the importance of educating children. See his use and purpose of his catechism in De Jong, "Calvin's Contribution to Christian Education."

<sup>18</sup> Presbyterian Church (United States of America), *BO PCUSA 2019*, 112.

<sup>19</sup> Presbyterian Church (United States of America), *BO PCUSA 2019*, 112.

<sup>20</sup> Presbyterian Church (United States of America), *BO PCUSA 2019*, 112.

chapter 2 and exploring how Calvin's doctor of the church was situated historically, I will contextualize the doctor of the church for each denomination in their respective seminaries. There are several PC(USA) seminaries in existence today—Auburn, Austin Presbyterian, Columbia, Louisville Presbyterian, Pittsburgh, and Union. However, I will focus on PTS for its historical value, emphasis on ministerial education, and relationship to the OPC and Westminster.

In order to understand the origins and function of PTS, we need to go back to the Log College started by William Tennent in 1726 in Bucks County, PA.<sup>21</sup> Tennent started this school to educate potential candidates for gospel ministry with an emphasis on piety, which Harvard University, Yale University, and William & Mary College seemed to neglect.<sup>22</sup> When Tennent retired the Log College in the early 1740s, many of his "New Side Presbyterian" students took up his vision for theological education that incorporated spiritual formation: "Faggs Manor academy in Pennsylvania (founded by Samuel Blair) and the Nottingham academy in Virginia (founded by Samuel Finley)."<sup>23</sup>

While these unaccredited institutions popped up to promote revivalism, they still saw Yale University as a suitable place for ministerial education until David Brainerd

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<sup>21</sup> Gary Steward, *Princeton Seminary (1812-1929): Its Leader's Lives and Works* (Philipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2014), 26.

<sup>22</sup> Steward, *PTS (1812-1929)*, 25, 26. This vision was not without controversy. The Log College was an unaccredited institution, seeking to address a perceived spiritual need in theological education. As candidates for gospel ministry came forward for licensure and ordination, they met resistance. Tennent emphasized a revivalism and spiritual zeal that was new to the Presbyterian Church. Presbyters that fell along these lines were dubbed "New Side Presbyterians," while those who did not emphasize these values were dubbed "Old Side Presbyterians." See page 28 of Steward's work for more information.

<sup>23</sup> Steward, *PTS (1812-1929)*, 30.

was expelled in 1742.<sup>24</sup> Many influential Presbyterians interceded for Brainerd's reinstatement, but the provost Thomas Clapp stuck to his decision.<sup>25</sup> One of those men was Jonathan Dickinson. Disgruntled with how Yale became hostile towards "New Side Presbyterianism," he took the advice of others and started his own institution of higher education: the College of New Jersey.<sup>26</sup> Princeton's college was established "in 1746 to educate Presbyterian ministers."<sup>27</sup> The first board contained many of Tennent's students and those sympathetic to New Side Presbyterianism: "Gilbert Tennent, William Tennent, Jr., Samuel Blair, Samuel Finley, and Richard Treat."<sup>28</sup>

However, a problem had occurred. 50% of college graduates did indeed become ministers, but that means 50% did not.<sup>29</sup> After the American Revolution, the prospects became dire, as less than 15% of college graduates entered gospel ministry.<sup>30</sup> By 1810, the Presbyterian General Assembly reported that 400 churches did not have pastors.<sup>31</sup> Ashbel Green considered starting a theological seminary for the training of ministers to

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<sup>24</sup> Steward, *PTS (1812-1929)*, 30. Many of the "New Side Presbyterians" were young. Thus, being caught up in the spiritual zeal, many of them became proud, such as Brainerd. In passing, he said of Mr. Whittelsey to a small group of his friends that "[h]e has not more grace than his chair." A student passing in the hall heard this comment and spread it around the community. Yale leadership tried to get Brainerd to apologize for this comment, but Brainerd felt wronged that he was gossiped about around town over a private comment. As a result, Brainerd was expelled from Yale.

<sup>25</sup> Wright Paulus, "Historical Tour of Princeton Theological Seminary," Wright Library — Princeton Theological Sem, 2012, <https://library.ptsem.edu/historical-tour-of-princeton-theological-seminary>; Steward, *PTS (1812-1929)*, 32.

<sup>26</sup> Paulus, "Historical Tour of Princeton Theological Seminary"; Steward, *PTS (1812-1929)*, 32.

<sup>27</sup> Paulus, "Historical Tour of Princeton Theological Seminary"; Steward, *PTS (1812-1929)*, 232.

<sup>28</sup> Steward, *PTS (1812-1929)*, 32.

<sup>29</sup> Steward, *PTS (1812-1929)*, 42.

