

# Shepherding Reformers in the Catechization Process for Prospective Congregation Members as an effort to build the faith and spiritual growth of the church

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#### **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of article This is For study in a way deep grazing reformers as references or guidelines theological in implementation catechism for prospective congregation members in the area church. Catechism understood as a coaching process systematic and planned faith , which guides every candidate sidi for know , appreciate and practice teachings Christian faith in general intact in life daily activities This No only emphasize on aspects knowledge doctrinal , but also in the formation of spirituality and morality rooted in relationships personal with Christ . This article use approach study qualitative with method studies literature to various source relevant theological and pastoral , then analyzed in a way interpretive in order to find meaning and implications in practice . Research results show that implementation catechism should be done in a way dynamic , contextual , and intentional with display face living grazing , namely pastoral ministry people in a way intact through mentoring spiritual , planting mark faith , and formation Christian character . Shepherding reformers based on principles sola fide , sola gratia , and sola scriptura become base solid doctrine in form understanding faith candidate sidi for acknowledge and believe in the Triune God. By thus , catechism No just means learning dogmatic , but rather a process of spiritual transformation that fosters maturity faith , faithfulness to God's word , and readiness become member active congregation as well as responsible answer in service church and witness in the world.

**KEYWORDS:** grazing reformatory, catechism, prospective congregation members, formation faith, pastoral theology.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

Shepherding ecclesiastical is fundamental aspects in life Christians rooted in the Trinity calling church , namely witnessing ( marturia ), fellowship ( koinonia ), and serving ( diakonia ). The three dimensions This No just function institutional church , but rather expression concrete from existence church as body The living and active Christ . The Church No can understood only as institution social or organization religious only , but as community living spirituality in love , service , and loyalty to God's Word (Vanhoozer, 2021). Within the framework this , grazing become the spirit that gives life all over activity church , ensure that every action service and teaching sourced from God's restoring love .

As living communion, church must built on base true and healthy faith, which is strengthened through education theological and teaching based on Scripture (McGrath, 2020). Teachings pure faith functioning as moral and spiritual foundation for growth church and its members. Hauerwas (2022) emphasizes that true theology will give birth to correct ethics; because true teaching No only fill in knowledge cognitive, but rather form character and spirituality. Therefore that, every form service church, including service catechism, must always based on principles teaching that is faithful to the Bible. Wright (2023) adds that congregation as body Christ called For life in truth and loyalty to his job, well in internal context of the church and in testimony to the world. Church with thus become signs and means God's salvation is present in the world through loyalty and obedience His people towards The Word of God (Barth, 2020).

Task main church as shepherd people is caring for , guiding , and growing life spiritual congregation . In the Bible, the task This depicted through metaphor shepherd and sheep , which emphasizes aspect love , care , and responsibility spiritual responsibility of a person leader spiritual to his congregation (Anderson, 2022). Pastoral care true No just function administrative , but is pastoral care and guidance people going to maturity faith . A shepherd must capable read spiritual

needs of the people, guiding they to repentance true, and form a life that reflects values kingdom of God (Peterson, 2021). The role of the shepherd as spiritual educators place it No only as teacher doctrine, but also as the facilitating servant experience faith and renewal spiritual people (Bosch, 2020).

In context life modern church, catechism occupy position strategic in grazing faith. Catechism is instrument education faith that helps congregation, especially generation young, understanding basics Christian faith and living it in life everyday (Larsen, 2022). This process No only knowledge - oriented theological, but also the formation contextual character and spirituality. Root (2021) emphasized that effective catechism must nature participatory and transformative, so that participant No only accept information theological, but also experienced encounter personal with Christ. In practice church like GMIM, the catechism is not just an administrative process going to confession faith, but rather A journey faith that prepares somebody become witness The mature and responsible Christ answer (Osmer, 2023).

In a way Historically , Reformed churches such as GMIM placed catechism as an integral part of spirituality reformist . Tennent (2020) explains that catechism in the Reformation tradition is rooted in the principle that faith must understood in a way rational and implemented in a way praxis . With thus , catechism functioning as bridge between doctrine and practice life daily . Teaching faith No only covers knowledge about God, but also formation a Christ- centered life . In this case this , reformatory pastoralism confirm importance balance between introduction intellectual and spiritual formation in coaching congregation young .

