



## THE REFORMATION: After Darkness Light

### Lesson 5: Martin Luther & Ulrich Zwingli Germany & Switzerland

#### Introduction

#### GERMANY

#### Andreas Bodenstein Von Karlstadt (1486-1541)

- Karlstadt was one of Luther's closest advocates, but due to his overly zealous reforms in Wittenberg, Luther distanced himself from him
- One bad example of what Karlstadt's reforms led to is documented by one resident of Wittenberg at the time. He wrote, "[The mob] made a fire in the cloister square, went into the church, broke the wooden altars, and took them with all the paintings and statues, crucifixes, flags, candles, chandeliers, etc. to the fire, threw them in and burnt them, and cut off the heads of the stone statues of Christ, Mary, and other saints and destroyed all the images in the church."
- Karlstadt was eventually exiled from Wittenberg, travelled for a while and ended up in Zurich, where he was befriended by Ulrich Zwingli

## **Thomas Müntzer (1489-1525)**

- Another figure who challenged Luther by his overzealous reforms was Thomas Müntzer
- Müntzer made social reform a gospel issue and provoked the peasants toward unrest, resulting in what is known as the Peasants' War (1524-25)
- Luther vehemently opposed the war calling the nobles to “put down the rebels like mad dogs”
- Müntzer was captured after the battle of Frankenhausen, and was tortured and executed
- The Catholic Princes blamed Lutheranism for the rebellion and vast numbers of peasants returned to Catholicism or became Anabaptists

## **SWITZERLAND**

### **Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531)**

- Zwingli was a Swiss reformer who brought swifter change to the churches in Switzerland than Luther did in Wittenberg, though his focus was much the same, that is, to bring the Word of God to do its work on the people of God
- Luther agreed with Zwingli on most theological matters, however, the difference of opinion regarding the nature of the Lord's Supper was enough for Luther to reject Zwingli
- Zwingli took a remembrance view of communion while Luther believed in more of a sacramental understanding of communion

## Four views of the Lord's Supper

### *Catholic View – Transubstantiation*

- They believe the elements, cup and bread, transform and become the substance of Christ when the priest makes the pronouncement, “Hoc est corpus meum”, “this is my body”

### *Lutheran View – Consubstantiation*

- Luther believed that Christ's body and blood are really present in the bread and wine, making the Lord's Supper a gift of grace from God

### *Zwinglian View – Memorial view*

- The Lord's Supper for Zwingli was a mere symbol to help us commemorate Christ's sacrifice and to signify our membership of his body

### *Calvin's View – Spiritual view*

- According to Calvin, when we partake of the Lord's Supper, the presence of Christ doesn't come down to earth but we are transported to heaven for spiritual nourishment

## Luther and Zwingli to meet (1529)

- Martin Bucer (1491-1551), early pioneer of ecumenism, had become the Reformer of Strasbourg, Germany. He was concerned by the dispute over the Lord's Supper and wanted Luther and Zwingli to meet.
- The result of the meeting was a disappointment. While they agreed on all points of doctrine, they failed to reach agreement on the meaning of the Lord's Supper. As a result, the work of reform in Germany under Luther and in Switzerland under Zwingli remained separated.
- Zwingli died by crossfire on the battlefield on 11 October 1531, as an Army Chaplain
- In *Tabletalk*, Luther is recorded saying: "They say that Zwingli recently died thus; if his error had prevailed, we would have perished, and our church with us. It was a judgment of God. That was always a proud people. The others, the papists, will probably also be dealt with by our Lord God."

## Zwingli's reforms

- A college for preachers
- Removal of all symbols revered by the Catholic Church
- Removal of music in worship
- The reorientation of the Lord's Supper to bring it to the people