

16th Century: Ulrich Zwingli and Friends

Historical Theology

Date: 10/23/22 and 10/30/22

Author: Lonnie Moore

- I. Preparation for Service
- A. He was the son of a successful farmer and magistrate
- B. Zwingli, as a boy, enjoyed studying the Bible in original Hebrew and Greek
- C. He, also, enjoyed music to the point he was nearly convinced to join a Dominican group in order to develop as a musician
- D. Switzerland at the time of Zwingli was very militaristic. The cantons were isolated by geography and became prosperous. Other countries tried to invade, forcing the Swiss to unite and develop strong fighting men and tactics. Because of their reputation, they were sought after as mercenaries. Working as mercenaries became an important way to add to the income between farming duties and/or for the young men who had no prospects for agricultural land.
- E. One of his teachers was Thomas Wyttenbach.
 1. Wyttenbach preached against the practices of indulgences before Luther did.
 2. He proclaimed that the Scriptures were the authority not the church
 3. He taught that salvation came by faith alone in the crucified Christ
- F. Zwingli was a disciple of Erasmus
 1. It was Erasmus that convinced Zwingli that salvation was in Christ alone
 2. Zwingli was, most likely, involved in translating the New Testament from Greek to common language.
 3. Mary and the Saints had no part in salvation
 4. Zwingli felt an indebtedness to Erasmus
- G. (Erasmus died a sad and somewhat lonely man. He was hated by the Catholics for “hatching the Reformation. The Protestants did not love him because he refused to join their movement.)
- H. Graduated from Basel University
- II. Early Days of Service
 - A. Priest at Glarus (1506-1516)

It was here that Zwingli began to question the moves and motives of Rome. The city of Glarus was nearly a military camp. From here the Pope gathered his army to march on the French. The loss of so many Swiss lives made Zwingli:

 1. Question the mercenary system
 2. Question the moves and motivation of the Pope
 3. Search for answers in the Bible.Back to the Source (reading the Bible in Greek and Hebrew)

Zwingli became a true Christian by reading the Scriptures.
 - B. Priest at Einsiedeln (1516-1518) (has the Shrine of Our Lady of Einsiedeln)
 - C. During his pastorate at Einsiedeln he fell into sexual temptation.
 1. He was ashamed of his sin
 2. He came to believe that the forced celibacy of the clergy was not healthy
 - D. Became known as the “Young Preacher”—he was a tourist attraction.
 - E. He was appointed to be the pastor of the largest church in the canton.
 - F. (Switzerland did not officially exist as a country, but was made of 13 cantons that were unified by common culture. Officially and theoretically, the Swiss cantons belonged to the Holy Roman Empire.)
 - G. Zwingli was strongly opposed for this large church. Detractors knew of his sin, but Zwingli owned up to this transgression. Also, his main competitor had even worse record (he had fathered six children)
- III. Service Leadership
 - A. Approach to preaching
 1. Began verse by verse through the book of Matthew
 2. His preaching was so powerful that one parishioner said “he felt like he had been lifted up by his hair and suspended in space”
 3. After preaching through Matthew, Zwingli went through Acts, I & II Timothy, and Galatians.