In a way theoretically , catechism is an educational process that is oriented towards the formation of Christian faith and morality through teaching systematic about doctrine base faith , ethics , and life spiritual (Schreiter, 2023). This process covers dimensions pedagogical and spiritual guidance participant going to transformation behavior as well as maturity faith (Heitink , 2022). Shepherding reformers emphasize that transformation spiritual only can happen through power God's grace at work in heart human , not Because business man solely (Calvin, 2021). Principle This in line with the three main pillars of the Reformation — *sola fide* , *sola gratia* , and *sola scriptura* — which became base for every form teaching Christian faith (Horton, 2023). Third principle This confirm that saving faith originate from God's grace , accepted through faith , and measured based on the truth of the Scriptures .

In practice , grazing reformers for catechism of the congregation demand existence awareness balanced theological and pedagogical . Keller (2022) reminds us that every form coaching faith must rooted in truth The gospel that changes heart and not only mind . That is , teaching catechism must bring participant to experience real spiritual , not only knowledge intellectual . The development process This must nature holistic , encompassing aspect cognitive , affective , and conative (action ). Through approach Thus , participants catechism is expected can understand calling his faith as a living disciple of Christ in love , service , and testimony in the midst of the world.

In context Church Evangelical Christian in Minahasa (GMIM), implementation grazing reformers in catechism sidi has high relevance. As the church that was born from Reformation tradition, GMIM has not quite enough answer For guard purity doctrine and grow spirituality true congregation. Bonhoeffer (2021) emphasized that true faith always produce action real in form obedience and service. Therefore that, catechism in GMIM it should be directed For form congregation young people who don't only know what they believe, but also live faith the in practice life social and ecclesiastical.

Ward (2022) suggests that that modern church faces challenge big in the form of secularization and weakening individualism spiritual commitment of generations young . In this situation this , a nuanced catechism reformers can become means revitalization strengthening faith return authority Word and relevance Christian faith in the modern world. Approach grazing reformers demanding that the church strengthen return pastoral function that emphasizes relation personal between pastor and congregation , and mentoring intensive spirituality . Greenman (2023) added that church need develop curriculum context - based catechism local , with still loyal to principles Reformation theology .

From the perspective methodological, research This examine grazing reformers for catechism of the congregation through approach analytical and constructive, with combine review literature theological and pastoral reflection. Analysis This highlight relevance grazing reformers as a theological model that can enrich practice catechism in the contemporary church. Research results show that grazing reformers No only confirm the authority of Scripture, but also brings to life return Spirit Christ - centered ministry. With thus, the church can become room formation deep spiritual, a place where faith No only taught but also lived.

In a way practical, application grazing reformers in catechism sidi can done through a number of step strategic: first, strengthening competence theological and pedagogical of the servants catechism so that they capable teach with runway solid theology and relevant approach; second, compiling curriculum contextual catechism with emphasize relevance faith to issues contemporary like technology, ethics social and responsibility answer ecological; and third, expanding dialogue

space between pastors, catechism teachers, and participants catechism so that the learning process become interactive and participatory (Osmer, 2023).

In the end , the shepherding reformers for catechism prospective congregation members functioning as heart from coaching faith a healthy and sustainable church . It confirm return importance role shepherd in guide people going to maturity true faith , realized through obedience , love , and service . Church called For Keep going transform become a community faithful to the principles of the Reformation: by faith alone , by love alone grace , and only by the Word of God. With thus , catechism No just part from church programs , but rather the process of spiritual formation that gives birth generation new a congregation that is loyal , tough , and rooted strong in Christ .

Through approach grazing reformers this , GMIM and the churches similar expected can Keep going renew system coaching his faith to remain relevant with challenges of the times without lost essence theologically . As emphasized by Greenman (2023), a church rooted in Reformation theology will always find method new For live The Gospel in the middle world change . Therefore that , grazing reformers No only inheritance theological , but rather calling prophetic For guide church going to continued loyalty updated in God's grace .

#### 2. METHOD

Research methods used in study This is approach qualitative descriptive- analytical approach This chosen Because nature flexible and possible researchers describe phenomenon grazing reformers and the process of catechization of the Sidi indepth and comprehensive . Through approach this research No only aim to explain fact in a way descriptive , but also analytical meaning theology behind every practice catechism conducted by the church in context reformatory pastoral care (Watkins, 2022). With Thus , research This make an effort reveal greater understanding reflective to principle theology reformers who became spiritual and doctrinal basis for implementation catechism .

