



**Ulrich Zwingli (1484–1531)**

# Conditions in Switzerland

- Holy Roman Empire divided into provinces where the loyalty was primarily toward local governments
- Swiss Republic consisted of 13 provinces or cantons
- Humanism was becoming more and more popular (thanks to the influence of Erasmus)
- Religious corruption evident (Huss had been burned to death at Constance in 1415; papacy was in obvious disrepair; local church leaders were morally corrupt)
- Switzerland was ripe for a reformation





**Born January 1, 1484 (Wildhaus)**



# Wildhaus



# Early Life

- Born in Wildhaus, seven weeks after Martin Luther
- His father was a civic leader (bailiff) in the town
- His parents wanted him to pursue the priesthood
- Attended school at Basel and Bern
- Entered University of Vienna in 1500
- Finished at University of Basel in 1504
- Highly influenced by Thomas Wyttenbach, and thus exposed to Erasmus and Religious Humanism in Basel
- Received his Master's degree in 1506



**Bern (old city)**





# University of Vienna



**Old University of Basel**

Zwingli was highly influenced by the teachings of Erasmus; who himself had spent some time at the University of Basel (1514–16; 1521–29)

As a result, Zwingli had a strong interest in Scripture and biblical theology; he was eager to see reform take place in the Catholic Church



Erasmus

# Early Ministry

- Became priest in Galarus (1506); a position he purchased for 100 guilders (a few hundred dollars)
- Also served as a chaplain for Swiss troops
- Wrote against abuses in the French and Swiss churches
- Started to receive opposition because of his writings
- After ten years at Galarus, he was forced to leave
- Retreated to Einsiedeln, where he ministered for two years (1516–18)
- During these early years, he adopted Scripture as his sole standard and continued to study humanism





**Glarus**





**Einseideln**



# Ministry in Zurich (1519–1531)

- Became parish priest in the Grossmünster (Great Minister) Church in Zurich – strategic city
- Taught verse-by-verse through the New Testament; simple expositions, not the Scholastic model
- His preaching quickly resulted in the abolition of indulgences
- Appreciated Luther and embraced Luther's writings
- When the plague hit Zurich, Zwingli refused to leave; as a result, he nearly died of the plague in 1519

# Ministry in Zurich

The plague hit in August, 1519, and those who could left the city. But Zwingli stayed to minister to the people.

When Zwingli became sick (in September, 1519), he wrote a poem (*Pestlied*) which explained his preparations for death. Here is part of what he wrote:

Thy purpose fulfill: nothing can be too severe for me.

I am thy vessel, for you to make whole or break to pieces.

Since, if you take hence my spirit from this earth, you do it so that it will not grow evil, and will not mar the pious lives of others.

# Ministry in Zurich

- Increasingly preached against Catholic abuses:
  - Sale of Indulgences
  - Fasting
  - Private Confession
  - *The Mass*
  - Use of Icons and Music in Church Worship
  - Tithing, Intercession of Saints, Purgatory
- His message of reform grew in popularity; Zwingli became the canon of Grossmünster in 1521



