Ulrich Zwingli
The Magisterial Reformer
History of the Church 4
Maranatha Chapel
Randy Broberg
May 2011
SWITZERLAND

“CH” --
Confederation of
the Helvetica
Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531)

• Ulrich Zwingli was born on January 1, 1484, only a few months after the birth of Luther.
• Lived to be just 47!!
• Became priest of the most influential parish in 1518 in Zurich, the largest of the Swiss states.
• open, warm, and friendly disposition
• embodied a boldly striking attempt to rethink all Christian doctrine in consistently biblical terms.
Zwingli, the Scholar

- He memorized the entire Pauline writings in the original Greek
- Knew Hebrew.
- Expert in the Scholastic works and the Church Fathers.
Zwingli’s Latin Margin Notes on NT Greek Text in his own handwriting.
Zwingli, the Humanist

- Zwingli influenced by the Renaissance.
- He had been greatly influenced by humanism and particularly the works of Erasmus, his mentor.

Erasmus, the Prince of Humanists
Zwingli, the Priest

- Committed adultery during this time.
- Military Chaplain
1516, Evangelical Breakthrough

Zurich
Instead of following the prescribed scriptural readings, he started preaching at the beginning of Matthew and announced his intention to preach straight through the Bible, verse by verse!
In 1522, however, a number of people in Zurich, under the direct influence of Zwingli's preaching, decided to defy the Catholic Church and eat some pork sausages during Lent.

This act of "rebellion" caused an uproar and it was determined that an open debate be held to settle the growing issues between Zwingli and the Catholics Church once and for all.
The summary of the gospel is that our Lord Christ, true Son of God, has made known to us the will of his heavenly Father and has redeemed us from death and reconciled us with God by his guiltlessness…Therefore, Christ is the only way to salvation of all who were, are now, or shall be.
Luther vs. Zwingli On Christian Living

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Luther</th>
<th>Zwingli</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Mosaic Law</td>
<td>The law was there to drive us to Christ, and upon doing so, it seemed to have lost any further significance</td>
<td>The law as something still binding in the sense that it is the basis upon which a believer conforms his life to that of Christ's.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Christian Life</td>
<td>The Christian life was one of freedom in forgiveness and reconciliation to God</td>
<td>The Christian life is one of conformity to the will of God as set forth in the Bible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1523 First Zurich Disputation

- Example of Magisterial Reformation!
- Zwingli defended "67 Conclusions" against the representative of the bishop of Constance.
- *solus Christus*, Christ alone, and *sola scriptura*, the Bible alone.
- 67 Articles were adopted by Zurich City Council.

The city council decreed after the disputation that Zwingli was to keep preaching the "Gospel and the pure sacred Scriptures, until he is instructed better. Furthermore, all people's priests, curates and preachers in their towns, territories, and dependencies, are to preach nothing but what can be proved by the Gospel and the pure sacred Scriptures . . ."
1523, Second Disputation

- Zwingli’s **Iconoclasm** provoked a second disputation in October, 1523
- The council abolished relics and images, and also church organs and singing!!
Zwingli, the Biblicist

- He taught that the Bible was the supreme authority and that faith was the key to the remission of sins.
- Opposed practices not supported by Scripture
- Scripture is the only source of rule
- He accepted the supreme authority of the Scripture,
- he applied it rigorously to all doctrines and practices.

Zürcher Bible appeared in 1529
Zwingli, the Social Reformer

• Dissolved Monasteries
• serfdom abolished
• poor relief.
• criticized mercenary system
• ministers permitted to marry
• Zwingli took a wife secretly in 1522 announced his marriage publicly in 1524.
• priests and nuns had been marrying
• divorce permitted in some instances.
1525, Zwingli vs. Anabaptists

- Disputations were held with the leaders of the Anabaptist group in January and March 1525.
- In 1525, the first adult "rebaptism" took place in Zurich. Conrad Grebel, a former admirer of Zwingli, baptized priest George Blaurock. Glaurock then baptized the rest of the little group.
- A number of Zwingli’s followers saw no biblical support for infant baptism, and saw a union between infant baptism and membership in the State.
- The “Anabaptists” (Swiss Brethren) also desired the abolition of tithes, a severance of the state connection, the creation of a pure or gathered church of true believers).
- In theological refutation of the movement, Zwingli wrote a special work, *On Baptism* (1525), in which his main emphasis was on the significance of water Baptism as a covenant sign. During the following years he devoted many other tracts to the subject, culminating in his *Tricks of the Catabaptists* (1527).
• Zwingli, who believed in both infant baptism and a state church, became hopelessly alienated from Anabaptists.