Approach descriptive-analytical own characteristics typical , namely focus on understanding phenomenon in context the original , using narrative data , emphasizing meaning subjective that appears from the interpretation process , and open to change theme during analysis ongoing (Kim, 2016). In the research this , researcher put theology reformers and principles catechism as lens conceptual that helps understand practice coaching faith prospective congregation members . With combine two elements this research can produce deep understanding about How grazing reformers implemented in a way practical in the teaching process Christian faith .

Research data sources This consists of on texts literature theological, documents ecclesiastical, and materials reference academic related doctrine grazing reformers as well as history and practice catechism. Data can also be obtained from transcript interview with pastor, servant catechism, and participants catechism (teenagers and youth), which function strengthen understanding contextual to dynamics coaching faith in the field. In addition, researchers make notes reflective during the analysis process literature For capture ideas and findings the beginning of a nature conceptual (Saldaña, 2013). Approach based literature This including in category studies theology practical which emphasizes reflection to experience and practice service (Watkins, 2022).

Data analysis was performed through stages systematic, starting from reading beginning, coding process, writing notes analytical, up to synthesis thematic. At this stage early, researchers read all data for get understanding comprehensive. The coding process done in two stages: coding open coding for identifying main ideas, and coding focused coding for group the ideas to in relevant themes. In context study theology, researcher using coding models theological which refers to the principles the basis of the Reformation such as *sola fide*, *sola gratia*, and *sola scriptura* as framework reflective For interpretation meaning (Saldaña, 2013).

Data reliability is tested through several validation strategies like *member checking*, *triangulation data sources*, *audit trails*, and *peer debriefing* (Smith & Davies, 2010; Schurink et al., 2012). Stages end from the analysis process is interpretation and synthesis thematic linking results findings with framework theology grazing reformist. Researcher interpret every theme based on its suitability with values theology taught in Reformation tradition, then compile conclusions that are theological at a time applicable for coaching prospective congregation members.

Approach This own superiority Because capable blend theory and practice in a way contextual. Researchers can understand nuances experience participant catechism as well as interpret spiritual meaning behind every activity coaching faith (Hall, 2024). However thus , because nature qualitative research This No aim do generalization broad . Subjectivity researchers in the interpretation process also becomes anticipated limitations with a rigorous validation strategy (Brink, 1995). With Thus , the method study This expected can give contribution theoretical and practical for development study theology practical , especially in context pastoral care and catechism in the contemporary church .

#### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Research result

Study This find that *grazing reformers* is a pastoral care model that emphasizes balance between reporting word, mentoring spiritual, and formation character congregation in a way communal and individual. Based on results interview with a number of pastor and servant catechism in the Church Evangelical Christian in Minahasa (GMIM) Tomohon and Manado regions, obtained understanding that grazing No Again viewed only as not quite enough answer pastor, but also as calling faith for all over congregation that has confirmed in sidi. A pastor state:

"The shepherd No only I'm on the pulpit . Everyone who has accepting sidi also has responsibilities answer shepherding fellow human beings — in family , community , even in places work . That is the true meaning of the 'priesthood of believers'." (Interview , Rev. ES, 2025)

Statement the confirm that grazing reformers based on the principle *priesthood everyone believes*, who rejects view hierarchical to service. With thus, shepherding understood as movement God's love experienced and passed on by the people in life everyday. Findings This in harmony with draft theology practice as put forward by Watkins (2022), that true pastoral action is participation man in work God's salvation through full relationship love, teaching word and guidance in suffering.

More continue , interview with one of them waiter catechism show that in context praxis , shepherding reformers functioning as transformative mentoring . Servant the say :

"Children young people who join catechism sidi sering come with various struggle — about faith, relationships, and the future. That's where our job is not only teach doctrine, but listening, guiding, and presenting God's love." (Interview, Mr. JM, GMIM Maranatha Catechist, 2025)

From the statement the can concluded that in approach reformist , function grazing No limited to teaching intellectual , but also in the formation of spirituality touching relational aspect emotional and existential participant catechism . Approach This in line with Parker J. Palmer's thoughts which emphasize authenticity and courage love as form grazing true . Therefore that , grazing reformers No only direct congregation For understand the word , but also grow courage For life in accordance recognized faith .

