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Zwingli's Doctrine of the Church

INTRODUCTION

There are a great many parallels in the church doctrine of Luther and Zwingli: the focus on Christ and his redemptive work, *sola scriptura*, the priesthood of all believers, the Augustinian and Pauline marks of the true church and its function within Christian society all featured prominently. In his earliest discussions, as noted earlier, Luther juxtaposed the ideal spiritual model with the imperfect or physical institution in order to expose the latter's corruptions and abuses to hopefully eliminate them and draw closer to the ideal. Zwingli's ecclesiology made a similar comparison but for him "the holy and ideal society of the truly faithful" was set alongside the "mundane and defective organization" of human life.[1] Luther (the theology professor and monk) laid more stress on a gospel *v.* law dichotomy in his theology and he emphasized the word over the prophetic claims of his spiritualist enemies. His concern was the salvation of his own soul. Zwingli (the humanist priest) tended to emphasize wider communal aspects in the form of the covenant and the moral/ethical imperatives inherent in the example of Christ. That is to say he was more interested than Luther on the church in its role to shepherd Christian society, reflecting a greater concern for the souls of his flock and for social unity. He was not writing from the position of personal introspection as was Luther. The different focus is the result not only of well-known doctrinal differences but also of the two men's quite different political environments and personal experiences. In the case

1. McNeill, 'The Church in Sixteenth-Century Reformed Theology,' 252.

of Luther this included disputes with radical mystics who seemed to be corrupting the basic tenets of his doctrine. Zwingli's ecclesiology developed against the background of the rise of Swiss radical sectarianism which also had seemingly corrupted his base position and disrupted the community in very serious ways. In any case, Zwinglian ecclesiology did not emerge fully formed in 1524 (at the height of Anabaptist pressures) any more than Luther's had emerged in 1530, but there is some value in a brief examination of his humanist roots (as reflected in his moral edification of the people) and his conflict with traditional Roman Catholic opponents in the pre-1524 period in Zürich. As W P Stephens noted, Zwingli's focus was an examination of the nature of the universal church (as the invisible congregation of saints) and the local, particular church (the visible congregations of professed Christians). Amalgamated to form the "one church, catholic," Zwingli stressed in his writings such issues as the preaching ministry, discipline (including excommunication), clerical marriage and vexing issues like images, food restrictions and clerical taxation.

ZWINGLI, THE HUMANIST REFORMER (TO C. 1520)

Oswald Myconius tells us in his *De H Zwinglii vita et obitu* (c.1532), in response to a series of questions from an admirer of the master, that Zwingli was already questioning ecclesiologic traditions before he took up his first preaching post in Glarus; "he saw how many things he ought to know, to whom the office of teaching the flock of Christ had been extended, as well as the eloquence through which he could expound everything rightly and profitably, in such a way that anybody could understand him."[2] Even at this early stage, c.1506, Zwingli was attacking abuses even as he was spending his time learning the biblical languages and studying the Pauline epistles as a disciple of Erasmus. He was also a Swiss patriot and Myconius made especial note of Zwingli's particular bugbear, military pensions (patronage or church funds and benefices being gifted to those outside the church and dedicated to non-spiritual ends, like the raising of mercenary armies). Like Luther, Zwingli was guarded in his earliest approaches to reform, however; "he preached gospel grace without alluding at all or very cautiously to the abuses of the Church of Rome"[3], perhaps in an effort to draw out reformation of the church in a gradual and inoffensive way. His gospel-based

2. Myconius, 'Original Life of Zwingli,' 5. For a study of Myconius' treatise, see Backus, *Life Writing in Reformation Europe*, 47–52.

3. Myconius, 'Original Life of Zwingli,' 6–7.

preaching and strong patriotism won him many devotees and this inspired an invitation to take up the "pastor *primarius*" position in Zürich (c.1519).[4]

Myconius also noted that Zwingli tended to promote the writings of Luther, recommending that the people of Zürich buy and read his works although Zwingli did not do so himself. By so doing it was his hope that the literate masses would see that he and Luther were of one mind and spirit on many issues, and that he could give them instead of more treatises a solid moral example as Luther's writings in action. Zwingli was perhaps thinking here (if his biographer is trustworthy) of the basic Augustinian-Pauline mandate of the true church to lead Christians in a genuinely Christian existence (the ethical or social mandate), although there is also an obvious debt to Erasmus. If the people had a local model of both evangelical and ethical reform they would learn from it, from reading Luther and from listening to the word preached in sermons. They could emulate these role-models in their everyday lives to their own edification. It was certain that they were not learning much from the traditional minded Catholic clergy.

Zwingli followed Luther's trials and tribulations, going so far as to defend him in a letter of late summer 1520, offering a solution to a series of related problems (indulgences, Luther's writings and Eck's accusations of heresy) which appeared to be dividing the Swiss church too.[5] Like Luther, he was not casting blame at the pope *per se* for all the troubles in Christendom but rather at the abuse of the doctrines and the positions of those claiming to be the leaders of Christendom. "We hear daily serious complaints from many quarters declaring that the yoke of the Roman See can be borne no longer. And this burden they do not perhaps lay so much to the charge of the Papal authority as to that of those who abuse the authority of the Pope to further their own tyrannical doings." Having said that, however, "cognisance of matters of faith belongs in an especial degree to the Roman Pontiff, and his prerogative must not be taken from him."[6] How do we get from this Zwingli, a defender of papal prerogatives, to the anti-papal reformer who emerged in the early 1520s? Luther's change and disgust grew up out of a combination of the church's refusal to reform married to his emphasis on gospel-based preaching. For Zwingli it was the church's continued engagement in what he considered as strictly temporal matters (from warfare to fiscal issues).

4. Zwingli, 'Concerning choice and liberty respecting food' 71.

5. Zwingli, 'Advice of one who desires with his whole heart that due consideration be paid both to the dignity of the pope and to the peaceful development of the Christian religion,' 58–67.

6. Ibid., 62, 63.

Famously, Zwingli opposed Swiss soldiers offering their services as mercenaries and he expressed his opposition to inter-Christian warfare as early as his first publication (c.1510), an Aesop-like morality fable in poetic form entitled *The Fable of the Ox* (wherein the ox represents the Swiss). The reader is presented with an imaginative tale in which all the elements to an understanding of his changing position are presented. In the tale the ox is accompanied and guarded by the dog Lycisce (who represents the alert minded clergy), who leads the ox through all the snares established by foreign powers, warns him of imminent attack, and brings him finally to pleasant pastures and cool refreshing streams. Zwingli did not like the way the Swiss were lured away to fight the battles of the French king or the emperor and it was against these self-interested bodies that Lycisce advises the ox to keep faith with the "herdsman" (i.e., the pope), who is well-aware of the wiles of the other kings. Keeping faith is the best way to keep the herd safe. The underlying meaning, as in all Aesopian fables, is moral: "I shall be taught by the fall, to eat the grass herbs and the resist all bribes and presents; for where bribes have free play, there liberty cannot continue to exist. Liberty is such a blessing that one reads the Spartans said to Hydarnes that they would fight for it not only with spears but also with axes. But where bribes besiege the hearts of animals, all friendship, liberty, and faithful alliance is despised."[7] Although he was very much opposed to the mercenary role adopted by Swiss soldiers Zwingli thought it was nonetheless beneficial to give aid to the papacy, and there is nothing in his writings of the pre-1516 period to suggest otherwise, although the fortunes of war obviously took their toll.

Historically, c.1508 to 1516 was a period of major engagements of the so-called "Italian wars," in which the French, Spanish, Imperial, Venetian and papal armies were variously allied or opposed as alliances formed, broke down and reformed over spheres of political influence in northern Italy (and which ultimately changed nothing). Throughout, Swiss mercenaries were allied with and then against the French (in line with papal politics). Zwingli served in many campaigns personally as a chaplain to the men of the Glarus contingents and in 1512 he wrote up his impressions and a brief history of the action (like a war correspondent might nowadays).[8] By 1516, however, as seen in his re-interpretation of the classic Greek tale of Theseus and the Labyrinth, Zwingli has become disillusioned with war and with the deceit practised by all parties to it:

7. Zwingli, 'The fable of the ox,' 34.

8. Zwingli, 'Account by Huldreich Zwigli of the engagements between the French and the Swiss hard by Ravenna and Pavia and in other places, and of the convention at Baden in Switzerland, in the year 1512,' 35–47.

