

The Birth and Evolution of Swiss Anabaptism (1520-1530)

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Historical accounts of Anabaptism have long been dominated by debates concerning its origins, including its theological foundations. Already in the sixteenth century it was thought that identifying Anabaptist origins also laid bare the theological nature of the movement. It is perhaps not surprising, then, that polemic as well as apologetic approaches have played a constant role in the discussion of Anabaptist beginnings. The field has continued to be plowed assiduously down to the present, with results seemingly as varied as the narrators and their ideological commitments. The literature is vast—by the reckoning of one historian, second in volume in Reformation studies only to the body of work generated by the Luther-renaissance.¹ We will not attempt a detailed description of this literature, nor rehearse the well-known historiographical shifts of the last century and a half.² The question of the nature of Swiss Anabaptism, however, and the proper description of its origin and evolution, has been made the focus of attention once again with the publication in 2003 of Andrea Strübind's detailed study.³

Strübind has argued that Swiss Anabaptist origins must be read and described *primarily* as a theological narrative, and, further, that when read through the lens of historical theology, Swiss Anabaptism displayed a separatist, "free church" ecclesiology from the start, in unbroken continuity from the early Zurich radicals to the Schleitheim Articles. With this thesis Strübind wishes to "revise the revisionists" of the 1970s and 1980s, who argued that early Swiss Anabaptism, in particular, was

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1. Hans-Jürgen Goertz, *Religiöse Bewegungen in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 1993), 79.

2. For a critical and thorough review (as of 1975), see James Stayer, Werner Packull and Klaus Deppermann, "From Monogenesis to Polygenesis: The Historical Discussion of Anabaptist Origins," *MQR* 49 (Apr. 1975), 83-122. A later "revisionist" perspective is found in Goertz, *Religiöse Bewegungen*, 75-89. For a recent overview, see John D. Roth, "Recent Currents in the Historiography of the Radical Reformation," *Church History* 71:3 (Sept. 2002), 523-535.

3. Andrea Strübind, *Eifriger als Zwingli: Die frühe Täuferbewegung in der Schweiz* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2003). See the review by James M. Stayer, and Strübind's response, in *MQR* (Apr. 2004), 297-313.

ambivalent on questions of violence and political involvement, and became solidly sectarian and separatist only following the failure of the Peasants' War.⁴ It was Strübind's study, especially her insistence that theological and ecclesiological evidence be taken seriously, that led to this present essay, in which we will reexamine the sources and the historical studies that have shaped the narratives of Swiss Anabaptist beginnings. By sorting through the accumulated evidence we hope to provide, in conclusion, a balanced account of this decade of Anabaptist beginnings in Switzerland.

In this essay the term "Anabaptist" is used to denote those sixteenth-century adherents who insisted on carrying out a water baptism of adults as the only proper, biblical baptism. Defining "Anabaptism" in this way has the merit of freeing the historical narrative from both polemical and hagiographical definitions, grounding the examination and description of the movement in an ecclesial practice recognized as central by adherents and their opponents alike. Excluded are radical opponents of infant baptism who never took the further step of instituting adult baptism, such as Thomas Müntzer and Andreas Karlstadt. This definition also clarifies the distinction between Spiritualists and Anabaptists, along the same lines that the baptizers themselves used: those who decided that only a spiritual baptism was needed were not considered "brethren" by those who continued to practice baptism in water. Of course, this definition must include among the baptizers people who were no great credit to Anabaptist descendants, such as the Münsterites and the Batenburgers, but this is simply to recognize the historical fact that not all Anabaptists were heroines, martyrs and saints.

