

Letter 518: 12 October 1533, Strasbourg, Capito and Martin Bucer to the City Council of Bern

Printed in BDS 7:517–21, no. 11.

[*Summary*]: Capito and Bucer advise the council of the importance of schooling for the poor. They praise them for using the income from monasteries for that purpose and hope they will expand the programme, for there is need for capable people in government. The old monasteries used to run schools, and ecclesiastical laws speak of provisions for instruction. It is therefore right to use church property to pay for it. At present the school system is divided by regions, but for the purpose of higher education, the most capable boys should be singled out and brought to Bern for instruction by the preachers and lecturers. In this manner they would make better progress and become useful members of the government or the clergy. They call the council's attention to an especially talented young man from Bern, Simon Sulzer, who should be employed as a lecturer. They hope that Bern will one day have a surplus of such men and be able to supply the surrounding region with teachers. Caspar [Megander] and [Johannes] Rhellicanus will be instrumental in the process. It is important to provide schools at home and avoid sending boys abroad where they might be corrupted. They should use church property to allow citizens to keep their children at school. Several citizens should receive a small contribution to keep their children longer at their studies and to make sure that those 'who are skilful by nature will become more skilful by training, and those who have a crass mind will nevertheless be advanced through training, so that they will be less awkward and more useful.' Good schoolteachers would attract pupils from other cities to Bern and create much mutual good will.