ULRICH ZWINGLI

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THE TIMES OF ULRICH ZWINGLI

The times surrounding the life of Ulrich Zwingli provided a vacuum waiting to be filled. Europe was "ripe" for a reformation as numerous changes were taking place coupled with widespread unrest. In many respects this time period could be summed up with the word "new". There were new methods for commerce, new discoveries were being make (ex. Columbus 1492), new industries were begun which brought in new roads and new transportation systems. Improved living standards, the freedom of the peasants, the rise of capitalism, the invention of printing (Gutenburg - 1450), increasing population, social revolutions (autonomous aristocratic cities), a decline of feudalism and a nationalistic spirit also paved the way for the "reformation".

However, the major catalyst for change leading to a religious reformation was the power (Papal control), secularization (Church involvement with the State), and absolute corruption (Godless practice) of the Roman Catholic Church.

Great intellectual changes were also occurring in the times of Zwingli. Townsmen became thinkers, which led to an independent study of the Biblical text. Scholasticism ("Christian" philosophy) was on the up-rise, with Platonic realism, Aristotle's Nominalism and Erasmus' religious humanism, and German mysticism, all seeking "truth" & "reality" in life. Men such as John Wycliffe (1320-1384), John Huss (1369-1415), and Girolamo Savonarola (1452-1498) cried out against the heresies of the Roman Church and preached God's Word fearlessly.

During this time of dark history, a few brief sparks of reform were made evident by harassed dissenters, and by men such as the "Christian Humanist" Erasmus, who longed to see the Roman Church cleansed not destroyed. Zwingli, however, was to move beyond Erasmus in many areas. One such area was the forming of his own Augustinian - Biblical theology with the environment of a Swiss city-state. (The government of Switzerland at this time was called a confederation - made up of German Swiss cantons - states).

> Zwingli lived in an age that was basically reaping the benefits of events of the 1450's - when Constantinople's fall to the Turks threatened all of Europe. In Zwingli`s lifetime-a mere fifty years- scholars of the church questioned the faith as Rome had taught it, and courageous explorers thrust through ancient myths and fears to discover new horizons. It was a world encountering a new kind of trade, including tasty foods from exotic lands. It was a world becoming stronger-in

England, France, and Spain. It was a world equipping itself with giants-moneyed families such as the Medici and the Fuggers, geniuses of form such as Michelangelo, Da Vinci, and Raphael, singleminded leaders such as Columbus, Henry VIII, Ferdinand and Isabella, and Luther. It was an age to give people hope in princely powers as well as in personal ideals. It was an age beginning to change at a faster pace, yet it was an age when one could still burn as a heretic.[1]

1 Herman C. Ahrens, Jr. (ed.), "Christian History Magazine," Vol.III, No.1., (Worchester Pennsylvania, [n.d]), p.20.

THE LIFE OF ULRICH ZWINGLI

Ulrich Zwingli was born on New Year's Day, l484, in the Wildhaus Valley of Switzerland. He was baptized with the name Huldrych but always used Ulrich when writing of himself. There were eight brothers in his family and an unknown number of sisters. According to Zwingli's description, he was born to "good, old, honorable stock,"[2] his father and grandfather before him having held the position of bailiff in the community. His father had political responsibility for his mountain valley, and likely spoke of public affairs to his family. Zwingli was instructed by his father in citizenship, love for the Fatherland, and zeal for the Confederation. Zwingli described himself as "a peasant, a peasant through and through,"[3] and from his early days he desired to serve the Confederation.

Zwingli's schooling began at the age of 5 in 1489 from an uncle named Bartholomew, who was parish priest in Weson. Ulrich studied there five years and primarily learned Latin. At age 10, he continued his schooling in Basle with a teacher only 6 years older than himself, attending a "primary school," whose main task was the perfection of Latin. Zwingli made excellent progress there and also did very well in music. In fact, when he continued from Basle to Berne to study at the humanist school of Heinrich Woelflin for two years, his lovely singing voice attracted the Dominican monks, who tried to entice him into their monastery. Zwingli was nearly persuaded and wrote home to say he was starting his novitiate. Although his family were good church people, however, they were "averse to papal desires"[4] and quickly called Zwingli home. Following this, Zwingli's family sent him to the University at Vienna, to pursue a study of philosophy and fine culture. After his four year stay at Vienna, Zwingli studied again in Basle from l502-06. There he obtained his Bachelor's degree in l504 and a Master of Liberal Arts degree in l506.