# Zurich (1500s)



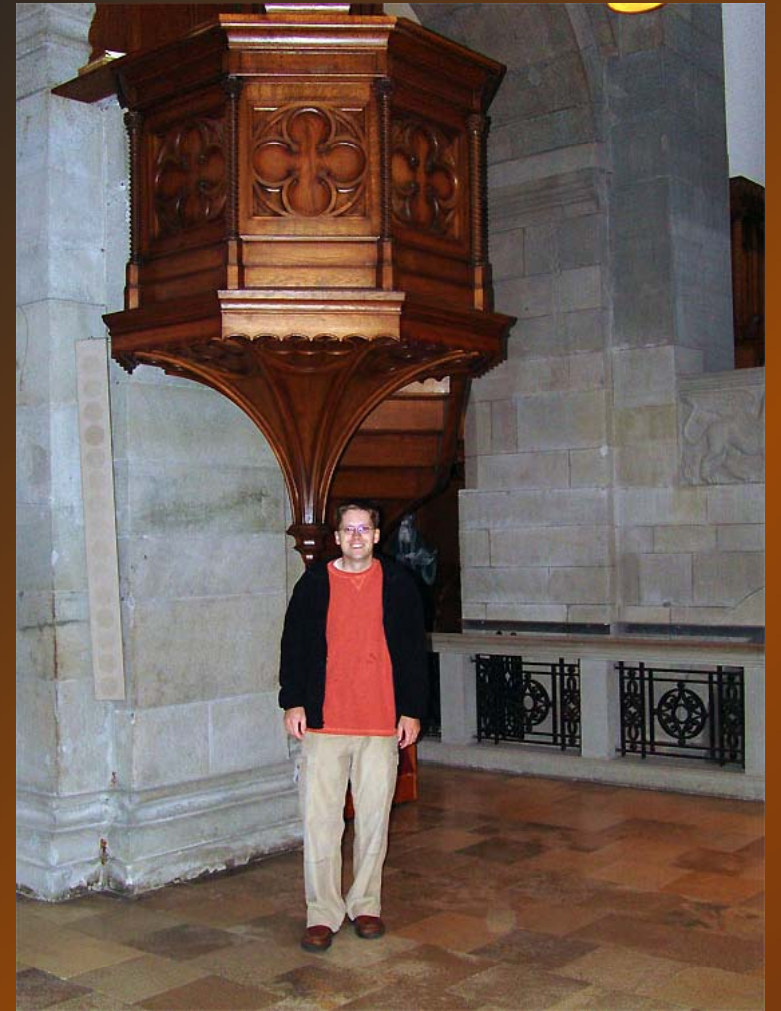
**Zurich**



**Zwingli's Church**



**Zwingli's Church**



**Zwingli's  
pulpit**





**Zurich**



**Zurich**



**Zurich**

# Ministry in Zurich

- On March 5, 1522, Zwingli preached a sermon for Lent against fasting. A few days later (March 9), Zwingli and several other priests broke the fast by eating smoked sausages.
- On July 2, 1522, Zwingli and several others petitioned the Bishop of Constance to void mandatory celibacy of the priests. The petition was denied, but Zwingli secretly married Anna Reinhard. Their marriage nearly caused a scandal when it was made public in 1524. They would have four children.

# The First Disputation

- On January 29, 1523, Zwingli held his First Disputation in which he publicly defended 67 Articles of his evangelical belief.
- Over 600 attended the disputation
- Johann Faber was sent by the Bishop to defend the Roman Catholic position
- Zwingli defended himself well against Faber
- As a result, the city council ruled to allow Zwingli to preach the gospel and initiate reforms in the city

# The 67 Articles

Sixty-seven statements that articulated Zwingli's thoughts; written in 1523. Here are some of the key articles:

**1.** All who say that the Gospel is invalid without the confirmation of the church err and slander God.

**19.** Christ is the only mediator between God and ourselves.

**20.** God will always give everything in Christ's name, whence it follows that for our part after this life we need no mediator except him.

# The 67 Articles

**21.** When we pray for one another on Earth, we do so in such a way that we believe that all things are to be given to us through Christ alone.

**22.** Christ is our justification, from which follows that our good works, if they are of Christ, are good; but if ours, they are neither right or good.

**24.** No Christian is bound to do those things which God has not decreed; hence one may eat at all times all food.

# The 67 Articles

**27.** All Christian men are brethren of Christ and brothers to one another; and the title of father should not be assumed by anyone on Earth. This includes orders, sects and factions.

**28.** All that God has allowed or not forbidden is right, hence marriage is permitted to all human beings.

**34.** There is no ground in the teaching of Christ for the pretensions of the so-called spiritual authority.

**35.** Whereas the jurisdiction and authority of the secular power is based on the teachings and actions of Christ.



# The 67 Articles

**36.** All the rights and protection that the so-called spiritual authority claims belong to secular governments provided they are Christian.

**37.** To them likewise, all Christians owe obedience without exception.

**63.** To sum up; that realm is best and most stable which is ruled in accordance with God's will alone, and the worst and weakest is that which is ruled arbitrarily.

# The Second Disputation

- On October 26, 1523, a second disputation was organized to address the Mass and the use of icons
- Over 900 attended the three-day event
- Zurich then started to make massive reforms (despite the objection of the Bishop of Constance)
  - Images removed (pictures, statues, candles)
  - Bones of saints buried; alters replaced by tables
  - Organs in churches dismantled; choirs abolished
  - Gold and silver melted from relics and crucifixes
  - Monasteries transformed into shelters and schools

# The Second Disputation

- At this time, Zwingli preached a famous message known as “The Shepherd.” It’s full title is: “How one can recognize true Christian shepherds and also the false, and moreover how one should behave in regard to them.”