<sup>30</sup> Paulus, "Historical Tour of Princeton Theological Seminary"; Steward, *PTS (1812-1929)*, 42.

<sup>31</sup> Steward, *PTS (1812-1929)*, 42.

meet this deficiency in the early 1800s, as encouraged by Samuel Miller.<sup>32</sup> The idea had some steam, but did not gain traction again until the 1808 General Assembly when Archibald Alexander publicly urged for one.<sup>33</sup> Green capitalized on this call and, in 1809, formally petitioned the General Assembly to form a theological seminary.<sup>34</sup> The seminary opened up in 1812 as a subset of the College of New Jersey—"The Theological Seminary."<sup>35</sup> In 1902, Princeton divided the college and seminary into two distinct institutions.<sup>36</sup> The College of New Jersey eventually was called "Princeton University," and the seminary was called "Princeton Theological Seminary."<sup>37</sup>

While the decline of an institution is typically a multifaceted problem, perhaps the one event that catalyzed the downfall of PTS was the 1909 student rebellion. In that year 1909, students fought against the heavy exegetical curriculum, opting for a more practical curriculum.<sup>38</sup> This model followed what Union Theological Seminary in New York did.<sup>39</sup> J. Gresham Machen wrote to his parents about this revolt on Sunday, February 21, 1909:

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<sup>32</sup> Paulus, "Historical Tour of Princeton Theological Seminary"; Steward, *PTS (1812-1929)*, 42.

<sup>33</sup> Paulus, "Historical Tour of Princeton Theological Seminary"; Steward, *PTS (1812-1929)*, 43.

<sup>34</sup> Paulus, "Historical Tour of Princeton Theological Seminary"; Steward, *PTS (1812-1929)*, 43, 44.

<sup>35</sup> Steward, *PTS (1812-1929)*, 47; Wayne G. Strickland, "Seminary Education: A Philosophical Paradigm Shift in Process," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 32, no. 2 (June 1989): 232, 233; Westminster Theological Seminary, *Academic Catalog: 2021-2022* (Glenside: Westminster Theological Seminary, 2021), 5.

<sup>36</sup> Strickland, "Seminary Education: A Philosophical Paradigm Shift in Process," 232.

<sup>37</sup> Paulus, "Historical Tour of Princeton Theological Seminary"; Strickland, "Seminary Education: A Philosophical Paradigm Shift in Process," 233.

<sup>38</sup> Steward, *PTS (1812-1929)*, 44–46; Strickland, "Seminary Education: A Philosophical Paradigm Shift in Process," 233. Green's original vision for PTS emphasized character, piety, and rest with a curriculum organized around Hebrew, Greek, the Westminster Standards, ethics, church history, and ecclesiology.

<sup>39</sup> Strickland, "Seminary Education: A Philosophical Paradigm Shift in Process," 233.



[O]ther seminaries have yielded to the incessant clamor for the 'practical,' and we are being assailed both from within and from without. I only hope the authorities will have the courage to keep our standard high, not bother about losses of students, and wait for better times. It is the only course of action that can be successful in the long run.<sup>40</sup>

Unfortunately, the authorities lost courage.

The other factor that influenced the drastic change at PTS was biblical criticism. Julius Wellhausen and David Friedrich Strauss set forth a critical approach to both OT and NT respectively.<sup>41</sup> These views were imported into the Presbyterian Church by Charles Augustus Briggs.<sup>42</sup> B. B. Warfield, former professor of didactic and polemical theology at PTS, continually wrote against these errors throughout most of his life, defending Scripture whenever he could.<sup>43</sup> In many ways, Machen filled this role after Warfield's death as he came onto the faculty of PTS as a professor of NT.<sup>44</sup> He became embroiled in the fundamentalist and modernist controversy, writing his most popular work *Christianity and Liberalism*. Throughout these controversies, controversies retained

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<sup>40</sup> Strickland, "Seminary Education: A Philosophical Paradigm Shift in Process," 233.

<sup>41</sup> Steward, *PTS (1812-1929)*, 285; See T. Desmond Alexander, *From Paradise to the Promised Land: An Introduction to the Pentateuch*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 15–18 for more information on OT documentary hypothesis; See Mark L. Strauss, *Four Portraits, One Jesus: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*, 2nd ed., 2020, 419, 420 for more information on D. F. Strauss.