> The world is so full of deceit that we have no more that image of Christ than the heathen. Yea we are worse; for the heathen do all deliberately, so that repentance and misery does not come over them. We, on the other hand, in our conceit hurry all matters along thoughtlessly. Therefore we are all in trouble. Whoever commits crime and murder is considered a bold man. Did Christ teach us that? . . . See how for a little gain we barter away our lives; thus we plague our neighbours, and injure all natural right with wars, quarrels, and other matters, so that we might think the hellish furies to have broken loose. Tell me what have we Christians more than the name? No one shows patience or wisdom. Most of all the princes have learnt nothing except to pursue their own desires. As soon as a notion enters their heads, everything else must cease. But when God allows peace to shine upon us, men become beasts. In order, however, not to stir the fire (for men are very angry, when abused), I have bethought myself of the pleasant fashion of a series of fables, which you can easily understand.[9]

Like Luther, Zwingli formulated new ideas about the role of the preacher which were at odds with the Roman Catholic Church and its concern for worldly gain (in the form of territory or money), and this informed his stance against mercenary services:

> And I could wish . . . that one would declare the alliance with the Pope null and void and would send the treaty back with the messenger.' He also said: 'Against a wolf one raised the hue and cry, but no one really opposed the wolves who destroyed most people.' It was fit and proper that these latter wore red hats and capes; for if one shook them ducats and crowns would be scattered round about; if they were wrung out, the blood of your son, brother, father, and good friend would flow.[10]

In a short span of time, through experience Zwingli had changed his mind from supporting the papacy as the only sure moral ground to a view of both the papacy and Roman church as without morals altogether. This and the way Luther had been treated since 1517 informed his further ecclesiology development.

9. Zwingli, 'The Labyrinth,' 54.
10. Zwingli, 'What Zwingli said and preached,' 68–69.

SOCIAL MORALITY—ZWINGLI V. ROMAN CATHOLIC AUTHORITIES

Zwingli had watched closely Rome's reaction to Luther's work and by the early 1520s he had begun to combine several streams of thought juxtaposing human and divine interpretations and regulations of the church, preaching against mercenary services (whether in alliance with the pope or not), and highlighting areas were religious authorities had created rules and regulations against the clear message of Scripture (e.g., food restrictions or priestly celibacy). There are echoes of Erasmus' *Complaint of Peace* (1521) as one of the major underlying models for Zwingli's warnings against worldly military alliances, and these concerns were repeated in the treatise he sent out at about the same time to the magistrates of Schwyz (May 1522). Indeed, so powerful and influential was this preaching that the magistrates of Zürich took it all on-board and officially forbad mercenary service (11 January 1522) and those at Schwyz followed suit.[11] In the combination of these two matters we begin to see the emergence of Zwingli the church reformer.

Alistair McGrath examined two letters addressed to Myconius which illustrate a new element in Zwingli's thought *via* a movement from humanist to gospel argument. In a letter of 31 December 1519, for instance, Zwingli was pleased with the effect of his humanistic, moral approach to reform. The moral exemplar of the *imitatio Christi*, the biblical exegesis, *ad fontes* approach to reform and gospel-based preaching, the spiritual (internal) understanding of religion (reminiscent of Erasmus' *Handbook of the Christian Soldier* and *Julius Excluded from Heaven*) had been effective. It was a moral reform movement based on Scripture and love of neighbor and had Erasmus' methodology at the heart of it, aimed at the establishment of an ethical social arrangement. Zwingli saw some initial positive results as the beginning of a Christian renaissance and noted some locals re-devoting themselves.[12] The problem, in addition to Zwingli's emerging providential theology was that not enough of the masses were taking up the reform mantra and, of course, opposition from the traditional Roman Catholic authorities remained to hinder what effort there was. The socio-economic and political practises of the church (like its war-like activities) were anathema to Zwingli. In a letter of 24 July 1520, he conceded to Myconius, much as Luther recognized, that the masses needed more than moral examples and humanist instructions. To change their hearts they needed divine intervention, *sola fide* and *sola scriptura*. Between the writing of the

11. Potter, *Huldrych Zwingli: Documents of Modern History*, 7. Also see, Zwingli, 'A solemn warning,' 130–49.

12. McGrath, *Intellectual Origins*, 49–50.

two letters (during which time a plague hit the city) Zwingli has added a new element to his ecclesiology. He had not abandoned the humanist moral effort but recognized that his focus on changing people's minds was wrong-headed. Humans are unreliable and their leaders are self-centered so instead the focus must be on the word of God.

In the second letter the parable of the wheat and the tares (from Matt 13) was employed to explain that the true church lies hidden, invisible, within the visible church.[13] The visible church nonetheless has a vital role to play in terms of instruction, example, education, and in preaching of the Word for the benefit of true believers and non-believers alike. What now emerged in Zwingli's ecclesiology, however, is opposition to anything that harms the good work of that external church. This could be anything from simple abuses of power and position to a changing perception of the ministry and discipline. Added to those issues raised by the church authorities' attacks on Luther are those noted earlier, like food restrictions, images, communion in both kinds, clerical celibacy, and Zwingli wrote treatises and sermons on these (as well as against mercenary service) and, eventually, the traditional authorities in the cathedral and in the monasteries reacted with accusations of heresy. This attracted the attention of the Bishop of Constance and the political authorities of the other cantons (in early April they were sending delegates to investigate), all of which gave Zwingli a national stage.

Norman Birnbaum pointed out that in the initial stages a spiritual stalemate developed. The city needed the income from the mercenary work and Rome needed all the mercenaries the Swiss states could provide. When the Roman authorities reneged on their financial obligations, however, local Catholics were made to look rather foolish and some of Zwingli's points began to resonate.[14] Perhaps this explains why the story of meat eating in Lent (the story of the sausages, the printer Froschauer, and his apprentices) became a *cause célèbre*? The tale was used by traditionalists to raise trouble for Zwingli (as he had witnessed the event), making such a fuss that the magistrates were actually forced to launch an investigation. For Zwingli, the questions raised allowed him to make a case in both moral and gospel terms. If the word of God does not deny man something then what is the crime if man pursues it in moderation and with due thanksgiving?

Zwingli highlighted the issues in a subsequent sermon of 23 March 1522 (later printed as *Concerning choice and liberty respecting food* on 16 April). His purpose was to show that Scripture made no specific regulation

13. Stephens, *The Theology of Huldrych Zwingli*, 263.

14. Birnbaum, 'The Zwinglian Reformation in Zurich,' 33.

against the practise of eating particular foods at particular times, so what was the actual crime under investigation? In other words, they were all dealing with an issue of mere human rules, unnecessarily vexing good men and negatively effecting genuine church practise. A series of scriptural passages were examined in the first part of the subsequent treatise to show that the complaints were groundless in the eyes of God, so how can there be a case in the eyes of the church? For example, Matt 15:17 shows that no food can defile a man if moderation is employed and thankfulness expressed. An inference is made between such regulations in the Christian church and the Pharisees' defense of Judaic dietary rules: "all of which regulations Christ desired to do away with in the New Testament. These words of Christ, Mark speaks still more clearly, vii., 15: 'There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him; but the things which come out from him, those are they that defile the man.' So the meaning of Christ is, all foods are alike as far as defilement goes: they cannot defile at all."[15]

"Whence this new kind of Jews?" may well have been Erasmus' subsequent question had he been examining the issues. Another example was taken from Col 2:16. The message there was that men were not to be judged according to the quality of their food; good or bad they may eat when and what they please (even garbage). Zwingli's emphasis was again on moderation and thankfulness, moral and ethical imperatives. Food and drink satisfy the needs of the body and no more or less than that, treated with temperance and thanks to God for providing it. If a man can fast, leave him to it, it is a good, noteworthy thing but if he does not have that ability then there is nothing in the gospel forcing him to fast. Much the same argument would be made with regard to celibacy, and scriptural proof texts were taken from Acts 10:10, 1 Cor 6:12 and Titus 4:1 among others to illustrate the point.