# Additional Reforms

- On April 16, 1525 Zwingli abolished the Mass and celebrated his first Lord's Supper
  - Zwingli sat at a simple table
  - Readings were performed in German, not Latin
  - Both elements were given to the congregation
- Later in 1525, Zwingli would also perform an infant baptismal service in the common language of the people
- Prior to this, in 1524, Zwingli (with the help of his colleagues) produced a Swiss New Testament; the entire Bible would be completed in 1530



# Ulrich Zwingli

# The Anabaptists

- In making his reforms, Zwingli had studied the Bible with a group of men and had reached a number of biblical conclusions with them
- When the town council of Zurich did not initially oppose the Mass (in 1523), some of Zwingli's students argued that Zwingli should abolish the Mass anyway
- Zwingli, however, sided with the town council
- The students felt betrayed; they parted ways with Zwingli and continued to study the Bible on their own

# The Anabaptists

- Their study of the Scriptures led them to oppose infant baptism
- In January 1525, Zwingli debated his former students on the issue of baptism
- The key individual was Conrad Grebel; others were Felix Manz, George Blaurock, and Balthasar Hubmaier
- The city council sided with Zwingli; the result was that Grebel and others were ordered to baptize their children; they were forbidden to meet for private Bible study; and they were threatened with banishment

# The Anabaptists

- Zwingli: Sons of God's children are also God's children

Anabaptists: Only believers are God's children

- Zwingli: Infant baptism is parallel to OT circumcision

Anabaptists: NT baptism is not related to circumcision

- Zwingli: Household baptisms of Acts support it

Anabaptists: Household baptisms do not mention infants

- Zwingli: Infant baptism is not directly condemned in NT

Anabaptists: Infant baptism is not taught in the NT



# The Anabaptists

- Zwingli: The NT does not teach “re-baptism”

Anabaptists: We are not teaching “re-baptism” either

- Zwingli: Christ blessed the little children and said that those in the Kingdom must be like little children (which implicitly supports infant baptism)

Anabaptists: If all little children are saved, then why baptize at all (since baptism distinguishes believers)?

- Zwingli: Children are sanctified by parents (1 Cor. 7:14)

Anabaptists: No, children sanctified by the Scriptures



# Zwingli's Disputations

# The Anabaptists

- Swiss Brethren separated completely from Zwingli
- Twelve men met in the home of Felix Manz and performed believer's baptism for the first time
- George Blaurock went house to house preaching
- Balthasar Hubmaier publishes pamphlets against Zwingli; Zwingli responds with his own pamphlets
- March, 1526 – the town council issues the death penalty for rebaptism
- “He who dips shall be dipped”

# The Anabaptists

- Zwingli wrote his *Refutation of the Tricks of the Baptists* in July 1527:

When they saw themselves beaten after a considerable conflict, and when we had exhorted them in friendly ways, we broke up in such a way that many of them promised they would make no disturbance, though they did not promise to give up their opinions. Within three, or at most four, days it was announced that the leaders of the sect had baptized fifteen brethren. Then we began to perceive why they had determined to collect a new church and had opposed infant baptism so seriously.

# The Anabaptists

... We warned the church that it could not be maintained, that this proceeded from good counsel, to say nothing of a good spirit, and for these reasons: They had attempted a division and partition of the church, and this was just as hypocritical as the superstition of the monks. Secondly, though the churches had to preserve their liberty of judging concerning doctrine, they had set up catabaptism without any conference, for during the whole battle about infant baptism they had said nothing about catabaptism. Third, this catabaptism seemed like the watchword of seditious men.

# The Anabaptists

... Then when they learned this in great swarms they came into the city, unbelted and girded with rope or osiers, and prophesied, as they called it, in the market place and squares. They filled the air with their cries about the old dragon, as they called me, and his heads, as they called the other ministers of the word. They also commended their justice and innocence to all, for they were about to depart. They boasted that already they hold all things in common, and threatened with extremes others unless they do the same. They went through the streets with portentous uproar, crying Woe! Woe! Woe to Zurich.