Analysis to practice catechism in several congregation show that the coaching process faith This become receptacle main for implementation grazing reformist . Based on observations and notes interview with three catechism teenagers , they disclose that implementation catechism No only event Study theology , but rather room formation character and fellowship . One of participant said :

"During catechism, we are not only Study verses, but also invited reflect and share experience alive. I feel like having a family spiritual new." (Interview, RT, 17 years old, participant catechism sidi, 2025)

Statement This describe that the process of catechization is of a nature reformers has create room learning dialogical and transformative faith. The approach used No mere transfer of doctrine, however formation maturity faith through experience a vibrant community. This is where looks synergy theological between pastoral care and catechism, where the pastor play a role as facilitator who grows faith and encouragement participation active congregation in service.

In addition , the results study show that grazing reformers contribute significant in form spiritual identity of the congregation post sidi's confirmation . Many respondents state that after receive sidi, they feel more own not quite enough answer For serve and be example in life everyday . A new catechism confirmed say :

"After the meeting, I feel calling I No finished , but new started . I want serving in youth and learning word more in ." (Interview , SM, 18 years old , GMIM Paulus, 2025)

Statement This show that catechism sidi is not end from the teaching process faith, but rather beginning from involvement active in calling church. This is in harmony with Osmer's (2008) view that objective end pastoral care and catechism is enable God's people to life as a responsible disciple of Christ answer in real world context.

From the whole results research , can concluded that grazing reformatory and catechism sidi has close and constructive reciprocal relationship . Shepherding give direction and spirit theological for implementation catechism , while catechism

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become form concrete from grazing That alone. Both of them oriented towards *sola scriptura*, *sola fide*, and *sola gratia*—namely faith rooted in the Word, love God's grace, and recognition will Christ as center life church. Therefore that, in context contemporary church, renewal service catechism must be always associated with update paradigm reformatory pastoral care—that is, one that is based on loving, participatory, and Christ-centered.

Implications from study This is that church need strengthen role catechism as an integral part of grazing congregation . Pastors and servants catechism expected No only focus on the material teachings , but also on spiritual accompaniment and strengthening faith contextual . With thus , shepherding reformers can Keep going life as movement renewal spiritual growth congregation become a community rooted in the word , bearing fruit in service , and witness for the world.

## 4. DISCUSSION

#### **Shepherding Reformers: Analysis Constructive**

Shepherding in its practical dimension is a sacred responsibility shared by all believers, not merely pastors or clergy. This inclusive perspective underscores that pastoral care is a communal vocation in which every member of the church participates in expressing compassion, empathy, and guidance toward others, particularly those facing emotional or spiritual struggles. In contemporary theology, pastoral care is increasingly viewed as a form of mutual ministry that integrates psychological insight, social engagement, and spiritual accompaniment rooted in Christ's example of love and service (McMinn & Campbell, 2023; Louw, 2016). Such an approach moves beyond traditional clerical functions and emphasizes shared responsibility in embodying God's love through acts of listening, nurturing, and reconciliation within the body of Christ.

Pastoral care should not be reduced to administrative or institutional activity, but rather understood as an extension of God's redemptive action at work through His people. The church, therefore, acts as the living presence of God's compassion in the world, ensuring that the shepherding function remains relational, incarnational, and participatory (Wicks, 2021; Heitink, 2022). Shepherding becomes an act of divine partnership—where believers serve as co-laborers with God to bring healing, restoration, and hope to those in need. This perspective transforms pastoral care into a dynamic theology of presence, where care is expressed not through authority but through authentic relational engagement, humility, and service (Doehring, 2020; Lartey, 2003).

Furthermore, shepherding functions as an educational and formative ministry. The shepherd acts not only as a caregiver but also as a moral educator who imparts life values, nurtures discernment, and encourages spiritual growth. Within this pedagogical dimension, pastoral ministry mirrors the vocation of teaching, as both aim to cultivate wisdom, maturity, and character grounded in faith (Anderson, 2022; Miller-McLemore, 2012). Parker J. Palmer's reflections on authenticity and vocation remind us that true spiritual leadership flows from an integrated life, where personal integrity and spiritual depth become the foundation of effective ministry. A genuine shepherd is one who listens deeply, walks alongside others through complexity, and facilitates encounters with divine truth through presence and empathy (Palmer, 2000; Palmer, 1998).