In the second part of the sermon-treatise Zwingli reviewed the gospel evidence against a wider selection of related Roman Catholic innovations like calendar feast days, quarter fasts and other days associated with specific dietary regulations. Among these references Gal 4:9 is particularly interesting as the heart of the epistle was opposition to the Judaizing activities of Peter and Barnabas. Zwingli rehearsed a familiar Lutheran distinction between the Word as law and the Word as gospel: "Jews and heathen have always clung closely to the letter of the law, which oppresses much, indeed kills." He concluded that the law had been fulfilled in Christ. The law was useful in proving human short-comings, certainly, but recognizing this, shelter is taken in Christ and the gospel.

15. Zwingli, 'Concerning Choice,' 73.

> But whosoever does not know and will not know this narrow way to the mercy of God through Christ, undertakes with his own powers to fulfil the law, sees only the letter of the law and desires with his might to fulfil that, prescribing for himself this and that chastisement and abstinence at certain times, places, and under other circumstances, and after all that he still does not fulfil the law, but the more he prides himself on having fulfilled the law, the less he has fulfilled it, for in his industry he becomes puffed up to himself.[16]

There was no place for works righteousness in Zwingli's doctrine. His position was that the local visible church had raised in this controversy a point of conflict between "human" canon laws upon which fasts without meat were predicated, human needs, and the gospel which leaves the question of fasting (a good thing in and of itself) to individual conscience. His examination of the issue (late in a section entitled "Concerning the commandment of men") also revealed the Roman Catholic party's underlying financial trickery. For example, only in the last century did the Swiss need to purchase the "privilege" (from Rome) to use milk products during special days, but why was this not a sin previously?

> Now if that was a sin, why did the Roman bishops watch so lazily that they allowed them to eat these fourteen hundred years? If it is not a sin, as it is not, why did they demand money to permit it? Say rather this, I see that it is nothing but air, see that the Roman bishops announced that it was a sin, when it became money to them: Proof, as soon as they announced it as a sin, they immediately sold it for money, and thus abused our simplicity, when we ought fairly to have seen that, if it was a sin according to God's law, no man can remit it, any more than that one might murder a man, which is forbidden by divine law . . . abstinence from meat and drink is an old custom, which however later by the wickedness of some of the clergy came to be viewed as a command.[17]

His concern was public morality. To uphold or break old customs were personal rather than divine matters but he warned that the vexation of neighbors should always be guarded against.

Turning to this question of vexation, he recommended, much as Luther did, that if a practise offended a neighbor, one perhaps weak in his faith, even with clear scriptural evidence it was better not to carry on in the

16. Ibid., 84–85.

17. Ibid., 89.

presence of the neighbor. This is, to practise discretion until he had been better educated.[18] This edification of the neighbor, the role of the visible church, then provided the meat of the next section of the treatise which is not unlike Luther's treatment of similar ideas in *Freedom of a Christian*. In essence Zwingli summed up the message of the sermon in ten brief points. Genuine love of neighbor, edification, divine truth (the gospel) and social peace are all watch-words for his ecclesiologic reform; the church was a watchdog over the flock. Indeed, this was the exact message he wanted to send to the bishop (a man not himself unfamiliar with humanist scholarship). In *A Friendly Request* (of 13 July 1522), examined below, Zwingli's exegesis of 1 Tim 3:1–2 makes the bishop the guardian of Christian society (much as the dog Lycisce had been represented earlier). The episode proves a useful compare and contrast type case study for Zwingli. On one side the obligations of a genuine Christian community and the power of the gospel and on the other merely transitory human traditions. The controversy brewing here is reminiscent of the images storm which raged in contemporary Wittenberg.

Zwingli's gospel-based preaching had clearly raised some controversy in Zürich and in the wider Swiss Confederation, so much so that according to his own later relation of the events the bishop was finally forced to send a delegation to investigate (7–9 April 1522).[19] It is interesting that the delegation had no mandate to hold Zwingli, accuse him by name or debate with him in public about the issues he had raised. The delegates wanted only to address the magistrates and have them deal out admonishments. Perhaps they wished to avoid a repeat of the Luther affair? In the event, it was Zwingli, backed up by the senior churchmen who forced the issue into the open. He twice referred to the complaints raised by the delegates, initially in a meeting of the Zürich clergy and later in the Senate chamber, and the response of the bishop's delegate gives us a good insight into what Zwingli had been preaching and to what he objected in the traditionalist position. One key matter was clearly his interpretation of the non-salvific nature of human prescriptions and ceremonials in the church.

The traditionalist position, as outlined by the delegate, was that ceremonies were sources of virtue or were simply virtuous in their own right (i.e., good works). Zwingli admitted only that they could provide guidance toward virtue. The delegate argued that ceremonies lead to increased faith

18. Ibid., 95.

19. Zwingli, 'Letter of Huldreich Zwingli to Erasmus Fabricius about the proceedings, on the 7th, 8th, and 9th of April, 1522, of the delegates sent to Zürich by the bishop of Constance,'113–29. This can also be found online at *http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/1682/3749*.

in Christ and, therefore, to do away with them would have serious negative consequences. They were the means by which "humbler Christians were brought to the recognition of salvation." Zwingli replied that he had instituted gospel measures instead. Preaching and teaching (i.e., ministry) of the gospel was the true occupation of priests (or ministers and pastors), as opposed to merely teaching ceremonies. Lead Christians directly to Christ rather than indirectly through metaphors. The delegate argued that the eating of meat in Lent was not permitted in the gospel and that it violated both pontifical and conciliar decrees as well as ancient customs. Zwingli could find no gospel directives. The delegate said that there was no salvation possible outside of the church and Zwingli agreed. The true congregation of saints was hidden within the visible church and needed its protection and guidance. The delegate said that Zwingli's arguments against clerical immunity from taxation were raising violent reactions among the masses with regard to related issues (referring to the tithe revolt in the rural environs) and he accused Zwingli of preaching sedition.

In his own defense (although he was never actually named or charged) Zwingli admitted "frankly that I desire to see a fair portion of the ceremonials and prescriptions done away with" associating them with old laws no longer necessary for Christians. Erasmus' words "Whence this new kind of Jews" echo loudly:

> For how trifling will the fasts of the Jews become which they ordained at times for those in great sorrow, if you compare them with these stated forty days' fasts of ours, institutions fit for serfs, and those that are ordained in a sort of unbroken and continuous row to honor of the saints! Furthermore, if you compare their selection of foods, its observation is more onerous among the Christians than among the Jews. They abstain from certain kinds of food, but not at a fixed period, with the exception of the Passover. We abstain from numerous kinds and for long seasons. And in the enforced leisure of feast days we surpass the Jews very greatly.[20]

Whether he expected there to be positive repercussions for the church in Zürich as a result of his challenge to the delegates to hear out the underlying reasons for his actions is hard to say. Maybe he did, as the address was followed up with a personal address to the bishop, matching the magistrates' (who took Zwingli's part) plea for clearer instruction. With the themes of *sola scriptura* preaching and avoidance of vexation at the heart of the issue of doing away with non-gospel prescriptions and ceremonials it cannot

20. Ibid., 116–17, 118, 126, 121–22.

surprise us that the next issue raised centered on the ministry in the form of petitions on clerical celibacy.