• Zurich council soon imprisoned the leaders and finally, after a further useless disputation in November 1525, brought them under a capital sentence.

• By March, 1526, adult rebaptism was a capital crime in Zurich, and four persons were put to death.

• Parents who did not want their children baptized were banished from the territory.
Spread of Reform, 1525-28

• Zwingli promoted Reformation throughout Switzerland.

• Zwingli’s writings spread—e.g., On Education, On Baptism, On the Lord's Supper, and especially the comprehensive Commentary on True and False Religion (1525).

• Aided by the learned Roman Catholic theologian Johann Eck, the five forest cantons of Luzern, Zug, Schwyz, Uri, and Unterwalden resisted the new trend.

• Several areas in Germany also adopted Zwinglian Protestantism instead of Lutheranism.

Spread Of Reform to Bern

• In Bern also the Reformed group steadily gained strength until by 1527 it had a majority in the two governing councils of the city.

• A public disputation was held in 1528 between Catholics and Reformers.

• one of the participants was Martin Bucer, leader of the Reformed preachers at Strasbourg.

Bern City Hall
The Berne Disputation, 1528

• The main theses put forth were
  (1) that the church is born of the Word of God and has Christ alone as its head;
  (2) that its laws are binding only insofar as they agree with the Scripture;
  (3) that Christ alone is man's righteousness;
  (4) that the Holy Scripture does not teach Christ's corporeal presence in the bread and wine at the Lord's Supper;
  (5) that the mass is a gross affront to the sacrifice and death of Christ;
  (6) that there is no biblical foundation for the mediation or intercession of the dead, for purgatory, or for images and pictures; and

Heinrich Bullinger
• In Basel the chief Reformer was Johannes Oecolampadius (1482-1531).

• Oecolampadius was professor for biblical theology from 1523 and then from 1529 pastor in Basel’s Cathedral and spokesman for the clergy.

• The city of Basel went over completely to the Protestant side in 1529;

• drove the city's most distinguished resident, Erasmus, to leave.

• Oecolampadius was a friend and fellow worker of Zwingli, whose theology he adopted, especially on the crucial issue of the Lord's Supper.
In 1529, in an attempt to bring cohesion to the German and Swiss reformations, the then political leader of the German Lutherans, Philip of Hesse, called a meeting between Luther and Zwingli to see if some alliance could be formed between the two groups.

Luther wrote upon the table, “hoc est corpus meum” ("This is my body" )

They appeared to have arrived at a deadlock, but actually they had made substantial gains because Zwingli advanced from his view that the Lord's Supper is only a memorial to the position that Christ is spiritually present.

Even though the reformers agreed on 14 other articles of faith, no final agreement could be reached.
Consequence of Failure at Marburg 1529

- Zwingli would have welcomed agreement with Luther for political as well as theological reasons.
- Luther was more than ungracious on this matter, accusing Zwingli of having a "different spirit" and teaching doctrines of Satan. The members of both movements would follow suit and look suspiciously on one another from this moment forward.
- The results of division were seen at the Diet of Augsburg (1530), in which the evangelical groups presented three different confessions, including Zwingli's Fidei Ratio.

"I would rather drink blood with the papists than mere wine with the Zwinglians."
Questions to Consider

- Was Zwingli’s method of debates in front of city councils the best way to bring about reformation?
- Would that method work today?
- Was “magisterial reformation” wrong or just not ideal?
- Do we think Christians today live under the law? If not, why not? If yes, why and in what way?
- Was Zwingli’s iconoclasm the right thing? How iconoclastic should we be? Should we get rid of all the instruments on the grounds of the Regulative Principle?
- What is the Lord’s Supper? Everyone agrees it’s a memorial, but is it more than a memorial?
- Would you refuse to fellowship with those who have a different view of the Lord’s supper the way the Reformers did? What did they understand about it that made it so crucial?