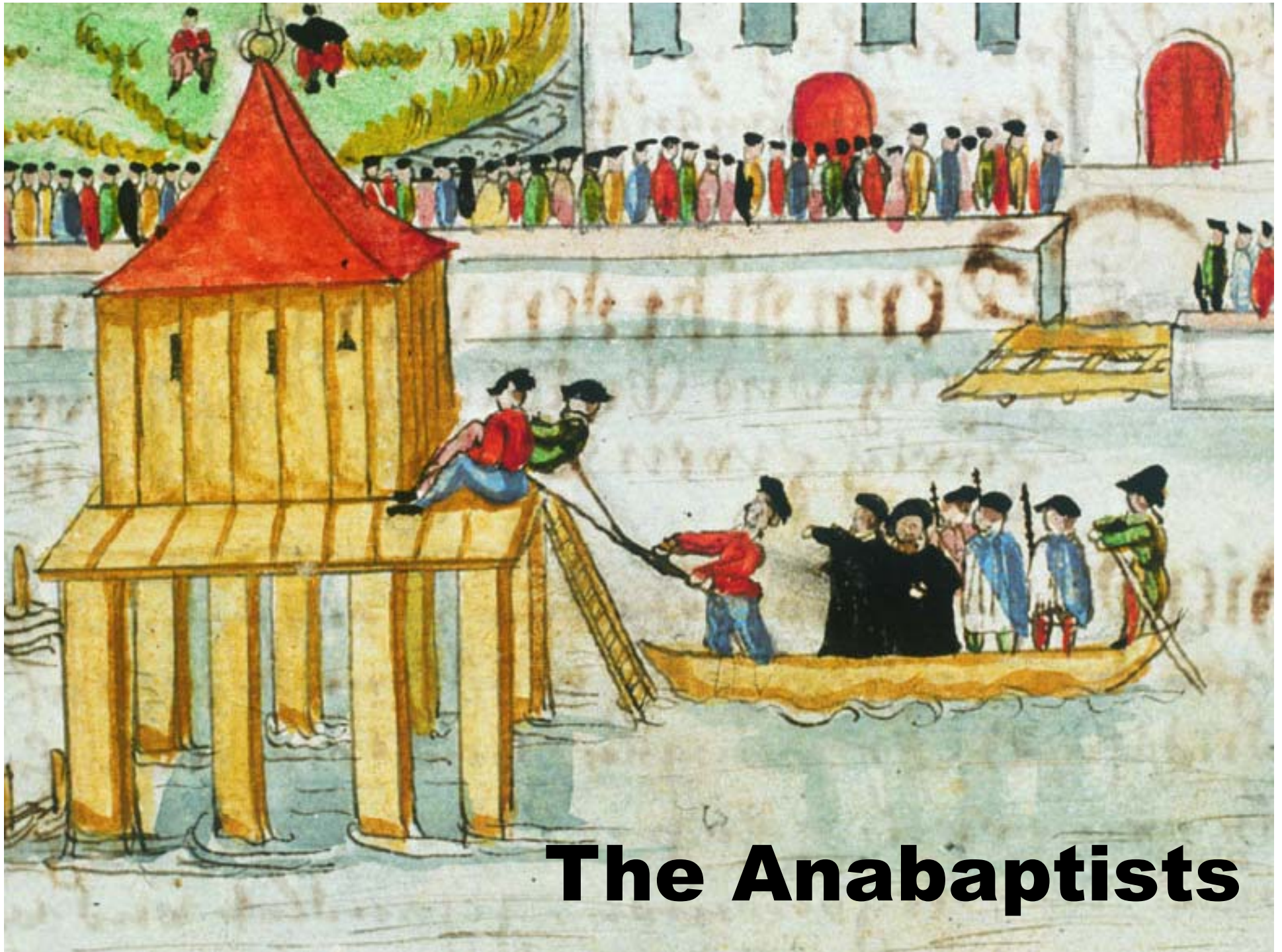
# The Anabaptists

.... Therefore establish your courage, good brethren. The hypocrisy of the Roman pope has been brought into the light; now we must war with hypocrisy itself. And you must do this with the less delay the more you see those apostles of the devil, although they promise I know not what salvation, seeking nothing but disturbance and the confusion of affairs, both human and divine, and destruction. So much about their division and betrayal of the church. They have gone out from us, for they were not of us.