Behind the scenes in the meantime the bishop reacted to events in Zürich. He issued a mandate, a pastoral letter, to the civil authorities (on 24 May) exhorting them to protect the ordinances of the Holy Church, and he appealed to the Swiss diet then sitting at Lucerne. The diet responded with an order forbidding all preaching that was liable to cause disquiet in the church. It is interesting that the bishop again admonished the reform leadership without naming Zwingli specifically. In response, two addresses were made (over the next fortnight) from the local leaders of the reform movement, one (of 2 July) to the bishop and one (of 13 July) to the diet, combining a plea to allow gospel-based preaching and clerical marriage (or at least a tacit acceptance of married clergy).[21]

Certainly Zwingli was not denying that clerical celibacy, or celibacy in and of itself, was a good thing or unscriptural (e.g., 1 Cor 7:32). The problem was an enforced celibacy which had been the ground of both lay and clerical complaints and vexations for centuries. While it is incontestable that the celibate state (that is, the unmarried state) is an ideal (particularly combined with chastity), Zwingli (like Luther) recognized that God would not force anything that was contrary to the well-being of man or contradictory to human nature. Therefore, and with all due respect to the married state it could not be a divine law that some men and women had to be celibate against their natures. He and a number of prominent Swiss clergymen (including Leo Jud) addressed two, practically identical, petitions to their clerical and temporal superiors, one in Latin (to the bishop) and one in German (to the diet). The editor of Zwingli's early writings suspected that the petitioners knew full well that they would get no positive response from either party. The bishop simply could not grant the request and the politicians would not presume to legislate on a spiritual issue. In any case, pleas on behalf of gospel preaching are hardly new to 1522; Zwingli had been preaching from the text of the New Testament since 1518 and his own experiences may have been the foundation of the other plea. What canon law and pontifical decrees have done, in his view, was make an unnecessary law out of a recognized virtue. Based on Matt 19:10–12 Zwingli argued that "not all men were capable of chastity, but only those to whom it had been given." Chastity was a "gift of God that was given to some men in such wise that they might recognize that the divine goodness and not their own strength was of avail in this thing."[22] Zwingli admitted that he was not one of those men so gifted.

21. Zwingli, 'Petition,' 150–65; and Zwingli, 'A Friendly Request,' 166–96.
22. Zwingli, 'Petition,' 156.

In an earlier confidential letter to his friend Heinrich Utinger (of 3 December 1518), Zwingli readily admitted to an unchaste existence while preaching at Glarus. In essence the letter was written to address rumors that he had seduced the daughter of an influential citizen of Einsiedeln. He confessed that while he never dishonored a married woman or a virgin or a nun stories about himself and a barber's daughter were true and confirmed that this was not the only example of his own weakness. While he admitted this rather dark side of his own character he hinted that his clerical superiors had set him a worse example. The conclusion he and his colleagues drew was that forced celibacy was a cause of sexual incontinence, a problem so easily remedied by lifting the non-scriptural restrictions on clerical marriage.

Despite the subject matter (or perhaps because of it) a deep regard for morality is apparent in the two petitions, a refreshing honesty about their own short-comings as well as a clear and deeply felt disappointment at the state of clerical morality caused by such restrictions. But, more than personal experiences were brought to bear on the issue. In a truly humanist fashion Zwingli also brought sacred history into the picture. Beyond the evidence of Scripture were the church fathers, who

> showed themselves unwilling to enjoin chastity upon all without exception, or to require a vow of chastity from others—the priests, at least—and even shielded human weakness with clever words, as was proper, in this way: When the sponsor who was accustomed to make answer for all who were to be confirmed was asked, 'Are they righteous, these whom you present?' he was wont to answer: 'They are righteous.' 'Are they well trained?' 'They are well trained,' etc. When, however, they came to chastity—'Are they chaste?' he answered, 'As far as human frailty allows.'[23]

Zwingli recognized that restrictions on marriage seemed to encourage promiscuity in some clerics, which offended social morality. The solution was simple; the New Testament allowed two options, "chastity or marriage . . . he should live chastely if that is given unto him from above, or marry a wife if he be on fire with passion."[24] As was his style, a number of scriptural references were reviewed in favor of the argument and against fornication and the consequent vexing of neighbors. The plea of the clergy was that clearly non-gospel based canons and decrees have failed to the disrepute of the clerical estate altogether. If it is the minister's duty to lead Christian society and to oversee morality then he clearly must be a good role model. Zwingli

23. Ibid., 157–58.
24. Ibid., 158.

had defended the violations of the Lenten fast (from the pulpit, in print and in the presence of the bishop's delegates and the magistrates) stressing that unscriptural regulations and ceremonials hindered the work of the church. The bishop did not take this in good part, however, and, perhaps in response to the petition he addressed a complaint (in the form of a circular) to the separate cantons' political authorities. Again, Zwingli was not named but there could be no doubt he was the target. As earlier his reply was direct, indignant at the bishop's continual obstinacy (or at least at that of his officials) and rather ironic in tone.

This was *Apologeticus Archeteles* (or *Defense for the beginning and the end*)[25] in which he protested that he had done nothing wrong and had only used plain language to lead the common people to God and Christ. Moreover, he warned the bishop that the Roman Catholic Church was in imminent danger of collapse under the weight of its own confusing and contradictory systems of ceremonials and due to the disparity between its hierarchy and its claims to authority and the opposing authority of Scripture. The new treatise is a useful and interesting overview of a wide range of Zwinglian beliefs, but it was not universally well received. On 8 September 1522, for example, Erasmus passed comment on it.

Erasmus recognized that there was learning behind the material but he was less than pleased by Zwingli's occasional irreverence and tone, asking that he take the issues a little more seriously in the future and not to "forget the modesty and the prudence demanded by the gospel," asking him to make wider expert consultations to avoid personal peril or harm to the church.[26] Ironically, it was the harm being done to the church that was uppermost in Zwingli's mind all along and other scholars who had received copies of his treatise gave much more positive responses. A parson of Revenburg, named Hummelberger, was so pleased that he read it through immediately so he could dispatch copies to Wittenberg (to Melanchthon and Ambrosius Blarer) and "our friends in Augsburg."[27]

In essence *Archeteles* was a wide ranging defense of Zwingli's *sola scriptura* reforming principle: "if I had taught anything impious, as these gentlemen will have it, to engage with me openly and to show definitely by the authority of Scripture, where and in what I have done wrong!"[28] We find statements of his salvation theology as well as his understanding of

25. Zwingli, 'Defence called Archeteles,' 197–292. For a brief examination of the treatise see, Locher, *Zwingli's Thought New Perspectives*, 156–61.

26. Erasmus, *The correspondence of Erasmus*, ix, 183–87.

27. Christoffel, *Zwingli or the rise of the reformation in Switzerland*, 68.

28. Zwingli, 'Archeteles,' 201.

the sacraments (which was later embodied in his *Sixty-seven Articles*) but, for the most part this was a statement on the duty of the minister and the authority of Scripture in opposition to the continuation of non-scriptural but traditional church practises. Zwingli claimed that he had been forced into writing this appeal: "I would rather they should suffer me quietly to lay the food of heaven before the sheep entrusted to my charge, to fill them with it and burn them with the fire of love," and that this confrontation was long in coming (allowing that that bishop's hand may have been forced by other than personal choice).[29] He wrote that bishop Hugo von Hohenlandenberg had been persuaded into opposition by his deputies and officials at Constance, particularly by the suffragan Melchior Fattlin and another officer named John Fabri (Faber). This kind of face-saving clause was very popular in early Reformation letters and there may have been some truth to it in this case.[30] Hohenlandenberg was a local man (born in Zürich) also well versed in humanist studies and very interested in church and doctrinal reform. Possibly, like Reginald Pole or Erasmus, he too wanted to embrace certain limited evangelical positions, an attitude which comes through in his pastoral letter. Prior to 1522 he was in general agreement with much of Zwingli's work, particularly on certain issues like indulgences, but the petition opposing clerical celibacy seemed to cause some personal offense. Hohenlandenberg even wrote a short response to *Archeteles* (which Zwingli attached to subsequent editions) defending clerical celibacy. The gist of which was that he worried a too rapid abandonment of long established ceremonies would result in schism and widespread confusion.