4. He ended up preaching through all of the New Testament except Revelation.
 5. (He was not convinced that Revelation belonged in the canon)
 6. (He thought Mary was a perpetual virgin and often referred to her as “the Blessed Virgin”)
Matthew 1:25
Matthew 13:55-56
 7. (Zwingli coined the term “Anabaptist” which means “re-baptizer”- not meant to be a compliment)
 8. On Fridays, he went into the marketplace and preached through the Psalms.
 9. He did not speak out directly against the Pope, but he said he would lead the people from the worship of idols to the worship of the living God.
- B. Zwingli and his brother were stricken with the Plague in September 1519.
1. Zwingli’s brother died.
 2. Having survived, Zwingli believed he had been spared by God for a purpose.
- C. Emboldened by his experience and by God, Zwingli preached out against the corruptions of the leadership in Rome.
1. Kept his temper and his tact better than Luther
 2. He read Luther’s writings beginning in 1521 and agreed with Luther on many issues.
 3. Zwingli: The papists say, “You must be a Lutheran, because you preach just as Luther writes.” I reply, “I preach just as Saint Paul writes. So why not call me a Pauline? In my view, Luther is a mighty advocate of God who has closely studied the Bible, more seriously than anyone has done on this earth for a thousand years. No one has been like Luther in the manly and unflinching courage with which he has attacked the pope. Still, I do not wish to be called after Luther’s name except that of my captain, Jesus Christ, whose soldier I am. Yet
- I value Luther as highly as anyone alive.”
- D. Zwingli was actually preaching “Christ alone” a year before Luther’s 95 Theses.
- E. Both Luther and Zwingli had been strongly influenced by Augustine of Hippo
- F. Some Swiss Reformers thought Zwingli was too soft, they wanted him to speak out directly against the Pope. He responded that he wanted to change individual hearts and that would not be accomplished with a hammer.
- G. The Sausage Scandal
1. Several workers decide to eat sausage on a Friday evening during Lent. Zwingli was with them but did not eat.
 2. Several men were punished, but Zwingli preached on the freedom to choose food.
- IV. New Service
- A. Break from Rome -Sept. 1522
1. Rejected the infallible authority of the Papacy
 2. Rejected the infallible authority of the Roman Church Councils
 3. Rejected the infallible authority of Roman Church Tradition
 4. Instead he embraced the authority of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Scriptures.
- B. The Pope did not excommunicate Zwingli because the Pope (now in Rome again) needed the Swiss mercenaries to fight against French control.
- C. (Zwingli secretly married Anna Reinhard in 1522 and then publicly married her in 1524) Table Talk Magazine July 2021 “Reformation Women: Anna Reinhard” <https://tabletalkmagazine.com/posts/reformation-women-anna-reinhard/>
- D. 67 Theses (not 95) January 1523
1. Announcements made before the Zurich city council
 2. *Purgatory does not exist
 3. *Lord’s Supper is not a sacrifice, but a remembrance of Christ’s sacrifice and an assurance of the salvation Christ has given us. (Christ died once-Not every Sunday at the Mass. Rom 6:10, Heb. 9:28)(A person does not need to partake every week

because once one has trusted Christ, that person has the fullness of God's mercy.)(Communion is not a work but a response of worship by a grateful person.)

4. If there is nothing "miraculous" about communion then there really is no need for a priest or a pope
 5. *Christ alone (no pope) is head of the church
 6. *Christ is the only way to salvation for all who were, are, or ever shall be
 7. *The one who claims there are other doors for salvation is a murderer of souls
 8. *A Christian may eat at all times all food, decrees about cheese and butter is a Roman swindle.
 9. Why before the city council? Zwingli looked upon Zurich as a Christian community that elected Christian rulers that were responsible for regulating the city's spiritual life.
 10. He believed that the secular government would take over the religious authority that the papacy had exercised.
 11. Luther did not agree with Zwingli on civil government working in such realms, Luther emphasized what salvation meant for the individual.
 12. City council decreed that no preaching would be done except preaching from the Bible.
- E. Zwingli wanted: Rebirth of Christianity
1. Tear down everything and go back to the Scriptures (throw out everything and go back to the Scriptures)
 2. This was different from Luther's approach: Catholic forms of worship are fine unless they go against the Scriptures.
 3. Zwingli called on churches to remove and eliminate: **religious pictures, crucifixes, candles, alters, relics, choirs, organs, robes, processions, and monasteries.** (Thought organs could become idols as people would be drawn to the beauty of the music)
- V. Friends in the Service of God
- A. Leo Jud
1. Was also a disciple of Thomas Wyttenbach
 2. Was Zwingli's right-hand man
 3. His preaching against the veneration of icons led to image smashing in the city of Zurich
 4. Translated the O.T. prophets and the epistles of Paul into Swiss-German
- B. Oswald Myconius
1. Was a personal friend of Erasmus
4. Zwingli would have agreed with previous leaders such as Bernard of Clairvaux and John Gerson as they spoke out against pictures and images because they led "the simple folk into idolatry"
 5. Zwingli was the first to have communion serve to the people as they sat in the pews.
 6. He was the first to use exclusively the local language for all parts of the service.
 7. He did use a liturgical form of worship:
 - a. Set prayers
 - b. Congregation recited the Apostle's Creed
 8. He used the Catholic liturgy as a base for making a Protestant version as opposed to Luther merely translating Catholic liturgy into the local language.
 9. No singing at a Zwingli service. The congregation read the Psalms. Men and women sat on separate sides and took turns reading lines of the Psalms.
 10. A normal Zwingli service had: **Bible readings, prayer, sermon**
 11. Communion services were held only four times a year. Zwingli saw communion as "little more than an act of pious ceremony"
- F. Cathedral Grammar School
1. Zwingli was appointed principal of the school in 1525
 2. He reorganized it from a mere grammar school to one that would include a theological school to train pastors.