The period from 1506-1518 was one of inner development and growth for Zwingli. He studied voraciously classical, patristic, and scholastic writings, plus was greatly influenced by his participation in the circle of Swiss humanists and by encounters with Erasmus, the "Christian Humanist." In his library, Zwingli possessed more individual works by Erasmus than by any other contemporary. During this period of Erasmusan influence, Zwingli learned Greek so he

2 Oskar Farner, Zwingli the Reformer (London: Lutterworth Press, l952), p. 7.

3 Farner, p. 7.

4 Farner, p. l4.

could read the New Testament in the original version. Erasmus taught Zwingli "to ignore the simple grammatical structure of the biblical reports and to look instead for the real meaning behind these reports ".[5] Zwingli's world-view, personal standards for morality, and preaching method and subject matter all were influenced by his humanist mentor Erasmus.

Zwingli was also influenced by Swiss humanism, which was nationalistic and patriotic. In contrast to the universal humanism of Erasmus, who contemplated "being truly human," Swiss humanism aimed at a renewal of the "fatherland," at society as a whole rather than individuals.[6] Zwingli's own reformatory goals, which developed later, remained committed to these humanist ideals, though he did gradually move from some of Erasmus' teaching. Zwingli was growing and changing, and through this development he would conceive his own position, though he never actually spoke of a conversion experience.

Possibly still in l5l9, but certainly after l520, the Erasmian basis of Zwingli's thought was shaken and gradually replaced by a new conception which is neither Erasmian nor Lutheran,

but which instead represented Zwingli's own theological model.[7]

After diligent study in Erasmus' Greek New Testament and after long wrestling with the moral problem of sensuality,

he experienced an evangelical breakthrough, much like

Luther was experiencing at about the same time. This

turned him even more wholeheartedly to the Scriptures.[8]

During these twelve years of growth (1506-18), Zwingli served as a normal parish priest at Glarus and Einsiedeln. At the end of l5l9, one of the most momentous happenings of his life occurred. He was called to be people's priest at the Zurich Great Church. The main reason he was chosen, some believe, was because his opposition to the mercenary system (Swiss soldiers working for pay for other countries) was in agreement with an influential segment of Zurich.[9]

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5 Ulrich Gabler, Ulrich Zwingli: His Life and Work (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, l986), p. 39.

6 Gabler, p. 7.

7 Gabler, p. 45.

8 Walter A. Elwell (ed.), Evangelical Dictionary of Theology (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, l984), p. 1204.

9 J.D. Douglas (ed.), The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978), p. 1073.

Some people in Zurich opposed Zwingli's appointment as people's priest because they feared he was another "reform-minded Erasmian." They also accused him of immorality, of seducing the daughter of a high official. However, "his appointment was confirmed after he explained that his 'immorality' was confined to contact with a known prostitute."[10] Zwingli wrote a deliberately obscure, almost cocky letter in reply to the accusations. He did not deny that he has committed immorality, but did point out that the accusations were inaccurate: the girl was merely the daughter of a barber (not a high official), who for two years had lived loosely. Thus, in his mind, he was not guilty of "corrupting" her. Further, Zwingli defended himself by saying, "When I was still in Glarus and let myself fall into temptation in this regard a little, I did so - so quietly that even my friends hardly knew about it."[11] The supposedly celibate Zwingli frankly admitted that he was unable to remain chaste, regardless of how hard he tried. It was his rule, however, never to violate a nun, a virgin, or the marriage bed.[12]

Apparently Zurich accepted Zwingli's defense of himself, for he was called to be their priest. One of the great moments of the Reformation occurred early in 1519 when Zwingli began his service in Zurich by announcing his intention to preach exegetical sermons beginning with the Gospel of Matthew. This was in contrast to using the customary prescribed sections known as pericopes. Out of this evangelical preaching arose incidents and teaching leading to the breach with Rome.