The bishop's ecclesiology was clearly traditional. It featured a combination of Scripture and long standing traditions: "Let no man cause you to wander from the way of the Lord which you have learned from the cradle. Let no man drag you Christians away from the Gospel, from the teachings of the Church, and from the pious traditions of the ancients." He clearly accepted the importance of the Scripture, but:

> we desire, nevertheless, nay urge, that the Gospel be preached and known and kept, only let it not remove any man from the fold and unity of the Church, without which there can be no Gospel; Christ is one, and the Church is one, and there is one apostolic seat placed upon a rock by the voice of the Lord. Another altar besides the one altar cannot be set up, nor a new priesthood besides the one priesthood be established . . . reason does not dictate nor does the natural reverence we ought

29. Ibid., 202.

30. Potter, *Zwingli*, 82.

> to feel for our forefathers counsel this sudden casting off with hostile violence of the traditions, observances, and ceremonials of the fathers. For I do not admit that those people should here be listened to, who resist the ceremonials and ordinances of the fathers simply on the ground that they are, as they say, the inventions of man, and not from the Spirit of God, but things laid upon the Christian multitude as a burden and an oppression by dreamers and perverted spirits; as if some notion could not be got up in regard to the traditions of the Apostles and of the general councils . . . let the general good also invite us to retain the observance of the ceremonials of the Church at least for the time being.[31]

His concern was to prevent disorder in society at large (which was not all that different than Zwingli's position). The bishop highlighted the disorder brought about by a few malcontents, asking serious questions: "What is more likely, that one person should be deceived, or the whole community? What is more probable, that the consciences of a few should be at fault, or of all?" When Erasmus and Luther debated the issue of free will Erasmus wondered whether, even if Luther was correct, what good telling the masses about it would do? Here, the bishop grants that the reformers may have a good point, but "what advantage to the general body, of which they are but a small part, is this obstinate attempt to drag it elsewhere going to provide"? Ultimately, he was asking that nothing be done until the church authorities could assemble in a council. Zwingli took the accusation of schism as a misguided personal attack, however reasonable the context, claiming only to want to "renew the old-time unity" of the church, claiming that his entire purpose had been only to bring the teachings of the Scripture to the masses and inspire renewed regard for social morality. His New Testament sermons had from Matthew onwards been geared in this direction and social morality was at the heart of his criticisms of the Roman Catholic establishment.

Take the bishop's point about the unity of the church and gospel. For Zwingli the idea that without the church there can be no gospel is the reverse of the truth and he brought history to bear on the issue. He reminded the bishop of the Arian controversy, "there was a Gospel, I take it, for both sides rested their case on it, and yet there was a tremendous split in the Church. Therefore there can be a Gospel along with a split in the Church." As for the reference to the authority of the pope; "Therefore Anastasius and Liberius, though Roman Pontiffs, had no Gospel, because they agreed with Arius. Whose was the Gospel? The Church's? Therefore there can be a Church with

31. Zwingli, 'Archeteles,' 213.

sound views, and this Church can have the Gospel, even if it has no Roman Pontiff." The gospel pre-dated Augustine; it pre-dated the church itself. The bishop's contention had been that the gospel was predicated on the agreement of the church, but

> historians tell us that Matthew first committed the Gospel to writing eight years after Christ's ascent into heaven, because the necessities of the situation demanded it. Up to that time they had preached it from memory with only the aid of the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Tell me, pray, what Church stamped the Gospel with approval then, and whose Gospel? Was it that which they all had in their memories? Country bumpkins! The Gospel could waver, therefore, and go wrong, after the manner of human things. Or was it the Gospel inspired by the Holy Ghost that had been sent by the Father and Christ? But it were impious if we said that that which God himself directs has need of human sanction.[32]

In Zwingli's view, Hohenlandenberg had taken "gospel" to mean merely the literal works assembled into canon while ignoring the original divine inspiration. "The Gospel consists not in the words of the Scriptures, but in their sense; not in the outside, but in the pith; not in the leaves of the language but in the root of its spirit." This difference of opinion led consequently to differing opinions about the church.

Zwingli gave voice to the not unfamiliar, anti-papal interpretation of Matt 16:18, using it as a platform against the idea that the pope was any kind of universal head of the church. At this point in the treatise we might reasonable expect Zwingli to segue to a "Lutheran" explanation of the existence of two different churches, visible and invisible, but instead he moves on to discuss the role of priests and bishops, using papal decretals and council decrees against Hohenlandenberg's position. Christ's only directive to his disciples was to preach; Paul claimed his only purpose was to spread the word. Zwingli saw contemporary bishops steeped in luxuries, engaged in warfare and impious living "even surpassing kings," all of which was forbidden by the council of Carthage. While many contemporary priests and bishops adhered to canon law they did not adhere to the gospel. They accepted money, did not live chastely, and involved themselves in temporal matters. The bishop's point about adhering to the decrees of the general councils also caused Zwingli some confusion. Did Hohenlandenberg mean the first four general councils which some equate in authority to the gospel, or to all councils? Did he mean those which approve clerical marriage or

32. Ibid., 213–16.

those which decry it? Did he include those councils which did not conform to Scripture? He asked why not use Scripture as a convenient touchstone and keep those canons which conform and disregard those which do not? Zwingli was determined to test doctrine in this way, as well as ceremonials. Hohenlandenberg thought it best to keep them for the time being, but Zwingli wondered when "they are to be done away with . . . what hinders their being abolished now, especially as the world is looking for this and all the good and learned are moving in this direction?" Hohenlandenberg would let a future general council decide the issue but Zwingli doubted that bishops with a vested interest in keeping the church as it was were likely to change it as their wealth and soft living depended on keeping the *status quo*. Zwingli's response then compared established traditions with the gospel and showed the bishop's officers that the reform-minded clergy have the health of the church and Christians at heart whereas the traditions-minded clergy do not. If Hohenlandenberg cannot see his way clear to admitting the truth of Zwingli's words, rather than resort to threats, flattery, snares, tortures and punishments, use "the open warfare of Holy Writ and by public meeting, following the Scripture as your guide and master, and not human inventions."[33] George Potter noted that *Archeteles* marked a transitional stage in Zwingli's ecclesiology from merely questioning traditions to proactively taking up *sola scriptura*.

The rising tension in Zürich between traditionalists and reformers finally forced the council to get involved (around February 1523) and Zwingli prepared a short statement of faith known as the *Sixty-seven Articles* to provide the basic points around which a proposed disputation would be held.[34] He made reference to all the issues that had been raised since 1518 as well as the resulting controversies. For instance, article twenty-four referred to the prohibition of foods, articles twenty-eight, twenty-nine and forty-nine to clerical celibacy, and article sixty-six to clerical wealth and materialism and throughout are references to Zwingli's concerns for social morality (in the form of ethical guidelines). In the event, representatives of the evangelical sect and the clergy in Zürich (e.g., Johann Stumpf, Conrad Grebel, Balthazar Hubmaier) and delegates from the other city-states met with the bishop's delegates (Faber and Martin Blansch, a preacher from Tübingen) before the magistrates. Neither Faber nor Blansch were willing to challenge the articles directly with scriptural arguments or even recognize the authority of the magistrates to deal with matters of doctrinal reform. Of the disputation

33. Ibid., 237–39, 248–49, 250, 254, 255–56, 288.

34. Zwingli, 'The sixty–seven articles of Ulrich Zwingli (1523)' can be found in *Confessions* (39–46), *Cochrane* (33–44) and *Selected works of Huldreich Zwingli (1484–1531)*, 111–17.

itself there are several accounts of varying seriousness, credibility and bias but the end result was the approval of Zwingli's teaching and a magisterial order to all the other priests of Zürich to follow his lead.[35]

As regards ecclesiology, Faber's first point in his opening statement not only set the tone for the dispute but also clearly encapsulated many of the Reformation's most basic issues. For Faber (and the Roman establishment in general) the church universal was Rome. The visible, institutional, hierarchical organization which embodied all Christians had the authority to interpret Scripture, apart from which there was no means of salvation. There was no distinction made between the visible and invisible, spiritual or material, and there was no need for one. Faber refused to discuss old practises, customs and traditions outside of a general council because, in his mind any decision made in Zürich might not find favor with other Christians "in Spain, in Italy, in France and in the north." That is, those not privy to the decision making process through their own representatives.[36] He recognized no local or particular distinction and he recommended that the issues should be written out and brought to the universities at Paris, Cologne or Louvain for comparison and judgment (as was traditional practise). He appears to misunderstand Zwingli's call for the faithful, or members of the congregation, to judge the dispute based on Scripture alone or why this was even a legitimate option.