# The Anabaptists

- The “heresy” of Anabaptism met with serious persecution in Zurich, under Zwingli’s leadership
- Anabaptists misrepresented by Zwingli
  - Manz was arrested and drowned in 1527
  - Hubmaier was burned at the stake in 1528
  - Blaurock was imprisoned and beaten; he was later burned at the stake in 1529
- But out of this the Swiss Brethren church was born; suppression of this movement consumed Zwingli

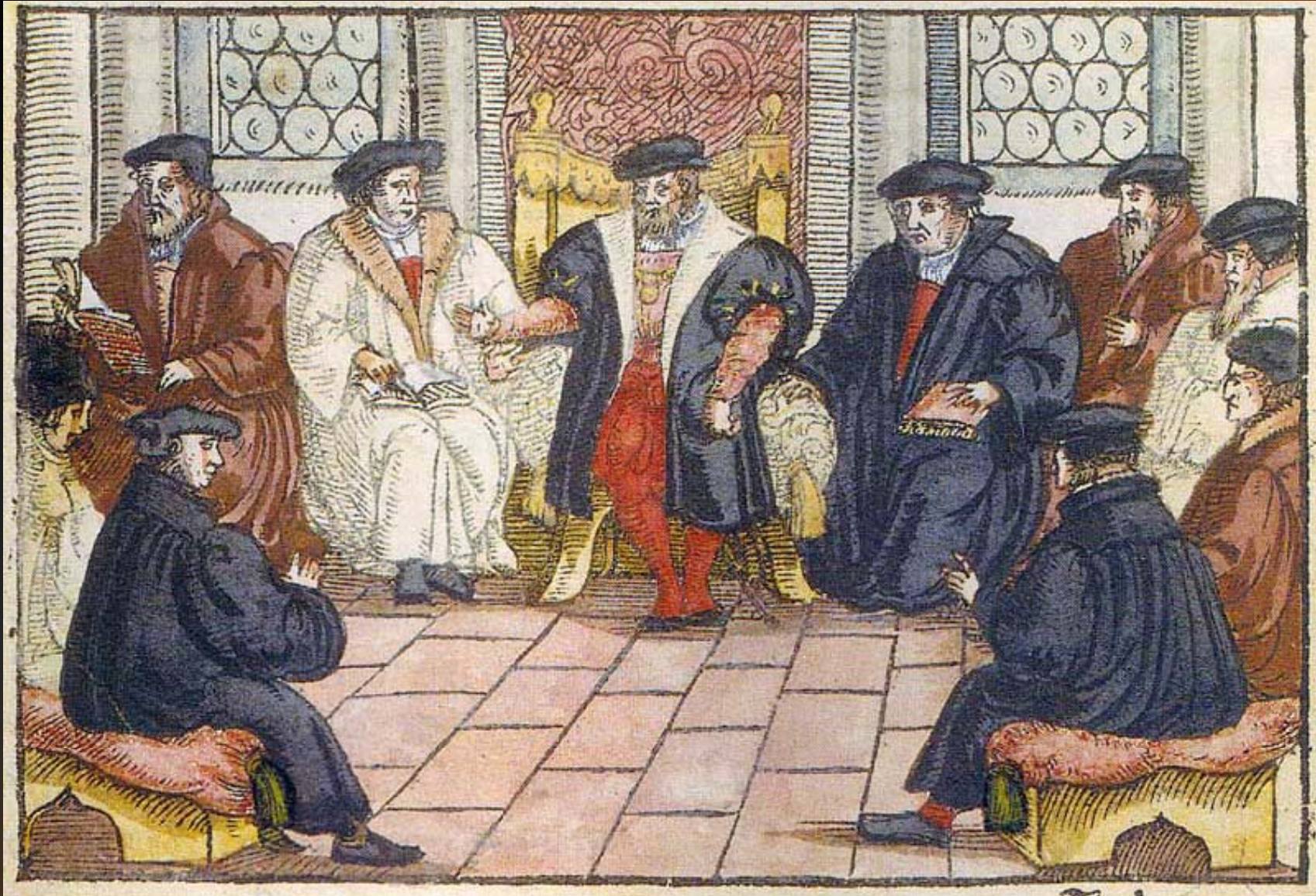