Zwingli's preaching became his most effective means of

advancing the cause of reform. His progress toward Reformation truth is difficult to follow because rarely were his sermons written out or recorded by a stenographer. His style was more informal and extemporaneous than that of Luther. Even though his voice was not strong and his delivery was rapid, he enlivened his sermons with humor and frequent anecdotes. He evidently kept his congregation awake and alert, and in the process he introduced them to Reformation concepts.[13]

Despite the fact that he did preach things against the pope previously, not until 1517 did Zwingli renounce the annual pension he received from Rome. He admitted that prior to 1516 he

10 Douglas, p. 1073.

11 G.R. Potter, Huldrych Zwingli (New York: St. Martin's Press, l977), p.11.

12 William R. Estep Renaissance and Reformation (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1986), p. 167.

13 Estep, p. 170.

still accepted the papal authority, though he made it clear that the papal money wold not keep him from preaching "one word of what was true."[14]

The first public step toward a break with Rome began with a sermon in which Zwingli stated that fasting during Lent was not obligatory for Christians. This was followed with a petition sent to Rome calling for a married clergy. Zwingli himself wed Anna Reinhart April 2, 1522, but did not reveal the marriage until other clerics had begun to do so. Even then he waited until his first child was due, and then made the marriage public.

It seems that "Zwingli did not intend to start a religious revolution with these first deviations from tradition, but he did."[15] The Reformation in Switzerland had some different areas of emphasis than that which was occurring in Germany. "The question of papal indulgences, which created such a stir in Germany and caused Luther to produce the famous 95 Theses, was of relatively minor significance for the Reformation in Switzerland."[16] Indulgences had been offered for money, but with little success. Zwingli himself publically proclaimed that those who sold indulgences were a fulfillment of Peter's description of false prophets in II Peter 2:1-3. Zwingli also developed a clear stand against the use of images and against praying to saints or Mary. He deplored these practices.

The final and decisive break with Rome came in Zurich in April, 1525, when Mass ceased to be said at any altars, and the Lord's Supper administered in a radically different manner took its place. Of course, Rome was not happy about this. In reply to rebuke from the bishop of Constance, Zwingli wrote "A First and

Final Explanation," part of which stated:

> I hold my convictions so strongly that I do not need the presence of any bishop or priest to ensure my forgiveness; for Christ Himself did this once and for all in the most wonderful way in giving his body as a sacrifice for us and shedding his blood.[17]

Thus, Ulrich Zwingli broke with the Catholic church and took his stand. The past years of study and searching culminated in this event. Zwingli had sought for an answer to the question of authority, and concluded that the Word of God **alone** had authority to rule and guide his life.

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14 Potter, p. 8.
15 Estep, p. 167.
16 Potter, p. 12.
17 Potter, p. 19.

Zwingli's last years were marked by increasing political activity, though he never held a political office. Zwingli's activities can only be understood against the backdrop of the Zurich government and the manner in which it functioned. In 1351 the Free City of Zurich joined the Confederation. Through the years, Zurich's aristocratic system of city government was replaced by a guild system. Thus, artisans (workers) were given legal equality with knights and nobles and were organized into guilds. By the 16th century, Zurich was governed by the representatives of the guilds.

Zurich was ruled by Small and Large Councils, who appointed "counselors" to prepare council decisions on all important political and ecclesiastical questions. In most cases, these recommendations were turned into ordinances. Thus, Zwingli, though he did not hold an office, had great influence through his participation in these advisory commissions. As will be pointed out later, Zwingli's theology allowed for a state church under the control of the magistracy. The Zurich Large and Small Councils also maintained control over appointments of ministers. In order for a man to be chosen, he had to be acceptable to the government and approved by existing ministers.