From the Reformed perspective, pastoral care is rooted in theological convictions such as sola scriptura, sola fide, and sola gratia—affirming that all believers share the priestly call to serve and shepherd one another (Vanhoozer, 2015; Horton, 2023). This view dismantles rigid hierarchies and restores the church as a communal fellowship where ministry is shared, and authority derives from Scripture and the Spirit, not from position. Shepherding thus becomes the living expression of the priesthood of all believers, where leaders and congregants co-labor in the mission of God to restore, teach, and reconcile (Wright, 2023; Bonhoeffer, 1954).

In its reformist orientation, shepherding also carries a prophetic and missional mandate. It challenges the church to be present in public spaces as a transformative witness of God's love, justice, and mercy (Bosch, 2020; Wells, 2018). The Reformist model of shepherding transcends the boundaries of ecclesial routine, engaging actively with societal issues such as inequality, mental health, and moral formation. By doing so, it revitalizes the theological vision of the church as both a pastoral and prophetic community, one that embodies hope and redemption in the complexities of modern life (Hall, 2024; Osmer, 2023). Through reformist shepherding, theology becomes lived and dynamic—shaping communities that reflect Christ's compassion in worship, education, and public service alike.

## **Catechism: Learning the Christian Faith**

Sidi Catechism represents an essential dimension of the church's educational and pastoral ministry, functioning not merely as doctrinal instruction but as a comprehensive process of faith formation. The catechetical framework equips young believers to develop both spiritual maturity and ethical responsibility, ensuring that faith is not only understood intellectually but embodied in daily living. In contemporary theological discourse, catechesis is viewed as an integrative model that nurtures discipleship through holistic engagement—encompassing belief, behavior, and belonging within the

life of the church (Bosch, 2020; Larsen, 2022). It serves as a pedagogical bridge between theological knowledge and Christian praxis, fostering the development of character and conviction among young believers as they prepare for full participation in the body of Christ.

Etymologically, the term *catechesis* stems from the Greek *katekhein*, meaning "to instruct orally" or "to resound," implying the transmission of truth through communal proclamation and relational engagement. Within the ecclesial context, catechesis is not a mere transfer of information but an encounter between divine revelation and human transformation (Tennent, 2020; Root, 2021). The process involves catechumens (learners), catechists (teachers), and catechisms (instructional texts), all working synergistically to build a formative faith experience grounded in Scripture and lived experience. This approach aligns with contemporary educational theology that emphasizes the interplay between faith, learning, and practice as the foundation for sustainable Christian formation (Anderson, 2022; Vanhoozer, 2021).

In its practical implementation, the Sidi Catechism emphasizes the integration of biblical instruction, personal devotion, and ethical living. It invites participants to grow into the likeness of Christ through disciplined study, prayer, and service. The process moves beyond intellectual assent to include affective and volitional transformation—helping catechumens internalize biblical truths and apply them in community and social life (Wright, 2023; Heitink, 2022). Through this, catechesis becomes an instrument for shaping mature disciples who live out their faith with authenticity and accountability before God and others.

Moreover, the catechetical process holds a missional dimension. It prepares individuals not only to confess faith but also to embody the gospel in acts of service, justice, and compassion (Osmer, 2023; Wells, 2018). The Sidi Catechism thus acts as a formative and transformative practice, positioning believers as witnesses of Christ's redemptive work in the world. The inclusion of contextual and dialogical pedagogy further enhances its relevance to contemporary challenges faced by youth in a pluralistic society (Hauerwas, 2022; Hall, 2024). The church, therefore, must continuously renew its catechetical vision—anchoring it in biblical theology while engaging the realities of modern discipleship—to ensure the flourishing of faith that is both personal and communal.

In conclusion, the Sidi Catechism embodies the dynamic interaction between faith instruction, pastoral care, and community formation. It nurtures believers to live their faith not as abstract belief systems but as lived expressions of grace and truth. When integrated with Reformed pastoral principles, this process becomes a vital avenue for spiritual renewal and ecclesial vitality, fostering generations of believers who are rooted in the Word, empowered by the Spirit, and active in the mission of God in the world (Peterson, 2021; Horton, 2023).