<sup>42</sup> Steward, *PTS (1812-1929)*, 286. Their theses and arguments are too complex and detailed to fully expound in this thesis. In short, Wellhausen set forth his "documentary hypothesis"—a type of form criticism—that postulated four editors of the Pentateuch: Yahwist (J), Deuteronomist (D), Elohist (E), Priestly (P) sources. Strauss, a NT scholar of the first question for the historical Jesus, performed a critical examination of the life of Jesus and concluded that his miracles were myths. Both criticisms directly undermined the inerrancy, inspiration, and authority of Scripture. However, these criticisms reconciled (at least in appearance) modernist ideals and Christianity, which made it appealing to many biblical and theological scholars.

<sup>43</sup> Steward, *PTS (1812-1929)*, 284, 287.

<sup>44</sup> Steward, *PTS (1812-1929)*, 287.

control of the board of trustees over PTS.<sup>45</sup> However, they recognized the Presbyterian church was broadening in their beliefs and perspectives. During the 1929 GA, the Presbyterian church voted to reorganize the board of PTS, giving control to the liberals and modernists.<sup>46</sup> As a result, Machen left PTS to start his own institution of theological higher education which will be covered more thoroughly in the next section.<sup>47</sup>

Many point to this General Assembly decision as the moment that PTS transformed into a different institution. PTS was no longer was the stalwart of Presbyterian theology and ministerial preparation that it once was. Rather, it embraced German higher criticism and theological liberalism. Though it retains the DNA of Presbyterianism, many of its beliefs and practices run contrary to its original founding vision. For this reason, many historians point to this restructuring as the turning point in PTS. Of course, PTS remained committed to the training of ministers for gospel ministry to this day. However, the ministers (and theologians) it produced often had a bent towards various criticisms of the Bible and liberalism.

Although not an explicit commitment of the institution, many of their seminary faculty have some sort of current involvement in the church, used to have active

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<sup>45</sup> Steward, *PTS (1812-1929)*, 290.

<sup>46</sup> Steward, *PTS (1812-1929)*, 290; Westminster Theological Seminary, *Academic Catalog: 2021-2022*, 5.

<sup>47</sup> Paulus, "Historical Tour of Princeton Theological Seminary." Among those who also left with Machen were "Robert Dick Wilson, ... Oswald T. Allis, and Cornelius Van Til." See Westminster Theological Seminary, *Academic Catalog: 2021-2022*.

leadership roles, or simply attend as congregants.<sup>48</sup> Although a Presbyterian and Reformed institution, their faculty are presently ecumenical.<sup>49</sup>

The institution has degree programs geared towards Christian education, and they exhibit a commitment to continuing education of their students and those in the church. In 1963, John A. Mackay—the third president of PTS—founded the Tennent College of Christian Education at the request of the 1941 General Assembly. Its purpose was to train Christian women for lay leadership in the local church. This degree program is still an accredited MA degree offered by the institution, even as a dual degree with the MDiv, with an emphasis on spiritual formation. James I. McCord—the fourth president of PTS—founded the Center of Continuing Education.<sup>50</sup> Originally, seminars and lectures were offered, but it has now expanded to online seminars and paid courses.

### *Analysis of the Doctor in the Presbyterian Church (United States of America)*

Although the title "doctor" of the church has not been used, it is quite evident that the PC(USA) has greatly benefited from those who fill these roles. To begin, the PC(USA) rightly emphasize with Calvin the distinction between the "pastor" and "doctor." They see the pastor's primary role as administering the Word and sacraments, whereas the teaching ministry of the church is fulfilled by those whom they call "certified Christian educators," also known as their seminary professors.

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<sup>48</sup> Princeton Theological Seminary, "Faculty," accessed March 12, 2022, <https://www.ptsem.edu/academics/faculty/all-departments>.

<sup>49</sup> Princeton Theological Seminary, "Faculty."

<sup>50</sup> Paulus, "Historical Tour of Princeton Theological Seminary."

The PC(USA) has expanded the role of doctor to include discipleship aspects. In practice, this emphasis does work itself out in seminary classrooms, as students and professors spend many hours discussing life and theology. However, this component is an expansion upon Calvin's doctor of the church. The doctor is necessary to assist the pastor in the preservation and propagation of sound doctrine so that he can focus on the ministry of the Word. To assume the responsibility of discipleship aspect unnecessarily confuses the purpose of these offices.