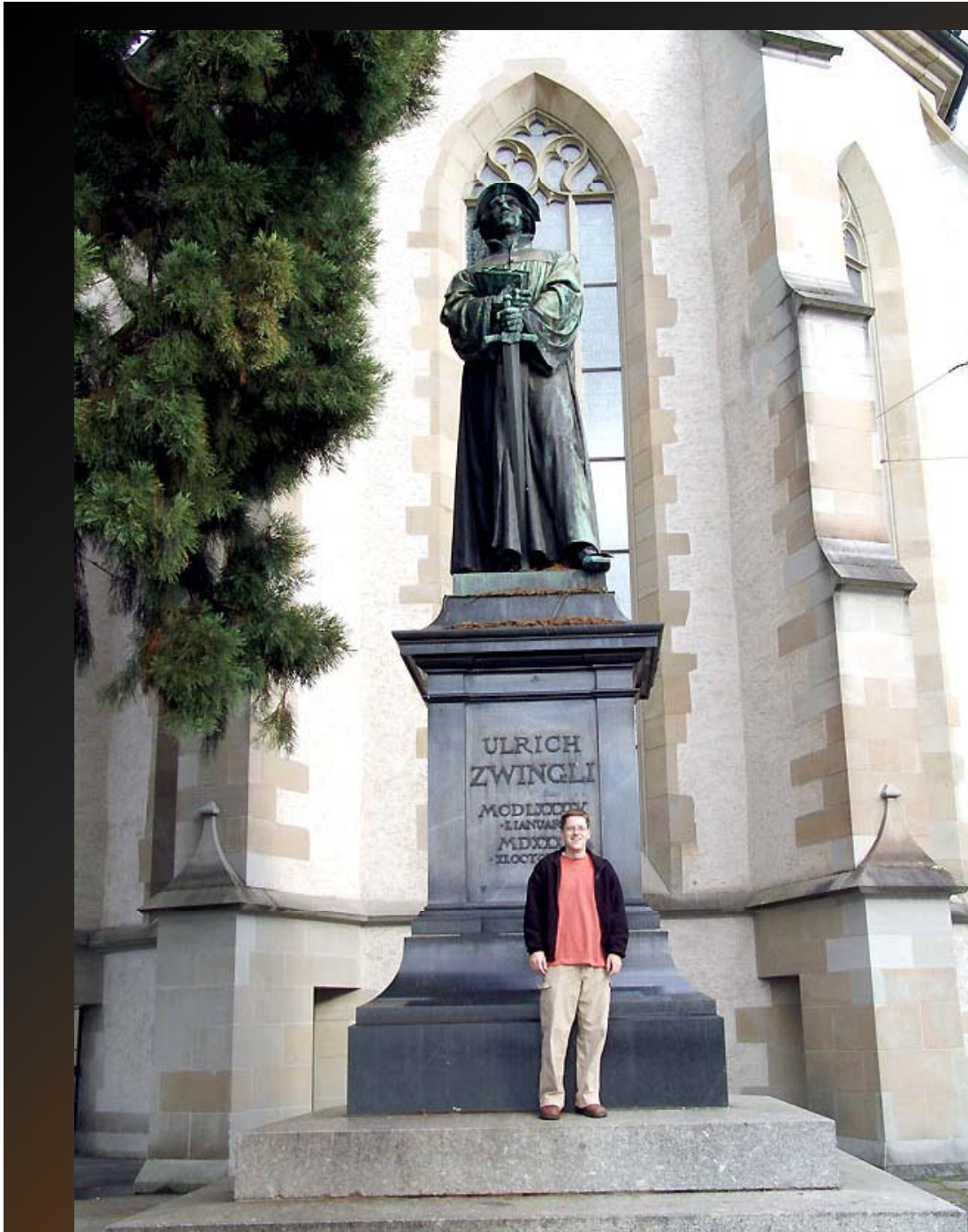
# The Anabaptists

# Zwingli's Later Life

- In 1529, Zwingli met with Luther in Marburg, Germany at the invitation of Philip of Hesse
- The two could not agree on the nature of Communion (the issue was the “real presence” of Christ)
- Back in Zurich, tension was mounting between the Protestant cantons and the Catholic cantons in Switzerland
- The tension eventually erupted in Two Wars of Kappel (1529, 1531)
- Zwingli died in battle in 1531 (at the age of 47)



