Johannes Brenz (1499–1570), reformer of the city of Schwäbisch Hall and leading churchman in the Duchy of Württemberg, was the most important champion of the Lutheran Reformation in Southern Germany. An articulate advocate of the view that secular government includes the divinely imposed obligation to provide for the establishment and maintenance of true religion, he was also the most gifted ecclesiastical organizer of all Lutheran reformers. His unique achievements as a creator of church order set a standard for others to imitate.

The texts in this collection record his views on the office of Christian magistrate. Just as importantly, they chronicle the development of the system of church government that was fully realized in Württemberg only in the 1550s. The documents in this volume thus provide an excellent basis for tracing the theoretical and practical developments of the Lutheran territorial church.

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