The title of "certified Christian educator" makes sense given the range their BO allows, but it seems to be also an unhelpful expansion of the role of the doctor. No longer is a doctor an expert in Scripture, but now he can be an expert (or may be presumed to be an expert) in theological studies, psychology, education, and church history. On the one hand, these areas of studies enable more people to enter church leadership. On the other hand, while these areas are helpful to ministry and life, the doctor's main point, as repeated before, should be the preservation and propagation of sound doctrine.<sup>51</sup> Expanding the areas a doctor could or should cover may distract them from their primary purpose, resulting in not only an overworked pastor but also an overworked doctor.<sup>52</sup>

The PC(USA) BO allows for their voice in presbytery meetings but does not allow them a vote unless they are a ruling elder. This provision enables doctors, as

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<sup>51</sup> Depending on whether one holds to one kingdom or two kingdom theology can also impact whether the church should have an authoritative voice in areas like counseling and education. See Michael W. Goheen, *A Light to the Nations: The Missional Church and the Biblical Story* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011) for a one-kingdom perspective. See David VanDrunen, *Living in God's Two Kingdoms: A Biblical Vision for Christianity and Culture* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2010) for a two-kingdom perspective.

<sup>52</sup> Of course, a theologian is probably well-versed in some, if not all, of these areas and is able to speak into current conversations effectively. Even though Calvin himself was well-versed in general history and philosophy, he still advocated that the doctor specialize in the Bible and make the propagation and protection of its doctrine the doctor's first priority.

experts on the subject matters listed above, to speak into presbytery issues and help shape the thinking of ruling and teaching elders. Therefore, they are recognized leaders but not ordained to gospel ministry like ministers are ordained—which is consistent with Calvin's explanation.<sup>53</sup>

The primary context in which a doctor exercises their giftings is on Sunday and in the seminary. On Sunday, the PC(USA) BO seems to expect that educational enterprises will be conducted for the benefit of God's people. Although laity can certainly fill teaching ministries like Sunday schools, it is even more important for certified Christian educators to exercise their roles. The connection between education and the Lord's Day highlights the spiritual nature of the role doctors play in the church.

PTS was viewed as the house for orthodox Presbyterian theology that also had sympathies for piety found in the Great Awakening. They obviously exercised a great deal of influence in the PC(USA) because, as criticism and liberalism took root in the seminaries, it began to take root in churches, even if it was only in practice. Machen saw this domino effect and sought to ensure it did not happen at his denomination or school—the OPC and WTS.

## **Orthodox Presbyterian Church**

We cannot talk about the PC(USA) and PTS without discussing the OPC and WTS. Since the OPC and WTS are direct descendants of the PC(USA) and PTS, they

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<sup>53</sup> Due to PTS' ecumenical faculty, some hold ordination in their respective denominations while others are not ordained. Unlike Calvin, there are some denominations or presbyteries in denominations that view the teaching ministry of the doctor as an ordainable activity. This innovation will be covered more thoroughly in the following sections.

inherit much of their history and structure (though they attempted to throw off the erroneous conclusions of higher criticism and liberalism).

### *Book of Church Order*

Although the OPC's BCO is brief compared to the PC(USA)'s BO and the PCA's BCO, it provides incredible insight to how the doctor of the church functions in their denomination—even though they only devote a chapter. In BCO Form of Government, chapter V, paragraph 2, "Offices in the Church," the mention of "evangelist, pastor, teacher, bishop, elder, or deacon" recognizes the function carried out.<sup>54</sup> BCO Form of Government V.3 reads, "The ordinary and perpetual offices in the church are those given for the ministry of the Word of God, of rule, and of mercy."<sup>55</sup> None of these titles carry with it "teacher" or "doctor," though "elders who have been endued and called of Christ to labor also in the Word and teaching" is close.<sup>56</sup> However, as has been suggested before, even though a minister may teach, this does not necessarily make him a doctor.

In the very next chapter, BCO Form of Government VI.1, "Ministers or Teaching Elders," the book recognizes that "there is a diversity of gifts that are essential to the discharge of evangelistic, pastoral, and teaching functions."<sup>57</sup> In BCO Form of Government VI.2, the main responsibility of the minister is the care of souls for those

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<sup>54</sup> Orthodox Presbyterian Church, *The Book of Church Order of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church* (Willow Grove: The Committee on Christian Education of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 2020), 8. Emphasis mine.

<sup>55</sup> Orthodox Presbyterian Church, *BCO OPC 2020*, 8.

<sup>56</sup> Orthodox Presbyterian Church, *BCO OPC 2020*, 8.

<sup>57</sup> Orthodox Presbyterian Church, *BCO OPC 2020*, 9.

under his charge. However, in that care, the teaching elder teaches sound doctrine.<sup>58</sup> In fact, "[a]mong those who minister the Word the Scripture distinguished the evangelist, the pastor, and the teacher" which will be covered in subsequent chapters.<sup>59</sup> Therefore, it seems that the doctor and the pastor are both ministers in the OPC.