2. Professor of N.T. studies at Basel University
 3. He knew of Zwingli's leadership abilities and was one of biggest reasons Zwingli was brought to Zurich to preach at the Great Cathedral
- C. Johann Oecolampadius (Echo-lam-pah-dee-us)
1. A great Christian humanist that became a great reformer
 2. He convinced Philip Melancthon that the elements of communion were representative of the body and blood of Christ
 3. Greek and Hebrew scholar
 4. Helped Erasmus with the translation of the Greek N.T.
- D. Berchtold Haller
1. Was also a disciple of Thomas Wytttenbach
 2. Powerful preacher in city of Berne
 3. Bought the city-canton of Berne into the Reformation
 4. This made the two most powerful cantons (Berne and Zurich) fully into the Protestant movement.

VI. Conflict in Service: Communion

- A. Luther v Zwingli (Lutherans v Reformed)
- B. Agreement:
1. Reject Transubstantiation
 2. Not a sacrifice that can secure grace
 3. The bread should not be "adored" when the priest declared, "This is My body".
 4. The cup should be for the laity, too.
- C. Disagreement:
1. Luther believed that Christ's body and blood were present, "in, with and under" the bread and wine.
 2. Luther believed it was important that Christ be bodily present. Otherwise it would seem that Christ was absent.
 3. Zwingli argued that the word "is" in "This is my body" means "represents." Christ could not be there in body because His risen body is in heaven.
 4. Christ is present at communion, not as a man, but as God.

5. Luther put forth that the union of divine and human allowed Christ to be bodily present everywhere
6. Zwingli countered Luther's stance by pointing out: *To think that way was the same as the old heresy of Eutyches. If Christ body could be omnipresent then it would cease being a human body.*
7. The Lutherans claimed that the Reformed view was close to that of the old Nestorian heresy that separated the two natures of Christ to the point there was no union.
8. Luther ended up declaring that Zwingli was not even a Christian:

I cannot regard Zwingli or any of his teaching as Christian. He neither holds nor teaches any part of the Christian faith rightly, and is now seven times more dangerous than when he was a papist.

9. This attitude brought disappointment to the Swiss Reformers. They had hoped for religious and political alliance to stop the Catholics.
10. They recognized the Lutherans as fellow Christians and were greatly dismayed that Luther would make them enemies when they had a common foe: Rome.
11. A meeting was held by Prince Philip of Hesse called the Marburg Colloquy. Luther would not be moved. Zwingli begged Luther to agree to disagree, but Luther refused to recognize the Reform movement as true Christian.

VII. Conflict in Service: Anabaptists (Re-baptizers)

- A. The man on the bridge illustration. (Erwin Lutzer)
- B. Anabaptists believed wholeheartedly that the Bible should be followed
- C. That would include "Thou Shalt Not Kill"-which would mean war is not right.
- D. Furthermore, the Bible does not mention infant baptism, therefore only people who are professing belief in Christ should be baptized.
- E. Anabaptist leaders included Conrad Grebel, Felix Mantz, Wilhelm Roubli, and other associates of Zwingli.