Zwingli's goal in his latter years was to open the entire Confederacy to the preaching of the Gospel and to create a European-wide anti-Hapsburg (Austrian) alliance. Other members of the Confederation, however, were not so positive toward Zwingli's reformation ideas, or to Zurich's split with Rome and new state church. There were still Catholic areas, who held to (in their own words) the "old faith" and condemned evangelicals. In order for the Reformation to make progress in Switzerland, Zwingli (and Zurich) needed allies. These were found most obviously in similar city-states--St. Gall, Berne, Basle, Schaffhausen, Biel, Constance, and Strassburg--thus Zwingli attempted to influence each of these areas to reject Catholic control and become evangelical. Zwingli also had hopes to include the German Protestants but failed when he and Luther could not reach an agreement at the Marburg Conference on the question of Christ's presence in the Eucharist. As several of the other Swiss cantons did become reformed, their closer cooperation led to an alliance called the Christian Civic Union. They were anxious to expand the evangelical faith, but this was resisted by the Catholic members of the Confederation. Each side wanted exclusive control, believing there could be but one Christian faith. This conflict led to the first (bloodless) Kappel war in June, 1529. Zurich

declared war, and the evangelical troops marched on the Catholic states. Contrary to Zwingli's advice, however, the soldiers agreed to refrain from combat while negotiations were carried on. Terms of peace were agreed to, promising religious freedom and recognition of the Reformed faith in the Christian Civic Union states.

Both Zwingli and Philip of Hesse (a German prince who supported the Reformation) realized that Reformed teaching in Germany and Switzerland faced a growing threat from the aggressively Catholic emperor Charles V (1530). Zwingli's cause was in need of allies, and he and Philip hoped to join together, in spite of the lack of success at the Marburg Conference. Zwingli also hoped for help from the south German cities. Finally, in alarm at the threat his Reformed alliance faced, Zwingli moved closer toward an alliance with France, which he had earlier emphatically rejected. He changed some of his stands (not doctrinal but political) in order to attempt agreement with France, still claiming that his primary concern was the promotion of evangelism.

By the summer of 1531, Zwingli was convinced that cooperation with the Catholic inner states had become impossible, and that his hopes of bringing about by persuasion an all-protestant Switzerland were at an end. "It was now necessary that Zurich and Berne join forces to dominate Switzerland."[18] However, this success was not to be. Berne favored an economic blockade of the Catholic states rather than open warfare (which Zwingli advocated). Due to the blockade, the Inner (Catholic) states declared war on the Christian Civic Union.

Despite the fact that the Reformed troops far surpassed the other forces, there were internal stresses and strains (so great, in fact, that Zwingli offered his resignation in July, 1531. Though it was not accepted, his influence was diminishing.). As a result, a small and ill-prepared force was dispatched to fight the Catholic opponents on October 11, 1531, and Zwingli--present as a citizen-soldier and not as army chaplain - was killed. His death ended the effort to make Switzerland a reformed country. The Christian Civic Union was abolished and although areas which had chosen reform were not compelled to give it up, no Catholic states were allowed to reform in the future.

18 Potter, p. 130.

"Zurich and its allies remained faithful to Zwingli's religious teaching, which merged with that of Calvin to become the creed of the Reformed churches of Europe."[19]

19 Potter, p. 137.

THE THEOLOGY OF ULRICH ZWINGLI

The Swiss papists often accused Zwingli of being a Lutheran, to which he replied that he had been "preaching the gospel" before he ever heard of Luther. He further stated:

> Nor will I bear Luther's name; for I have read very little from his books with the sole purpose of doing justice to the papists . . . So I will not have the papists call me Lutheran, for I did not learn Christ's teaching from Luther but from the very word of God.[20]

Some claim that Luther had no profound influence upon Zwingli.[21] Though some similarities are obvious, important differences in their positions exist as well. Zwingli's protestantism was "a more rationalistic and biblicistic variation of Luther's theology."[22] His views on public worship and the sacraments represented a far more radical break with past traditions than did Luther's.

BIBLICAL AUTHORITY

As Zwingli struggled to define for himself what he would believe, the conflict within him basically seemed to be over the question of authority. Who would be the authority in what he believed and what he taught his church to practice? By 1522 it appears he had resolved this problem. He moved beyond Erasmus' teachings ("which strove for a renewal of the church while preserving traditional authorities--Scripture, dogma, councils, papal authority). Zwingli replaced these with the reformatory conviction that Scripture is the sole basis of teaching and life."[23] He testified:

> When I was younger, I gave myself overmuch to human teaching, like others of my day, and when about seven or eight years ago I undertook to devote myself entirely to the Scriptures I was always prevented by philosophy and theology . . . But eventually I came to the point where . . . I saw the need to set aside all these things.[24]

After 1522, Zwingli no longer acknowledged the teaching authority of the pope and councils. In his tract titled "On the Clarity and Certainty of the Word of God," Zwingli upheld the claims of Scripture over the authority of the Roman church, which claimed the exclusive

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20 Potter, p. 94.