The OPC dedicates a whole chapter to "Teachers" in BCO Form of Government IX, giving the following definition: "A teacher is a minister of the Word who has received particular gifts from Christ for expounding the Scripture, teaching sound doctrine, and convincing gainsayers, and is called to this ministry."<sup>60</sup> The OPC's Form of Government recognizes that the "teacher" is ordained to the ministry similar to a pastor or minister; he possesses the gifts of teaching the Bible, doctrine, and debating with those who hold to error and is called to the ministry both internally by the Spirit and externally by the church. Calvin would affirm all these accounts, though the OPC's Form of Government includes calling, which Calvin did not emphasize.

The following paragraph delineates practical applications of the office:

A minister may serve a local congregation as a teacher if there is at least one other minister serving as pastor. The teacher may also give instruction in a theological seminary; or teach the Word in a school, college, or university; or discharge this ministry in some other specific way, such as writing or editing in the field of Christian religious education. He shall take a pastoral oversight of those committed to his charge as teacher, and be diligent in sowing the seed of the Word and gathering the harvest, as one who watches for souls.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Orthodox Presbyterian Church, *BCO OPC 2020*, 9.

<sup>59</sup> Orthodox Presbyterian Church, *BCO OPC 2020*, 9.

<sup>60</sup> Orthodox Presbyterian Church, *BCO OPC 2020*, IX.1.

<sup>61</sup> Orthodox Presbyterian Church, *BCO OPC 2020*, IX.2.

Although the OPC places a high value on the educational ministry of the church, it is subordinate to the ministerial needs people have—a church cannot have a doctor without a pastor. However, the church is not the only place where a teacher can serve—they can serve in any institution of education from grade school to doctoral school. Other ministries like writing and publication are included. Nevertheless, the Form of Government does not limit them to teaching, but gives space for other ministries, such as publication. However, even though the doctor is responsible for the instruction of Christians, they are also committed to the spiritual care of those under them—a theological innovation beyond Calvin.

### *Westminster Theological Seminary*

Unlike PTS, WTS is not officially a part of any denomination.<sup>62</sup> However, this difference does not mean that WTS does not have close ties with other denominations—mainly, the OPC and PCA. For this study, due to the close ties the OPC and WTS have historically, I will treat them together. It is also important to note that unlike the PC(USA), the OPC does not have any denominationally sponsored seminary.

Although the story of PTS continues to this day, it continues in two different streams. On the one hand, PTS exists as PTS in New Jersey—the "New School Princeton." On the other hand, PTS continues in the institution of WTS, carrying forth the

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<sup>62</sup> Perhaps seeing how the PC(USA) General Assembly took control of PTS's restructuring as voted upon by the elders gave Machen and founders second thoughts when they formed this new denomination and school. However, this freedom does not mean there is a lack of ecclesiastical oversight: "The Seminary is governed by a self-perpetuating board consisting of at least twelve but not more than eighteen trustees, of whom at least forty percent but no more than one-half must be ministers of the gospel. Each member of the board is required by the charter to subscribe to a pledge ... and is required to be a ruling or teaching elder in a church that shares the Seminar's commitments and Presbyterian and Reformed heritage." (Westminster Theological Seminary, *Academic Catalog: 2021-2022*, 5.)



heritage of the "Old School Princeton." After the death of B. B. Warfield in 1921, J. Gresham Machen took up the charge to preserve the Old School Presbyterianism PTS was founded upon and was in danger of losing.<sup>63</sup> Due to the reorganization of PTS in 1929, Machen left the institution and founded WTS after 23 years of service at PTS. Shortly thereafter, the PC(USA) revoked his credentials, and he found himself without a job and without a church. In September 1929, WTS held its first classes in Philadelphia, PA.<sup>64</sup>

Although the general history of WTS is much briefer than PTS (being that the institution is less than 100 years old), WTS shares in the history that comes before it. Although there are notable moments in their history, much of what they are known for is their faculty, their output, and their commitment to the Scriptures and the church (for most faculty members are either ordained, licensed, or served in various conservative Presbyterian denominations).

### *Analysis of the Doctor in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church*

In many ways, the language of "teacher" in the OPC is more familiar and stays true to the title and function of "doctor." The teacher in the OPC focuses on the exposition of Scripture, communication of doctrine, and persuasion of those who hold erroneous positions—in short, preserving, and propagating sound doctrine.

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<sup>63</sup> Steward, *PTS (1812-1929)*, 284.

<sup>64</sup> Westminster Theological Seminary, "Westminster Seminary History: Rich Legacy of Faithfulness," accessed March 12, 2022, <https://www.wts.edu/about/history>.

However, the OPC deviates from Calvin's particular articulation of the nature of the doctor. Their Form of Government views the doctor as a function of the pastor, which means they are ordained to ministry. Initially, this seems like conflation between the offices, but the OPC is marrying the two offices Calvin erected. They see a closer relationship in their functions than they do distinctions. In other words, it is a matter of emphasis for each office. As a result, unlike Calvin and the PC(USA), the doctor is an ordained position in that he is a minister who focuses on instruction of sound doctrine.