- F. They wanted Zwingli to take the Reformation farther and faster. They wanted to do away with the tithe, usury, and military service. Further, some of these radicals wanted a totally self-governing church, free of government interference.
 - G. In his second disputation (1523), Zwingli disagreed with the interpretation that "Thou Shalt Not Kill" included killing on the battlefield.
 - H. In 1524, Roubli began preaching against the practice of infant baptism. Some members of his congregation refused to have their children baptized. The Zurich city council demanded that the parents bring in the children for baptism. Zwingli called for calm and discussion, however, some of the Radicals disrupted a service and damaged a baptismal font. This damaged the reputation of the Anabaptist/Radical movement.
 - I. The city council called for a public debate on the issue of baptism. Zwingli argued that re-baptizing was not correct. It did not fit with his view of building a Christian society/nation. He saw baptism as the sign of a covenant between God and man, similar to circumcision was a sign of a covenant between God and Abraham. The debate lasted two days, in the end the city council ruled that infant baptism needed to be maintained and all were ordered to have their children baptized.
 - J. Zwingli viewed the Anabaptists as enemies to his Christian Community (In many ways this view of society goes back to Constantine)
 - K. In January, 1525, more than a hundred adults were baptized and celebrated communion outside of the Zurich church order. They had created a new movement called the Swiss Brethren.
 - L. The city council viewed the baptisms and communion service as acts of anarchy. (It would be like a group within Nebraska announcing that they were not going to follow state law, that they would make their own laws.) The council banished several leaders.
 - M. By October, the city council discovered that the "Brethren" were back to their outlawed preaching and practices. This time some were imprisoned, banished, or executed. Zwingli and others were in the medieval mid-set that heresy was a crime that called for the death penalty.
 - N. Zwingli did not object to the execution of four Anabaptist leaders. (Drowning)
 - O. As many as 5,000 Anabaptists were killed in Switzerland
 - P. The Anabaptists fled Switzerland (many become Mennonites)
- VIII. Conflict in Service: War between the Cantons
- A. 1529 the Protestants won the conflict.
 - B. 1531, war broke out again. This time the Catholic cantons gained the upper hand. Zwingli was fighting as a private soldier and was wounded. As he lay under a tree, unable to defend himself, Catholic soldiers found him. They stabbed to death, when he would not give in to their demands to pray to Mary.
 - C. His last words: You can kill the body but you cannot kill the soul.
 - D. He was quartered, burned, and his ashes mixed with dung so that his followers would not use his ashes as relics.
 - E. After the war, the four city cantons remained strongly Protestant, but the five forest cantons became even stronger guardians of the Catholic faith.
- X. The Service continues with Bullinger
- A. With the death of Zwingli, Heinrich Bullinger became the leader of the Swiss Reformers.
 - B. Bullinger came to faith after studying Luther and comparing with Scripture.
 - C. He lived and preached in a rural canton so it became unsafe after the Catholics won in 1531. He fled to Zurich.
 - D. The city council chose Bullinger to replace Zwingli at the Great Cathedral.
 - E. He was a gifted writer, theologian, and preacher. His textbook on theology became the main training manual for the Anglican clergy.
 - F. He gave refuge to English Protestants during the reign of Mary Tudor (Bloody Mary) in the city of Zurich.

- G. He was one of the first to see how the Old Testament and the New Testament are one continuous story of God's grace. That Christ is really the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant.

Response:

1. What is the most difficult to understand about Zwingli?
2. What are some of the changes that came about as God used Zwingli?
3. What is a practice or teaching of Zwingli that we use or on which we agree?
4. What is practice do we have that we feel strongly about but is not mentioned in the Bible?

Sources:

2000 Years of Christ's Power, Vol 3, Renaissance and Reformation Nick Needham.

Theology of Huldrych Zwingli, Wikipedia

Reformation Women: Anna Reinhard, Table Talk.

The Case for Mary's Perpetual Virginity, Catholic Answers, Catholic.com.

Mary in the Gospel of Matthew, Schmoop.com.

Zwingli's Sixty-seven Articles, Christian History Institute.

Huldrych Zwingli and the Early Reformation, Bruce Gordon, YouTube.

Rise of the Swiss Warriors and Mercenaries. Kings and Generals Channel. YouTube.

Swiss Warrior: From Italian and Burgundian Wars to Papal Guard. Kings and Generals Channel. YouTube.

The Shrine of Our Lady of Einsiedeln, The Catholic Travel Guide.

John Calvin & Ulrich Zwingli and the Drowning of the Anabaptists Reformation Lecture Three. Erwin Lutzer. YouTube.

Suggested reading and viewing:

Ulrich Zwingli: The Swiss Reformation, Episode 20 on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MouHu57uT4I>

Christian History Institute, #305 Zwingli's Sixty-Seven Articles

Ligonier Ministries, Who was Zwingli, and what was his impact on the Reformation?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=99-lyVpS7Lk>

Zwingli and the Radical Reformation. Denton Bible Media Ministry.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rH0yM8zVKX8>



Ulrich Zwingli



Vatican Swiss Guard



Pike



Halberd



Birthplace of Zwingli



Great Cathedral in Zurich



Tearing down images



Conrad Grebel



Berchtold Haller



Johann Oecolampadius



Heinrich Bullinger



Felix Manz