21 Douglas, p. 1073.

22 Elwell, p. 1204.

23 Potter, p. 49.

24 G.W. Bromiley (ed.), "on the Clarity and Certainty of the Word of God," Zwingli and Bullinger, Vol. 24 of the Library of Christian Classics (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953), p. 90-91.

right of interpreting Scripture. He argued that "the Scriptures apart from philosophy or theology bring the Word of God to the receptive heart."[25]

In one of Zwingli's sermons he showed the distinctiveness between one who truly preached God's Word and one who did not by saying, "When you find that it gives you assurance of the grace of God and eternal salvation, it is of God."[26]

Zwingli boldly declared: "It is my conviction that the word of God must be held by us in highest esteem . . . and no such credence is to be given to any other word."[27] Thus in his approach to theology and practice Zwingli looked for strict and specific scriptural warrant for each belief. For example, his strict adherence to the Bible led him in 1527 to **remove the organ** from the Great Minster, since Scripture nowhere mandated its use in worship (and this in spite of the fact that Zwingli was an accomplished musician who otherwise encouraged musical expression). Such emphasis on Biblical support for doctrines, however, led him into embarrassment when early Anabaptists demanded proof texts for the practice of infant baptism.

INFANT BAPTISM

Mainly because of his Covenant theology, Zwingli adhered to infant baptism. He wrote in 1524: "Baptism is the initiation both of those who have already believed and those who are going to believe."[28] Zwingli argued for infant baptism based on three supports:

> 1) John the Baptist baptized people into Christ though they did not yet know him; 2) According to Colossians 2:11, baptism replaced circumcision, which was given to infants whose faith came later; and 3) Because Christ commanded that children be allowed to come to him, it is wrong to forbid children to be baptized because by doing so, one forbids them to come to Christ.[29]

THE LORD'S SUPPER

Although Zwingli's stand on infant baptism was not what it could have been, in the area of the Lord's Supper, he stands out as one of the most biblical of the Reformers. In Article 18 of his 67 Theses, Zwingli speaks out against the Roman Catholic concept o the Mass, and sets forth

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25 Estep, p. 172.
26 Bromiley, p. 173.
27 Potter, p. 30.
28 W.P. Stephens, The Theology of Huldrych Zwingli (Oxford: Claredon Press, 1986), p. 196.
29 Stephens, p. 196.

his concept of the Lord's Supper, from which he never retreated: "that Christ himself, having sacrificed himself once is for eternity a certain and valid sacrifice for the sins of all believers; therefore, the Mass is **not** a sacrifice, but is a memorial."[30] He further explained:

> It is not as if it was the bread that freed us or the wine that gave us spiritual refreshment, but it was our faith that did it, our belief that Christ wished us to have his body and blood because through them he set us free and cleansed us from sin.[31]

Zwingli's discussion with German Protestants about the Lord's Supper led him to doubt Luther's belief in a sacramental real presence of Christ in Communion, in favor of a nearly memorialistic view.

> For Zwingli such a sacramental view of Christ horribly confuses the human and the divine. Though Zwingli does not deny that in the incarnation the two natures are united, he puts the emphasis on their distinction. After the Resurrection, Christ ascends bodily into heaven and sits at the right hand of God. Christ is omnipresent only in his divinity, not in his humanity. It is principally by virtue of his divine nature that he is the Saviour of human beings.[32]

To Zwingli, the Lord's Supper was primarily an occasion to remember the benefits purchased by Christ's death.

It must be noted, however, that one author claims that Zwingli's view on the Eucharist has been widely misunderstood, and that during his last years he moved from his earlier view toward a doctrine of spiritual presence.[33]

Zwingli was strongly predestinarian in his theology, completely advocating election, though only in the positive sense (to heaven). He did not teach the "double predestination" which Calvin later espoused.