Due to the recognition by the OPC of the teacher as a pastor, the teacher may at times carry out pastoral functions, such as, regularly expounding the Word on Sunday mornings and administering the sacraments. This ability does not make these acts his primary focus but does allow him to fulfill these obligations, unlike Calvin's articulation. Based on Calvin's articulation of the doctor, he would probably prefer that the doctor not be ordained so that he can focus on teaching the people sound doctrine and refusing error rather than fulfilling these caring functions in the body.

Even though the teacher is an ordained position in the OPC, a church cannot call a teacher if they do not have a minister. This distinction is intriguing because the OPC Form of Government seems to recognize that there is a distinction between the purpose of the teacher and the purpose of the minister. While this distinction may seem as if the doctor is subordinate to the pastorate, it is more likely the OPC recognizes a hierarchy of needs where the spiritual care of God's people takes precedence over educational ministry. Calvin would affirm this fact, but this clarification seems inconsistent with the ordained nature of the office of teacher.

Calvin's original vision for the doctor was for him to regularly teach in the academy. Certainly, this is one of the primary ways that a doctor fulfills his purpose. However, the OPC expands the possible vocations in which a teacher can serve. While the Form of Government initially emphasizes the church, it also lists various types of Christian educational services—like the academy or school—they can serve in and be ordained in. Again, this is an expansion upon Calvin's original vision, but perhaps they have a broader vision for the purpose of doctor than Calvin originally purported.

### **Presbyterian Church in America**

There has been a tendency in the church to combine the doctor—who declares doctrine—and the pastor—who applies doctrine to the people—due to their view of the two offices of elder (which is made up of teaching and ruling elder) and deacon. This tendency can be seen in the PCA and their BCO. However, this combination does not mean that they do not value the educational ministry of the church, for they have two institutions of higher education under denominational controls, unlike their conservative OPC cousin—not to mention their dedicated discipleship committee. Further, in the PCA, pastors can be *de facto* doctors if the distinction of the office of doctor—the training of pastors, scholars, and others in biblical interpretation—was not lost.<sup>65</sup>

#### *Book of Church Order*

In the PCA's BCO, the section on Form of Government articulates the three offices of the PCA: "The officers of the Church, by whom all its powers are administered,

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<sup>65</sup> McNeill, "Calvin," 10.

are, according to the Scriptures, teaching and ruling elders and deacons."<sup>66</sup> Concerning "the elders[, they] jointly have the government and spiritual oversight of the Church, including teaching. Only those elders who are specially gifted, called and trained by God to preach may serve as teaching elders."<sup>67</sup> The PCA's BCO furthers this distinction by analyzing the terms:

As he has the oversight of the flock of Christ, he is termed *bishop* or *pastor*. As it is his duty to be spiritually fruitful, dignified, and prudent, an example to the flock, and to govern well in the house and kingdom of Christ, he is termed *presbyter* or *elder*. As he expounds the Word, and by sound doctrine both exhorts and convinces the gainsayer, he is termed *teacher*. These titles do not indicate different grades of office, but all describe one and the same office.<sup>68</sup>

What the PCA's BCO does in 8-1 is describe the various terms related to the "teaching elder" as it relates to function. While the purpose of the term "teacher" resembles Calvin's articulation in his writings and sermons, where they deviate from Calvin's hierarchy is that they see all these functions taken up in the office of pastor. There is no room for a doctor of the church since the pastor performs these duties in his office.

This omission is unusual from the perspective of Presbyterian history and polity. Even though churches summarize their offices as deacon and elder (with a distinction between teaching and ruling), a provision has been made for a doctor or teacher of the church since the inception of the Westminster Standards. What makes this omission even more odd is that the PCA has two of their own schools where many of their faculty are

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<sup>66</sup> Presbyterian Church in America, *The Book of Church Order of the Presbyterian Church in America* (Lawrenceville: The Office of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America, 2021), 1–4, 7–2.

<sup>67</sup> Presbyterian Church in America, *BCO PCA 2021*, 7–2.

<sup>68</sup> Presbyterian Church in America, *BCO PCA 2021*, 8–1.

"doctors" and ordained in their presbyteries. Of special focus will be their only institution related to ministerial education.