There is now no serious questioning of the fact that the earliest documented baptism of adults in the sixteenth century took place in Zurich, on or about the evening of January 21, 1525.⁵ Present and

4. James M. Stayer, *Anabaptists and the Sword* (Lawrence, KS: Coronado, 1972); James Stayer, "Die Anfänge des schweizerischen Täufertums im reformierten Kongregationalismus," in Hans-Jürgen Goertz, ed. *Umstrittenes Täufertum* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977), 19-49; Martin Haas, "Der Weg der Täufer in die Absonderung," in Goertz, *Umstrittenes Täufertum*, 50-78. The classic "revisionist" article is Stayer, Packull and Deppermann, "From Monogenesis. . .," noted above. See also Hans-Jürgen Goertz, "History and Theology: A Major Problem of Anabaptist Research Today," *MQR* 53 (July 1979), 177-188; *idem.*, *Pfaffenhaus und Groß Gescrei* (Munich, 1987); Hans-Jürgen Goertz, *The Anabaptists* (London: Routledge, 1996) for arguments "de-theologizing" Anabaptist history and arguing for socio-historical causes. James Stayer and Werner Packull have both softened the initial "genetic" division between Swiss and South German Anabaptist groups in recent publications. See James M. Stayer, *The German Peasants' War and Anabaptist Community of Goods* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991); Werner O. Packull, *Hutterite Beginnings* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1995).

5. The date is established by Fritz Blanke, *Brothers in Christ*, trans. J. Nordenhaug

participating were Conrad Grebel and Felix Mantz, former friends and students of Huldrych Zwingli, and George Blaurock, a lapsed priest from Chur. There were other persons present, but they remain unnamed in the sources. The *Hutterite Chronicle* describes the event:

After the prayer, Georg Blaurock stood up and asked Conrad Grebel in the name of God to baptize him with true Christian baptism on his faith and recognition of the truth. With this request he knelt down, and Conrad baptized him. . . . Then the others turned to Georg in their turn, asking him to baptize them, which he did.⁶

The documented first baptisms in Zurich rendered obsolete the hoary tale of all "Anabaptism" originating in Saxony with the Zwickau Prophets and Thomas Müntzer, but it raised significant new issues:

- Given that the first baptizers had been followers of Zwingli, what caused the rupture between them?
- When did the "radical party" emerge, and what was the nature and origin of the issues that motivated the radicals?
- Did Swiss Anabaptism begin with aspirations of popular reform, arriving at an eventual separatism only after the failure of the Peasants' War, or was Swiss Anabaptist separatism inherent in its earliest beginnings?
- How did early Swiss Anabaptism evolve, as political repression set in?

In seeking to provide answers to these questions, we will examine first the prehistory of Swiss Anabaptism, then look in detail at the first year in the life of the Swiss baptizing movement (1525), concluding with an examination of the evolution and spread of Swiss Anabaptism from 1525 to 1530 in neighboring Swiss and South German territories.

I. THE PREHISTORY OF SWISS ANABAPTISM: BEGINNINGS IN ZURICH

EARLY RADICAL ZWINGLIANISM TO THE FIRST ZURICH DISPUTATION, JANUARY 1523

Huldrych Zwingli assumed the office of people's priest in Zurich in January, 1519; by 1522, he had accepted the principle that Scripture alone

(Scottdale, PA: Mennonite Publishing House, 1966), 20.

6. *The Chronicle of the Hutterian Brethren, Known as Das grosse Geschichtbuch der Hutterischen Brüder* (Rifton, N.Y. : Plough Pub. House, 1987), 45.

was the ultimate authority for Christian doctrine and life.⁷ The Reformation principle of *sola scriptura* was the bedrock on which the Zurich reformation was built; it was on this same foundation that the Anabaptist movement rested when it emerged in Zurich in 1525.

Zwingli's adherence to the scriptural principle led him to strong critiques of non-reformed clergy as well as of traditional beliefs. Zwingli's public sermons were the medium through which he reached the masses with his reforming ideas; he preached also on Fridays to the crowds gathered for market day in Zurich. In his sermons Zwingli targeted traditional practices such as enforced fasts, clerical celibacy and the misuse of tithe and interest income. There was no separating religious from social or political issues in Zurich: an appeal to scriptural authority could not avoid calling into question the social and political structures of authority that had long been sanctioned by the church and in which church institutions themselves were implicated.