CHURCH & STATE

In his doctrine of ecclesiology, Zwingli believed that the church and government were linked. He wanted to make the whole state "Christian." He advocated a practical program of

30 Estep, p. 176.

31 Potter, p. 96.

32 Robert C. Walton. "The Spread of the Zwingli Reformation" Christian History Magazine. Vol.III, No.1, (Worchester Pa., [n.d.]), p.34.

33 Douglas, p. 1074.

reform in cooperation with the magistracy and felt free to "grant the Christian magistrate the right to determine the external forms of the church's worship and life."[34] Zwingli believed the magistracy should "govern the Christian Commonwealth in cooperation with the prophet who expounded the Scriptures for the spiritual well-being of the entire community."[35]

The foundation for Zwingli's doctrine of society (i.e. his belief that the government oversees the church, etc.) was his theology regarding divine and human righteousness. Zwingli believed that divine righteousness, actualized by the command to love God and love one's neighbor, is a moral claim upon the inner man which cannot in essence be fulfilled due to man's sin nature. In contrast, human righteousness is the order within a community--visible acts rather than attitude. Zwingli believed civil government was charged with the administration of human righteousness. He rejected the idea that the church had a separate spiritual jurisdiction, holding that "all clerics should be placed under the jurisdiction of the appropriate civil judicatory."[36]

34 Douglas, p. 1074.

35 Douglas, p. 1074.

36 Gabler, p. 74.

THE CONFLICTS OF ULRICH ZWINGLI

In Zwingli's perception, he had two different enemies: the Anabaptists and the Roman Catholics. However, since his differences with the Catholic church have already been discussed, instead the problems he had with the Anabaptists and then with Luther will be surveyed.

CONFLICTS WITH THE ANABAPTISTS

The Anabaptists leaders, such as Conrad Grebel and Felix Manz, originally were Zwingli's followers, but began to question the Biblical authority for such doctrines as infant baptism and a state church. Zwingli himself had some early doubts about infant baptism and also at first leaned toward the notion of a "suffering" church (i.e. one like the Anabaptists believed in--separate from the world and government and willing to be persecuted for their stand). By 1523, however, Zwingli had decided in favor of a state church which received security, unity and direction from a Christian (evangelical rather than Catholic) government. It was because of Zwingli's conviction that the church and state were inseparable that he supported active resistance to the Anabaptist movement.

They were viewed as "radical." The Anabaptist endangered Zwingli's alliance with the magistracy, whose support he believed was essential. After breaking with Zurich in 1523 and forming their own church in 1525, they were viewed as a threat to public order. In Zwingli's mind, the Anabaptists were rejecting government authority and ordinary civil obligations. Thus the first of them were drowned in 1527, with Zwingli's approval.

Zwingli declared that the baptism of the Anabaptists was heretical because it was "born outside the church."[37] He argued that although nothing is mentioned in the New Testament regarding infant baptism, it still is possible that it was practiced--just not recorded. Zwingli often accused Martin Luther of clinging to Catholicism regarding the Lord's Supper. If only he would have realized that he was doing the very same thing concerning infant baptism. Instead, he built an elaborate doctrine (the ancestor of today's Covenant theology) to support a practice he was unwilling to give up. He reasoned that the New Testament church was like Israel, and therefore infant baptism was like circumcision. His order: covenant - election - then inclusion (salvation).

37 Potter, p. 42.

A great deal of bitterness, scorn, and even perhaps hatred are evident in some of Zwingli's writings against the Anabaptists. In his "Refutation of the Tricks of Anabaptists," he accused them of being hypocrites filled with shameful evil, of claiming to have reached perfection, and of being Satan's apostles.[38]

At least it can be said on Zwingli's behalf that unlike Luther he "refused to posit faith in the infant. For him faith was expressed by the congregation on behalf of the baptized, who were surely among the elect."[39] However, like Luther, Zwingli was reluctant to totally separate from the Catholic church. In contrast to men like the Anabaptist leaders Grebel and Stumpf, Zwingli in public debates moved cautiously, taking the defensive rather than the offensive and greatly desiring "Christian unity" with those who refused to accept Scripture as the only rule of faith and practice.

In the eyes of Grebel and his friends, Zwingli must have appeared as one who sacrificed the authority of the Word of God upon the altar of human expediency.