### *Covenant Theological Seminary*

As mentioned before, CTS is the official PCA seminary. Covenant College was a Bible Presbyterian Church school.<sup>69</sup> The college eventually became a part of the RPCES.<sup>70</sup> The Synod chose Saint Louis for the campus location because it was central to the denomination.<sup>71</sup> Although not a part of the original vision, the Synod appended a theological seminary graduate department to CC.<sup>72</sup> In order to better accommodate the space needed for students in the arts and sciences, the college moved to Lookout Mountain, Georgia.<sup>73</sup> However, the seminary stayed in Saint Louis, Missouri due to their need for theological research. The schools were separated for the move, thus honing foci in their respective academic programs and financial situations. The North Central Association accredited CTS first, then the Association of Theological Schools eventually accredited CTS later.<sup>74</sup> Both the college and the theological seminary became a part of

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<sup>69</sup> Rayburn, Robert G. "Covenant College and Covenant Theological Seminary," [1982-1990], Robert Gibson Rayburn Manuscript Collection, PCA Historical Center, St. Louis, MO, <https://www.pcahistory.org/rgo/schools/covc-s/history.html>.

<sup>70</sup> Rayburn, "CC and CTS."

<sup>71</sup> Rayburn, "CC and CTS."

<sup>72</sup> Rayburn, "CC and CTS."

<sup>73</sup> Cowan, Ebertz, and Shields, "The Vocation of Teaching: Themes and Models from the Presbyterian Tradition," 150; Rayburn, "CC and CTS." The emphasis on the liberal arts is a testimony to medieval curriculum, which Calvin implemented at the Academy of Geneva.

<sup>74</sup> Rayburn, "CC and CTS."

the PCA when the RPCES was received. They both remained under the control of the General Assembly rather than switching to independent schools.<sup>75</sup>

Since CTS is the denominational seminary of the PCA, its theology and divinity faculty are required to be ordained in the PCA, and the effects are evident: on average, the faculty have over nine years of ministry experience before they join the faculty at CTS, and they influence the largest number of pastoral candidates in the PCA, as a majority attend CTS.<sup>76</sup> Although they use the language of "pastor-scholars,"<sup>77</sup> it's clear that through an integrated ministry experience and academic teaching that the professors at CTS fulfill Calvin's vision for the doctor.

### *Analysis of the Doctor in the Presbyterian Church in America*

Most of the CTS professors are ordained in the PCA because they regularly instruct in theology and ministry and are also active members of their churches—either as laity or ruling/teaching elders that regularly preach on Sunday to a specific church and administer the sacraments. However, they are only recognized as "teaching elders," not as "doctors." While functionally the professors are working as "doctors" in Calvin's original conception, the waters are muddied. They are recognized as ministers in the PCA, but their primary focus is on an academic institution as they regularly propagate doctrine by teaching students and preserve it by making students aware of theological error as they

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<sup>75</sup> Rayburn, "CC and CTS."

<sup>76</sup> Covenant Theological Seminary, "Why Covenant: Training You for a Lifetime of Ministry," accessed March 15, 2022, <https://www.covenantseminary.edu/why-covenant/>.

<sup>77</sup> Covenant Theological Seminary, "Why Covenant: Training You for a Lifetime of Ministry."

serve in their churches in ministry. CTS has prepared several generations of theological and ministerial students who serve in a variety of denominations, including the PCA.

## **Chapter 5**

### **The Doctor in 21<sup>st</sup> Century American Presbyterian Churches**

Calvin's doctor of the church may seem like a small addition to current ecclesiastical structures; however, it significantly contributes to the ministry of the church. The doctor of the church creates a ministry role that intensely focuses on the propagation and preservation of sound doctrine for the benefit of the church. Doctors accomplish this goal by regularly teaching God's people both in the church and the academy, both pastors and laity.

#### **Summary**

In chapter one, I constructed a road map for this study, highlighting the significance of this forgotten doctrine. In chapter two, I highlighted the historical origin of this doctrine by writing a brief biography of Calvin, tracing the church's theological education from the ancient church to the Reformation and examining how Calvin applied this doctrine in Geneva. In chapter three, I examined occurrences in Calvin's writing where he discussed the doctor of the church. In chapter four, I examined the books of order and major seminaries for each of the three major Presbyterian denominations in the United States for evidence of Calvin's understanding of the office of doctor.

#### **Application**

Drawing from Calvin, the primary duty of the doctor is teaching doctrine. Though this is similar to the pastorate, it is unique in that it is centrally concerned with the subject matter of right doctrine and communicating it to people rather than focusing wholly on



the care of souls. The doctor is free to move where educational needs exist that he believes he can fulfill. The doctor's primary teaching tool—the lecture—is meant to inform God's people, through intellectual means, what God has revealed to them through his Word. The doctor is also meant to drive people deeper in their understanding of doctrine so that they can teach others and defend it. This specificity means that he will be an expert in some topics and will regularly wrestle with nuances and complexities that eventually have practical implications. Their skill in teaching is not meant to puff themselves up in pride but to lavish on God's people—as all spiritual gifts are intended to do.