The study of Scripture and ancient languages was important to Zwingli from the time of his arrival in Zurich; he initially pursued Greek studies with a learned circle of friends.⁸ By the fall of 1520 Conrad Grebel was part of the group, which had expanded its interests to the study of Hebrew; Felix Mantz and Simon Stumpf joined later.⁹ For Zwingli, such studies informed his regular scriptural preaching activity; for others, like the layman Conrad Grebel, scriptural and linguistic studies fueled a keen interest in church reform.

Zwingli believed strongly that the power of Scripture should be accessible to all, and soon craftsmen and peasants were also meeting in Zurich to study and discuss Scripture, in the vernacular. The best-known such circle emerged sometime in 1522, drawn to the bookseller Andreas Castelberger.¹⁰ Numbered among the students were Heini Aberli (a baker), Hans Ockenfuss (a tailor), Wolf Ininger (a cabinetmaker), Claus Hottinger (a salt salesman) and Lorenz Hochrütiner (a weaver). When

7. Ulrich Gäßler, *Huldrych Zwingli: His Life and Work*, trans. Ruth C. L. Gritsch (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 45-49.

8. See the "excursus" in Strübind, *Eifriger*, 131-147.

9. Strübind, *Eifriger*, 135-136.

10. Documentation on the Castelberger group is scanty. It is first mentioned in May 1522. The court record of testimonies of participants is undated, but probably dates from midsummer, 1523. See Leland Harder, ed. *The Sources of Swiss Anabaptism* (Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1985), 647, n. 2. See the excellent summary by Werner Packull, "The Origins of Swiss Anabaptism in the Context of the Reformation of the Common Man," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 3 (1985), 38-41. Andrea Strübind argues for continuity between the elitist Zurich study group and the more humble lay "reading groups."—Strübind, *Eifriger*, 141. See also J. F. Gerhard Goeters, "Die Vorgeschichte des Täuferiums in Zurich," in ed. L. Abramowski and J. F. G. Goeters, *Studien zur Geschichte und Theologie der Reformation. Festschrift für Ernst Bizer* (Neukirch: Neukirchener Verlag, 1969), 254-255.

Hochrütiner was later exiled from Zurich to his native St. Gallen he joined the Bible study group that had formed in that city around the layman Johannes Kessler. In spite of the differences in education and approach, there seems to have been no evident difference between the teaching of Castelberger and that of Zwingli, at least as one witness remembered it.¹¹

As events unfolded in Zurich, onetime members of the learned society—Conrad Grebel, Felix Mantz and Simon Stumpf—came to support the lay movement directly. The importance of grassroots biblical study cannot be overemphasized in describing the emergence of the Anabaptist movement in Zurich, which came to rely not simply on *sola scriptura*, but more fundamentally, on the premise that the truths of Scripture were accessible and comprehensible to lay readers and hearers of the Word who had only rudimentary educations.¹² The popular lay reading and interpretation of Scripture, however, carried the seeds of later division.

Zwingli's attacks on traditional pious practices led to the defiant "Wurstessen"—the ceremonial eating of two sausages by about a dozen people on March 9, 1522, in contravention of the Lenten fast. Zwingli was present at Froschauer's house for the fateful gathering, but he did not partake. He subsequently defended the action from the pulpit and in print, making the point that according to Scripture salvation did not depend on rules concerning food.

Some historians have claimed that the outlines of a proto-Anabaptist "radical party" are visible already at the Lenten protest¹³—given that some of the protesters were members of Andreas Castelberger's lay Bible study group and that four or five of the participants subsequently followed a radical path that led to Anabaptism.¹⁴ There is, however, no convincing evidence of a rupture between Zwingli and a "radical party" as early as March 1522.¹⁵ Even if, as seems unlikely, Zwingli was "surprised" by the sausage protest, he openly supported the action; in fact his fellow preacher, Leo Jud, was one of the sausage-eaters and

11. Hans of Wyl, one of the members of Castelberger's group, claimed that "Andreas's teaching agreed with Master Huldrych's to a tittle."—Harder, *Sources*, 206.