CONFLICTS WITH MARTIN LUTHER

Zwingli the Reformer of Switzerland and Luther of Germany met face-to-face only **once**--at Marburg in 1529 for a debate over the Eucharist. Luther believed in the bodily presence of Christ in the bread and wine, while Zwingli held a symbolic view. Each reformer sharply rejected the theology of the other. Because both men were strong-willed and held to profound theological differences, they clashed. In their verbal battle, Zwingli, a superb linguist, confronted Luther with the meaning of John 6:63 ("the words . . . are spirit, and they are life") in the Greek text. Luther responded that Zwingli's text had nothing to do with the discussion in progress. "No!" retorted Zwingli. "This will break your spine!"

Luther shot back: "Do not brag too much. Here, necks are not broken. You are in Hesse now, not in Switzerland!"[40] It is reported that Zwingli attempted to apologize but Luther refused to shake his hand, and the conference had reached a stalemate. Zwingli then was heard to say, "There is no one in Italy or France whom I would more gladly see" (than Luther). Luther replied, "Pray God that you later come to see reason."

38 Potter, p.41-43.
39 Estep, p. 189.
40 Estep, p. 161.

It is said that Luther regarded Zwingli as his disciple, and "rationalized their differences of opinion as due to Zwingli's personal peculiarities such as ambition and the need for recognition as well as to the Swiss national character, in which he included boorishness and love of war."[41] However, Zwingli, though he did believe Luther was wrong in some areas, did write: "Those who have faith know that it is neither from Luther nor Zwingli but from Jesus Christ our Lord; to Him be the honour and the glory. For Luther and I have the same faith about Him and in Him."[42]

41 Gabler, p. 161.

42 Potter, p. 57.

THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF ULRICH ZWINGLI

Ulrich Zwingli produced quite a few writings on various theological issues, along with political treatises and fictional literature. During his years at Glarus (1506ff), Zwingli's first literary works were produced. These were mainly historical/political writings, with Catholic viewpoints included. While in Zurich, Zwingli began a theological school to train qualified leadership. One important outcome of Zurich's College was the Zurich Bible (1529)--the first Protestant translation of the entire Bible into German--which had some impact even in England. Zwingli's commentaries also derived from this institution. His 67 Theses was written to declare his position. It is divided into two unequal parts: the first fifteen articles are positive affirmations of evangelical truth, and the other fifty-two condemn ancient rules, regulations, and practices of the Roman church.

After Zwingli's death, he was succeeded by Heinrich Bullinger. Although he insisted he was only carrying on Zwingli's work, in the more than 40 years of Bullinger's leadership, Zwinglianism changed in some areas and on the whole it stabilized. Bullinger continued to follow Zwingli's lead in viewing Anabaptists as a threat to church and state. The Zurich city government continued to exercise a dominant role in church affairs. This model of church-state relations eventually influenced England's Queen Elizabeth (Anglican), even as reformers John Knox and Calvin fought for the autonomy of the church over its own affairs. John Calvin of Geneva, Switzerland, too was influenced by Zwingli.

In his early years, Calvin criticized Zwingli in some areas, especially his doctrine of the Lord's Supper. However, Bullinger and Calvin succeeded in overcoming their differences and even formed the so-called Zurich Consensus, which brought the Geneva and Zurich churches together.

Despite Zwingli's influence, though, "nowhere can one speak of a church basing itself on Zwingli outside of the Confederation"[43]

in Switzerland. In fact, Zwingli's name and writings were almost forgotten, but his influence was still felt in the unity and congruity of the Genevan and Zurich churches.

Zwingli did affect Calvinism through Bullinger and Calvin, and therefore he can be counted as one of the founders of Reformed Protestantism. After Luther and Calvin, perhaps the

43 Gabler, p. l58-l59.

most influential early Protestant reformer was Ulrich Zwingli. He played an important role in making the break from Rome and giving the Bible its rightful place of authority. If only he would have followed his own principle of Scriptural authority in every area of his theology (as the Anabaptists challenged him)--the world would have witnessed an even greater Reformation.

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[Note: The periodical: Christian History Magazine. (Vol.III, No.1), is totally devoted to the life of Ulrich Zwingli.]