The PC(USA) recognizes "certified Christian educators," which can be equated with the doctor. However, they significantly expand on Calvin's original vision of the doctor by adding responsibilities and subject matters which one should have competency to teach in that are outside of strictly biblical and theological studies. While attempting to innovate the role, the denomination would do well by simplifying the "job description" of the "doctor" and have him focus on the preservation and propagation of sound doctrine.

The OPC is the closest to Calvin's original conception of the doctor in practice. However, they deviate from Calvin in that they see the doctor as a function of the pastor that could be its own distinct role.<sup>1</sup> This means that the doctor could be ordained to fulfill the ministry of the Word and sacrament, thus expanding his focus—albeit not to the extent of the PC(USA)—on other matters outside the purview of the doctor. It is

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<sup>1</sup> Perhaps, given the broader historical theology of this doctrine not covered in the thesis, Calvin was the one who deviated from this arrangement.

important for them to remember that although a pastor is a doctor, a doctor is not a pastor.

The PCA would benefit the most from Calvin's conception of the doctor. There are certainly many in the PCA—especially its own professors—that function as a doctor without the formal title and recognition from the BCO. In order to help the teaching elders focus on their ministry of Word and sacrament, the PCA could benefit by formally recognizing the doctor of the church and allowed that office to focus specifically on doctrinal instruction.

Practically, there are several ways for churches to flesh this doctrine out. First, churches can hire qualified doctors for their staff who focus specifically on the doctrinal instruction of God's people.<sup>2</sup> While some churches make this a practice, if it were more widespread, the theological literacy of entire churches and areas would be improved. Having someone dedicated to the biblical and theological development of God's people would begin to reverse the sad numbers found in the latest data from Ligonier and LifeWay as God's people begin to regularly grapple with God's truth. Second, churches can encourage those who have potential in scholarship to pursue advanced degrees. They can help increase the pool of potential candidates by even providing financial resources for these students to pursue advanced training. Then, after they complete a credential or

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<sup>2</sup> For example: Scotty Smith is considered a "Teacher in Residence" at West End Community Church, Anthony Bradley is a "Theologian-in-Residence" at Redeemer Presbyterian Church (Lincoln Square), Michael Kruger is a "Teacher in Residence" at Christ Covenant Church, John R. Franke is a "Theologian in Residence" at Second Presbyterian Church, David Filson is "Pastor of Theology and Discipleship" at Christ Presbyterian Church, where Christina Edmondson and Paul Lim are also "Scholar in Residence," and Wes Vander Lugt is "Theologian in Residence" at First Presbyterian Church of Tulsa.

course of study, they can come back and teach the church in matters of doctrine.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, churches can work with educational institutions to help provide teaching, training or writing workshops to help sharpen the skill of potential doctors. Third, churches and schools can develop more collaborative partnerships and share resources with one another. They can host weekend workshops or seminars on topics, offer discount rates for laity of the church to attend classes, or bring professors on to church staff to highlight the close relationship these two have in the preservation and propagation of sound doctrine for the church.

## **Conclusion**

Readers of this thesis may question its importance to the church's present-day mission. It may have seem as if a mountain is being made from a mole hill for the sake of niche historical study. In this thesis, though, my aim was to demonstrate precisely why Calvin's office of the doctor is essential to churches today. In an age of busy ministries, focused degree programs in seminaries, and a decline in theological literacy among the laity, it seems that pastoral teams should consider how they can incorporate theological educators onto their teams to help preserve and propagate sound doctrine for generations to come. In the Reformation, an educated laity, led by an educated clergy, brought the church into the light of the gospel as guided by the Spirit. An educated laity and informed clergy created conservative Presbyterian denominations that continue to flourish to this day in an age where higher criticism and liberalism choked out sound doctrine.

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<sup>3</sup> Additionally, rather than encouraging those who have interest in reading, writing, and speaking to become ministers so that they can work in the church, mentors can encourage individuals to become "theologians in residence" or "scholars in residence."

Recapturing this approach would help the church today to promote theological literacy among God's people. While the ministry of pastors may certainly be flourishing in many contexts, many are floundering due to the varying responsibilities and demands they have on their time. As a result, God's people are thirsty and hungry for robust instruction in God's Word. The doctor of the church, as Calvin originally conceived it, would greatly benefit the church's ministry of training people in sound doctrine by dedicating people to this role. May God's church flourish as his people strive to best structure the church to effectively ministry to one another.

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