As early as his eighth article, following immediately upon Christologic statements, Zwingli was careful to distinguish the faithful as "members and children of God" based on his salvation doctrine and providential principles (i.e., predestination). This corps of believers is the church, the "communion of saints, the bride of Christ" or what he identified as the Catholic or universal church of which Christ is the head. Christ being the residing intelligence without which the body falls into dangerous internal conflicts (resulting in pointless, burdensome laws, traditions, regulations and practises serving as replacement intelligence).[37] So that the communion of saints in Zürich is perfectly capable of deciding whether doctrines or practises are legitimate because they are led by Christ and inspired by the Holy Spirit. For this reason their decisions would not contradict those made by the communion of saints in Spain or in the north (although there might be certain external variations more suited to their local geographic, economic or political circumstances). For Zwingli the church is "no other than all right Christians,

35. Hegenwald, 'Acts of the convention held in the praiseworthy city of Zurich on the 29th day of January, an account of the Holy Gospel,' 40–117.

36. Ibid., 51, 66, 85.

37. Noll, *Turning Points*, 40.

collected in the name of the Holy Ghost and by the will of God, which have placed a firm belief and an unhesitating hope in God, her spouse" and its rule "depends and rests upon the word and will of God."[38] His communal principle clearly stands opposed to the hierarchical principle inherent in Faber's view. For the latter, bishops embody the church as the inheritors of the apostles and on behalf of the congregation. For Zwingli bishops are watchmen, overseers, guardians and teachers.[39] As Faber and Blansch were unwilling to debate subsequent issues, like clerical marriage and food regulations (all those things Zwingli took to be merely human traditions) the disputation proved very much a damp squib.

Because the dispute was such an unproductive event Zwingli published further detailed expositions of his foundation articles. He took pains to distinguish the gospel meaning of words like "church" or "*ecclesia*" from the German word *kirck*. The former refer to the community of the faithful (as per John 6:40) or "all Christians united in one faith by the Spirit of God,"[40] whereas the latter refers only to the physical structure or place where the community gathers (dividing the spiritual from the material). The gospel understanding refers to a community which cannot gather together in one physical, visible location, although they are gathered together, invisibly, in spirit by the Holy Spirit. So while contrary to its claims Rome does not represent (i.e., embody) the universal church (in the first spiritual, universal sense) it would certainly be a valid local expression of the community (in the later material sense) as would any parish or ecclesiastical division. The true invisible community is contained within that wider, variable, visible expression. This also has gospel significance (e.g., 1 Cor 1:2) as true members of the community can be found in any location. The church (the bride of Christ), in the form of a community, are the faithful invisibly united in spirit (whether universally or locally considered). In this way papal claims that the universal church is expressed in the pope and the hierarchy of bishops (Faber's claim), who have interpretative authority over the Scripture and who declare decretals and canons, can be dismissed as little more than human innovation and attempts to usurp Christ's authority.

For Zwingli, the first mark of the true congregation (articles thirteen to sixteen) is primacy of the gospel. The gospel, the promise of God and faith in that promise, constitute the church or community of the faithful as opposed to papal claims which have the roles reversed with the church claiming power to constitute the gospel. The pope, whatever other good

38. Hegenwald, Acts of the convention,' 85.
39. Ibid., 54.
40. Zwingli, 'The exposition of the Sixty–seven articles,' 44.

things he may represent, cannot be the head of the universal body. This is the clear meaning of article seventeen (although the pope can certainly be the leader of a local or regional congregation). Zwingli's exposition on his eighteenth article discussed the familiar image of the pope as an expression of the old style Old Testament sacrificing high priest, juxtaposed to the "eternal high priest" of the New Testament and His one-time for all time self-sacrifice which signaled the end of that old order. Those who would claim that high priest role are to be rejected, however, as being in denial of God's own sovereign authority. Zwingli's exegesis of Matt 23:9 supports this interpretation, aiding in his contesting of the traditional interpretation of other citations used to underlay papal supremacy (e.g., Peter as the rock, the power of the keys, etc.)

The role of the clergy was subsequently examined in a large block (articles twenty-three to thirty-two) augmented later with dedicated treatises. Zwingli condemned material orientation, traditions, vows of purity and sumptuary regulations distinguishing the clergy from the laity. Other marks of the true church include excommunication (i.e., discipline), morality and the priesthood of all believers. He placed the power of the keys into the hands of the visible congregation to deal with issues of public scandal rather than private disputes between members (articles sixty-one to sixty-three). He took to task in these later articles anyone who saw the ministry, the priesthood, as anything more than one office among others and as an office which grants that "indelible character" claimed by the Romans. Just like a mayor who fails to carry out his functions properly, the priest too can be dismissed becoming, once again, nothing more or less than a private citizen. As for the correct functions of a priest: "those who teach in the church, who proclaim the word of God, who translate Greek and Hebrew, who preach, heal, visit the sick, give help and alms to the poor and feed them; for all these tasks belong to the word of God."[41] For this service they are to be supported by the community. These responsibilities form the basis of a later treatise, *The Shepherd* (examined shortly).

ZWINGLI V. RADICAL SECTARIANISM (BIBLICAL LITERALISM AND ADIAPHORA)

From the start of his preaching career to these rather turbulence years in the mid-1520s, Zwingli's fundamental ecclesiology emerged and developed in response to local needs. He was initially in no hurry to bring in further changes beyond the concentration on gospel-based preaching (perhaps for

41. Ibid., 355, 357.

the same reasons Luther was initially determined to proceed slowly), and he opposed the demands only of those who wanted more immediate radical reform of any and every practise that did not have explicit scriptural support. For instance, in 1523 he re-considered traditional Catholic ceremonials and reiterated his view of the church in a treatise entitled *The canon of the mass*. Here, perhaps representing those further considerations hinted at in the twentieth of his *Articles*[42] he did not call for the rejection of traditional vestments, singing or use of the sign of the cross although already in the city churches some liturgical practises were being carried out in German (e.g., his colleague Jud had produced a new baptism ceremony). Zwingli was still willing that Latin be retained except for the reading of the Scriptures.[43] For these and other reasons he came under increasing criticism from some of his followers for not being biblical enough. He answered these critics with *An apology for the canon of the mass* later attached as a kind of appendix to the former treatise.

Taken together these patient and conservative writings reject the biblicism of the emerging radicals. To Zwingli their position smacked of mere biblical correctness which, as Luther had found with Karlstadt, emphasized the law over the promise of the gospel.[44] Zwingli's point was that in liturgical terms a law-based interpretation led only to a series of increasingly illogical and repetitive aspects (as in the Roman Mass) which he thought needed to be filtered out of the service in exchange for heightened communal awareness and fellowship.[45] The meat of the earlier treatise was Zwingli's understanding of the Eucharist and his opposition to the sacrificial understanding of the Mass but he also dealt with the nature of the church, contrasting (as earlier) the true Catholic (and particular) church against the representative church of Rome. This was still necessary as traditionalist critics were still coming forward. One such critic was Jerome Emser, poet, prose writer and important dignitary in the German church (and secretary to Duke George of Saxony).