**Colloquy of Marburg**



# Zwingli with Sword in Hand



**Zurich Banner  
(1500s)**



**Zwingli's Death**

# Zwingli's Legacy

## Contributions:

- Laid the foundation for the Swiss Reformation
- His *67 Articles* helped crystallize Reformed theology
- Heinrich Bullinger, his successor, would also be an influential theologian
- Committed to original languages, Bible exposition, and Scripture-based reform
- Helped spark the Baptist (Anabaptist) movement

# Zwingli's Legacy

## Defects:

- Overemphasized the church-state paradigm of government
- Betrayed his Baptist students when it became expedient to do so
- Quick to pursue violence (with the Anabaptists and Catholics) when peace may have been possible
- Did not take his own reforms far enough; turned on those who practiced his own teachings consistently

HULDRYCH ZWINGLI 1484 - 1531  
ZÜRCHER REFORMATOR  
HUMANIST, BIBELÜBERSETZER, VORSTEHER DER ZÜRCHER KIRCHE  
GEBOREN AM 1. JANUAR 1484 IN WILDHAUS  
PFARRER IN GLARUS UND EINSIEDELN  
AB 1519 LEUTPRIESTER AM GROSSMÜNSTER  
1524 EHESCHLISSUNG MIT ANNA REINHARD.  
GEFALLEN AM 11. OKTOBER 1531 IM ZWEITEN KAPPELERKRIEG  
DAS DENKMAL WURDE 1885 VOM TIROLER BILDHAUER HEINRICH NATTER ERSTELLT

**Zwingli Plaque**





M. HULDRICUS ZWINGLIUS,  
REFORMATOR ET PASTOR  
ECCLESIAE TIGURINAE.  
Obiit a. 1531. die 31. octob. aetatis 43.

156. 51. Zwingli mit dem des Wapens.

# Zwingli's Legacy

- Zwingli was succeeded Heinrich Bullinger (d. 1575)
- In 1549, Bullinger and Calvin agreed on the memorial view of the Lord's Table
- Responsible for the Helvetic Confessions of 1536 and 1562
- Wrote hundreds of letters, and thereby had a great influence on Reformation efforts around Europe



# 2nd Helvetic Confession

CANONICAL SCRIPTURE. We believe and confess the canonical Scriptures of the holy prophets and apostles of both Testaments to be the true Word of God, and to have sufficient authority of themselves, not of men. For God himself spoke to the fathers, prophets, apostles, and still speaks to us through the Holy Scriptures.

And in this Holy Scripture, the universal Church of Christ has the most complete exposition of all that pertains to a saving faith, and also to the framing of a life acceptable to God; and in this respect it is expressly commanded by God that nothing be either added to or taken from the same.

# 2nd Helvetic Confession

THE TRUE INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE. The apostle Peter has said that the Holy Scriptures are not of private interpretation (2 Pet. 1:20), and thus we do not allow all possible interpretations. Nor consequently do we acknowledge as the true or genuine interpretation of the Scriptures what is called the conception of the Roman Church, that is, what the defenders of the Roman Church plainly maintain should be thrust upon all for acceptance.

...

# 2nd Helvetic Confession

But we hold that the interpretation of the Scripture to be orthodox and genuine which is gleaned from the Scriptures themselves (from the nature of the language in which they were written, likewise according to the circumstances in which they were set down, and expounded in the light of and unlike passages and of many and clearer passages) and which agree with the rule of faith and love, and contributes much to the glory of God and man's salvation.

# 2nd Helvetic Confession

TRADITIONS OF MEN. Likewise we reject human traditions, even if they be adorned with high-sounding titles, as though they were divine and apostolical, delivered to the Church by the living voice of the apostles, and, as it were, through the hands of apostolical men to succeeding bishops which, when compared with the Scriptures, disagree with them; and by their disagreement show that they are not Apostolic at all. For as the apostles did not contradict themselves in doctrine, so the apostolic men did not set forth things contrary to the apostles. On the contrary, it would be wicked to assert that the apostles by a living voice delivered anything contrary to their writings.