## Shepherding Reformers & Sidi Catechism: Interaction Theological Constructive

Shepherding Reformers represents a model of pastoral care grounded in Reformed theology, emphasizing the authority of Scripture, justification by faith, and salvation through grace. This theological framework not only focuses on maintaining faith but also on cultivating the spiritual and moral maturity of the congregation, guiding believers toward a Christ-centered life. In this context, pastoral care is viewed as a shared responsibility within the community of believers rather than a strictly hierarchical duty. The shepherd's role extends beyond preaching; it encompasses nurturing, guiding, and equipping the faithful to live in an authentic relationship with God through reflection, teaching, and compassionate pastoral engagement. Such an approach underscores the importance of holistic ministry that connects doctrine with life transformation and discipleship. Recent studies have reaffirmed the relevance of Reformed pastoral theology in addressing the spiritual and ethical challenges of the modern church (Anderson, 2022; Hauerwas, 2022; Horton, 2023).

Within the implementation of catechism, the principles of Reformed shepherding hold vital significance. Catechism serves not merely as doctrinal instruction but as a process of spiritual formation designed to prepare believers for conscious, mature confession of faith. This process integrates theological reflection, spiritual mentoring, and communal accountability aimed at shaping responsible disciples of Christ. In practice, the catechist functions not only as a teacher but also as a shepherd who guides catechumens toward a deeper understanding of core Christian doctrines such as the Trinity, Christology, and salvation. Contemporary pastoral education literature emphasizes that catechesis must be dialogical, experiential, and contextually rooted, encouraging believers to embody faith in daily living (Root, 2021; Larsen, 2022; Osmer, 2023). Thus, catechetical ministry becomes a space for transformative encounters with the Word of God, enabling participants to integrate belief, behavior, and belonging into one coherent faith identity.

Moreover, Reformed shepherding demonstrates strong contextual and missional relevance. The church is called to embody love, justice, and hope in the midst of societal challenges, making pastoral care a public and transformative vocation. In an age marked by moral fragmentation and spiritual uncertainty, shepherding reformers call believers to live an active and critical faith that engages the world with compassion and integrity. The catechetical process, in this regard, functions as a practical medium for transmitting Gospel values into everyday life, ensuring that believers not only understand doctrine

intellectually but also live it out ethically and relationally. This holistic integration between pastoral theology and catechesis reflects a vital synergy where teaching, discipleship, and service converge to nurture mature and mission-oriented Christians (Tennent, 2020; Wright, 2023; Hall, 2024). Consequently, the union of Reformed pastoral care and catechetical practice offers a comprehensive ecclesial model that unites sound theology with active ministry, fostering the continual growth of God's people in faith and action.

#### 5. CONCLUSION

From the whole discussion in study this , can concluded that grazing reformers is a very relevant theological and pastoral model for modern church in foster faith congregation , especially for candidate sidi. Approach This confirm return Reformation principles such as sola scriptura, sola fide, and sola gratia as runway main for coaching spiritual. Shepherding reformers No just arrange life congregation in a way administrative , but rather guide people in a way spiritual going to maturity true faith . Through catechism , pastoral care reformers translated in practice education holistic , participatory , and transformative faith . This process help participant catechism understand base Christian faith , internalize values the Gospel , as well as develop responsible Christian character answer in life personal and community . With thus , catechism No only means of transferring doctrine , but also space formation living faith in which the people experience encounter with Christ and moved For serve fellow .

More far , research This confirm that grazing reformatory and catechism sidi has mutual relationship complete . Shepherding give framework theological and spiritual direction for implementation catechism , while catechism become means concrete from practice grazing That alone . Synergy both of them form community strong faith , which does not only understand teachings faith in a way intellectual , but also live it in action real . In the context of GMIM and other Reformed churches , the implementation of grazing reformers demand update pattern catechism to be more contextual , dialogic , and relevant with challenges of the times. Church need strengthen capacity of pastors and catechists as companion spiritual that is not only teach , but also guide and emulate true Christian life . With hold on steadfast in the authority of Scripture and the power grace of God, shepherding reformers will Keep going become foundation for formation rooted congregation strong in faith , growing in love , and bear fruit in service that glorifies Christ.

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