Emser is one of those interesting figures on the fringes of the Reformation. He was personally known to Luther (they were at Erfurt at the same time, c.1504, and were later engaged in polemic dispute), Zwingli (they were at Basel at the same time, c.1502) and Erasmus (who praised his learning and knowledge of the Fathers).[46] Emser had taken offense at Zwingli's

42. Noll, *Turning Points*, 41.
43. Richards, 'Introduction,' 348.
44. Stephens, *Theology*, 35–36; White, *Protestant Worship*, 60.
45. Senn, 'The Reform of the Mass,' 44.
46. Richards, 'Introduction,' 346.

doctrine of the Mass and wrote *Defence of the canon of the mass against Huldreich Zwingli* in response. This was not his first salvo, however, having already engaged in a polemic dispute with Luther on that very issue. No one could say he was not well versed in the evangelical position. However, for whatever reason he did not deal with Zwingli's ecclesiology (neither his description of the church nor his criticism of certain traditions like invocation of the saints). Doctrine of the church was, however, the first theme in Zwingli's *A reply to Emser* (1524). This was later copied into his comprehensive statement of faith, *Commentary on true and false religion* (1525).

Reminiscent of Luther's true church within the wider material church imagery, Zwingli had a use for the visible institution as the location where the true congregation hears the word and is fed on the blood and body of Christ, so the mixed nature of the church was the first of two primary points in *Reply*. From earlier treatises he reiterated the literary exposition of the word and meaning of the word "church" in the biblical languages bringing into play again the usual parables (like the wheat and the tares from Matt 13) against radical claims that members of the true church can recognize and separate themselves from non-believers by their own powers of observation.[47] But, before moving on to more specific examinations of Anabaptist thinking he still clearly had issues with the traditional interpretation. The "church," he wrote, is the multitude of those who profess faith in Christ (whether sincerely or not) and this is clear in both testaments and in literary comparison of the three scriptural languages. "Hence it is clear that 'ecclesia' is used not only for the pious, holy, and faithful, but also for the impious, wicked, and unfaithful, provided only that they were of the seed of Abraham according to the flesh and were intermingled with the pious."[48] This equates with Luther's visible church within which are those with genuine faith (that true church washed with the blood of Christ and called a communion of saints). As this inner, invisible church was predicated upon Christ its purity was His purity not that of the congregation. Christ's work of redemption washed the faithful of their iniquities and God planted faith in their hearts. The congregation of saints are still human; the church is said to be pure and spotless because these conditions rest on Christ. The church does not err because of its faith in, and attention to, the word of God.[49]

At this point Zwingli made an important distinction, one which landed him (as much as it had landed Luther) in further controversy and from

47. Stephens, *Theology*, 263.

48. Zwingli, 'Reply of Huldreich Zwingli to Jerome Emser defender of the canon of the mass,' 366.

49. Ibid., 373.

which point we see his ecclesiology increasingly addressing issues in relation to radical rather than traditionalist opponents. As earlier in *Archeteles* a distinction was made between the word of God as spelled out in fallible human letters and the Word of God as recognized within the listener/reader at the inspiration and internal teaching of the Holy Spirit within hearts and minds. Zwingli's second point was that this congregation of saints is distributed throughout the many individual congregations of the multitude of Christians which altogether represent the universal church and which cannot be physically gathered together in one place. It is not clearly distinguishable to human senses and it certainly is not defined by any gathering of bishops. Later in *Commentary* he expanded and explained that point. The church is the multitude of professing Christians and this can no more be embodied in the pope as an entire people can be embodied in a king (despite their claims to do so) or an entire citizenry is embodied in the magistracy. They are representative, certainly, if they have the agreement of the citizens, the people or the professing Christians, otherwise they claim too much.[50]

Keeping his focus on the congregation (saints and sinners alike) Zwingli sought to remove adherence to the traditional hierarchical structure of priest, bishop and pope imposed upon the church and giving it a false definition. The right to discipline wrong-doing, remove pastors, judge the authority of teachers and the doctrine of the minister is in the hands of the congregation inspired by the Holy Spirit, not imposed upon it from higher human authorities. This was a priesthood of all believers in action. Discipline and interpretative authority belongs to the congregation as a whole. This is the power of the keys (to admit believers, exclude the disorderly and receive again the penitent).[51] His proof text was 1 Cor 14:29, the Holy Spirit would inspire correct and consistent judgment. What led Zwingli into difficulty was the fact that these judgments and decisions are based on hearing the word inspired by the Spirit, but not everyone in the congregation hears and understands the word in that inspired state. This was one reason the Anabaptists wished to separate, so that the congregation of saints could be freed of the possible taint of the non-saints, but this is an issue for later consideration. At this point Zwingli was still addressing traditionalist Roman Catholics. The church has fallen into the state it has because the prerogatives of the congregation to make judgments and decisions has been systematically ignored and removed since the time of Christ. As a result several errors have crept into the church and the word made subject to severe distortions based on human volition. One criticism is that neither Zwingli nor Luther

50. Zwingli, 'Commentary on True and False Religion' 176.

51. Zwingli, 'Reply,' 353.

ever considered the possibility that the Holy Spirit might supply diverse understandings, a point raised in the first disputation. Zwingli's answer was that the Spirit and the Word could not contradict each other, so how could two different understandings be correct and faithful interpretations? For him unity and peace were to be striven for and understood in terms of the covenant. This problem became obvious when the radical evangelicals among his supporters claimed also to be inspired by the Holy Spirit (but with wildly different doctrinal understandings). They raised another minor issue in seeking precisely to understand what was the relation of the local congregation to the whole multitude of Christians beyond places in which true believers were planted? Their answer was to establish separate conventicles of believers which threatened Zwingli's entire ecclesiologic doctrine, his covenant thinking and his social ideals.

Before we move on to examine Zwingli's dealings with the radicals, however, I would like to quickly look at some of the issues raised about the church and congregation. As noted several times, for instance, and as early as his first sermons of 1518 Zwingli conceived of the ministry primarily in terms of preaching and teaching the gospel. He confirmed this view in his sixty-second article, differentiating evangelical ministers from their seemingly self-interested Roman counterparts, expanding the discussion to consider all the terms expressed in the *Exposition*. His vision of the ministry had not fundamentally changed. Specific re-consideration of the office was produced in October 1523 in a sermon preached before the ministers assembled for the second Zürich disputation (on images and the Mass) and later (March 1524) it was enlarged and re-worded as that treatise known as *The Shepherd*.

The main thrust of this sermon-treatise was a comparison between the true shepherd, he who preached and studied Scripture, who took Christ as his exemplar for all aspects of his own life and had (perhaps in a nod to Karlstadt) subsumed his own ego-centric will to that of God (*Gelassenheit*), with the false shepherd.

> Whoever retreats from the word of God for the sake of this ephemeral life will lose his life. Whoever depends on his own knowledge, counsel or feeling, thinking therewith to save himself, will destroy his own soul. Therefore the shepherd must deny himself, throw off his self-love, and certainly prepare himself to bear each day a new cross. Christ Jesus himself did so, always subjugating his will to that of the Father, bearing every cross until he came to the honor of sitting at the right hand of God. When now the shepherds, or any person, empties himself in this

> way, then the next thing is to be filled again with God, that is, he has all his confidence and consolation in God.[52]

The shepherd is to be a living example of a genuine Christian existence, much as Zwingli presented himself as a living example of Luther's evangelical convictions.[53] By way of contrast, the priest, the traditional Roman clerical officer does none of this. Instead of preaching and studying of the Scripture he disseminates his own ideas (based on the Fathers, traditions, papal decretals, ceremonials, etc.), nor does he rebuke those who need it for their own good or for the good of the community but rather for his own financial or material gain. Lining these up against each other the life of the true pastor, the true shepherd, is not an easy one, but "nothing other than divine love can bring the shepherd to deny himself, to leave father and mother, to go forth without purse, knapsack and staff, to be dragged before the princes, beaten, falsely accused and killed and that love may not exist without the fundamental of undoubting trust."[54] As Zwingli developed this over the course of the sermon-treatise we find that "staff" refers to worldly or temporal powers, "sack" (knapsack) refers to material possessions and "purse," perhaps obviously, refers to money or wealth. The true shepherd therefore will have none of these things weighing him down. Since both his message and mandate is spiritual he will be opposed at every turn by carnal unbelievers and he may face violence for his preaching and teaching. This being the case, Christ must be at the heart of his life and work and, undeniably, a firm familiarity with the gospel and the Old Testament is essential. Zwingli's goal was to examine the full gamut of the life of the minister, his relations, life, teaching, relation with external things and earnings.

It would be a hard life with little material reward (but one compensated by great spiritual rewards). Social responsibility is a key theme for Zwingli coming as it does after familiarity with the gospel and preaching of salvation in his scheme. "Therefore the shepherd must also carefully prevent the washed sheep falling again in the excrement, that is, after the believers have come into knowledge of their savior and have experienced the friendly grace of God, they should thereafter lead a blameless life so that they no longer walk in death." To do this the true shepherd practises what he preaches, unlike the false shepherds, the wolves, of Rome. "Most helpful toward that end is the shepherd's doing in practice what he teaches in words" (after Matt 5:19). Zwingli termed any other position mere hypocrisy. "It is only

52. Zwingli, 'The Shepherd,' 89.
53. Stephens, *Theology*, 276.
54. Zwingli, 'The Shepherd,' 106.

hypocrisy when one speaks beautifully of God but does not form one's life according to him."[55]

The image conjured up by Zwingli is a paternal one reflecting a powerful familial imagery. The relationship of Christ and His spouse (the church) is reflected on one level by the image of minister and church (raising true Christians in society) and on another the father and mother raising obedient, well-behaved children at home. The shepherd (like a father) is an educator to his children in that "he sees to it that they are trained into undefiled lives, friendly, harmless, seemly in all things, and fleeing all intemperance . . . Fathers are eager with deed and teaching to live without any advantages against their children." Zwingli drew out negative contrasts with the Roman clergy as they do not take pains to teach, nor practise what they teach. This is very important, "that living example teaches more than a hundred thousand words." Ministers unwilling to live as they preach are "false prophets . . . therefore the shepherd must represent a model, not out of everything we treasure as good, but of those things alone which God teaches and demands of us."[56] The true shepherd must be a living example as well as a father but, furthermore, he must also be the defender of the flock. Here, Zwingli turns to the problem of idolatry using 1 Kings 12–13 as a proof-text. Featured here is the biblical King Jeroboam: "Here the shepherd learns that he should not let the sheep be led into idolatry nor into any kind of unrighteousness. Although the sacrilegious and wicked Jeroboam has the impudence to do such, the prophet should stand over against the king even though he knows he will not be obeyed." It is enough that God sent the prophet, his success or failure was immaterial. Just as Erasmus armed his Christian soldier with faith and the gospel alone, these are the weapons the true shepherd uses against the powers of the world. Preaching, healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, casting out devils without staff, purse or sack. All the necessities will be provided if only the shepherd carries out his work faithfully. This leads a few pages later to a discussion of the power of binding and loosing.

Zwingli was arguing that the shepherd coerces no one into believing as faith must come from God. Whether this refers in some way to the persecution of so-called heretics by the priests of Rome is debateable: another interpretation is possible. Zwingli wrote "whoever does not receive you and accept your word, then go from that same house or city and shake the dust from your feet," symbolizing the separation between those bound and those loosed.[57] He did not deal with the obvious interpretation of physical separa-

55. Ibid., 90, 91.
56. Ibid., 92.
57. Ibid., 99, 103.

tion between believers and non-believers but he would have to do so shortly, envisioning instead a new society. He discussed the minister as father figure to an upright family and juxtaposed this with the naked nepotism shown by innumerable Roman examples. This advice clashes with contemporary social thinking, however. The idea that a priest or bishop, able to do so, would benefit his own family is often portrayed in a negative light but the fact of the matter is that there was great pressure across the social spectrum that a man was responsible for doing just that. If it was within his power to advance his family and his friends he did so earning both praise and a heightened social reputation as a result.[58] Perhaps this was the point, however, the true shepherd thinks not of his own mortal family and they in turn recognize that this must be the case. And, if the shepherd proves unable the parish has the right and duty to rid themselves of false pastors.[59] This similarly encapsulates Zwingli's thoughts on discipline as well, the congregation itself eliminating false dealers from within their midst.

As early as summer 1520 (as he told Myconius) Zwingli had been considering the question of excommunication (i.e., the ban or binding and loosing), having written the pope on Luther's behalf well aware of the rising tide of complaints against his own teachings. However, these considerations were not unfruitful. In summer 1522, for instance, after the magistrates had cleared the way Zwingli preached a sermon to the nuns of Oetenbach (and later published it as *Clarity and Certainty of the Word of God*). He interpreted Matt 18:15–18 as God's institution of excommunication and explaining its purpose. "Sinners," Zwingli noted, "who commit flagrant sin and offend their neighbours are to be cut off from their fellows."[60] There was no mention of fines, physical punishments or other penalties (as routinely imposed by Rome's priests). Soon thereafter two of the *Sixty-seven Articles* (thirty-one and thirty-two) addressed the same issue: "No private person may excommunicate anyone else, but the church—that is, the communion of those among whom the one subject to excommunication lives—along with its guardians may act as a bishop" and "the only one who should be excommunicated is a person who commits a public scandal."[61] The power of the "ban," that is in removing the offender from interaction with the community at prayer and in communion, should be invested in the congregation under the watchful eye of the pastor (the watchdog of orthodoxy). In terms

58. Chibi, "'Time–servers,' "Ciphers" and "Trimmers,'" 206.
59. Zwingli, 'The Shepherd,' 121.
60. Zwingli, 'Of the Clarity and Certainty or Power of the Word of God,' 91.
61. Noll, *Turing Points*, 43.

of evangelical interpretation, however, there is not much that we would label innovative about Zwingli's exposition of these articles.

The private warning to the miscreant followed by the witnessed warning followed by the accusation before the entire congregation is no less than Luther wrote. The power is in the hands of the local church (as the universal church cannot be physically gathered in one place) and it was the reputation of the local church which was primary in Zwingli's mind. The sin, in his understanding of Matthew, is against the church (in the guise of the particular community) and it was only following the sinner's failure to heed the warning of the congregation that the ban came into play. This effectively removed the power of the keys from the hands of individuals like bishops and popes, for they are not the church.[62] Zwingli uses the term "public scandal" for those things which warrant a ban. Ideally, he meant such things as "shameless adultery, open blasphemy, the deception of virgins, gluttony, evil talk, idleness, warring, procured marriages, libel, lies and such vices that cause Christians a great deal of unrest."[63] Left in the hands of the bishops and popes, however, the ban had become a tool of financial and material gain, the purpose of edification, education and leading to penitence of the sinner rarely considered. But these ends should be the only goal and the penitent welcomed back when he recognizes his fault and asks forgiveness. Ultimately, it is the local church which gains as it recognizes and then cures a problem. This is Zwingli's understanding of the example of Paul's advice in 1 Cor 3:9–11 and 2 Cor 2:5–8, that is of the local church dealing with a local issue. As in the Oetenbach sermon-treatise there is no talk here of fines, penalties and physical punishments. The ban and the humiliation should be enough and if it isn't then the tree is better off with the dead branches shorn away. A text-block in *Sixty-seven Articles* (thirty-four to forty-three) followed detailing the power of magistrates and the imposition of fines, penalties and punishments as temporal matters. Zwingli expounded on the issue in later writings too, as in *An Exposition of the Faith* (1530), specifically to counter Anabaptist objections to the power of Christian magistrates.[64] Of the reformed theologians like Oecolampadius, Bucer and Calvin, however, only Bullinger followed Zwingli with full agreement over the disciplinary power of magistrates. We will not deal with that separate issue here, but instead turn to the related issue of developing radical sectarianism in Zürich.

62. Zwingli, 'Exposition,' 229.

63. Ibid., 230.

64. This is discussed in Stephens, *Theology*, 273.