12. Goeters, "Vorgeschichte," 255; also Arnold Snyder, "Word and Power in Reformation Zurich," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 81 (1990), 263-285, esp. 266-271.

13. Robert C. Walton, *Zwingli's Theocracy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), 59-62; 69. This thesis was first proposed in 1895 by R. Staehelin, as noted by Strübind, *Eifriger*, 122, n. 6.

14. Strübind, *Eifriger*, 126.

15. In agreement with Stayer, "Anfänge," 27, n. 25, and Andrea Strübind, *Eifriger*, 128.

remained in the forefront of radical agitation. Zwingli's vigorous preaching against traditional church practices was having a disruptive effect, but far from decrying such provocation, Zwingli utilized the unrest as a catalyst for reform.

The bishop of Constance sent representatives to confer with city clergy and the city council. Zwingli managed to be present in the meeting with the bishop's representatives before the large council, and defended his position with biblical and theological arguments. The Zurich city council did promulgate a decree that condemned the violation of church fasts, but emphasized that this decision was only a temporary measure. The council requested a "definitive opinion" from the bishop. Ulrich Gäßler has noted that with this response the city council took responsibility for church reform in Zurich's territories. Furthermore, the council recognized Zwingli as an authoritative theological spokesman, on a par with the bishop's delegates, and required the bishop to bear the burden of proof for the church practice in question.¹⁶

The tableau for a complex reforming dance in Zurich thus begins to take shape in the spring of 1522: the city council would direct the orchestra and dictate the tune and tempo of change, cautiously measuring the political effects relative to other Swiss Confederates and foreign powers (especially Austria), as well as the potential for conflict at home. Zwingli and reform-minded clergy had to move carefully: they had qualified support from the council for the reform direction they preached from their pulpits, but any concrete changes to traditional church practices would provoke opposition from the old believers inside Zurich and within its city council, as well as outside the city, in the Swiss Confederation and from the bishop. In a pattern that would become increasingly clear, the city council reserved the right to orchestrate changes in actual church practice, while tentatively (at first) granting Zwingli and reform-minded preachers the right to preach "biblical truth"—a right that would be confirmed following the first Zurich disputation in January 1523.

The sausage-eating episode made it clear that some of Zwingli's followers seemed eager and willing to translate the preached reform into an active changing of church structures by deliberate provocation.¹⁷ A familiar cast of agitating characters appears again—specifically Heini Aberli, Claus Hottinger, Bartlime Pur and Conrad Grebel¹⁸—but there is

16. Gäßler, *Zwingli*, 55.

17. See Heinold Fast, "Reformation durch Provokation," in Goertz, *Umstrittenes Täufertum*, 79-110.

18. Three of these four had been agitating for reform in May. Heini Aberli, Claus

no evidence that Zwingli was displeased with their tactics.¹⁹ Zwingli himself utilized the same disruptive strategy at this time, interrupting the sermon of Franz Lambert, a Franciscan friar who was preaching in favor of the intercession of the saints at the Fraumünster. Zwingli shouted out, "Brother, this is where you err!" which caused quite an uproar.²⁰ In the summer of 1522, Zwingli was still conceiving of a broad reform movement in which all pious people would be directed into the same path of reform, energized by God's Spirit and grounded in Scripture.²¹ Conrad Grebel and his lay associates still fit comfortably within Zwingli's reform vision and strategy of continuing pressure on the clergy and practices of the old believers.²²

The first Zurich disputation, held on January 29, 1523, marks an important moment in Zurich's reformation. The meeting was called by the city council ostensibly to examine which faction among the preachers had been preaching the truth, according to Scripture. The council would render a decision after hearing the arguments, and it even invited the bishop of Constance to attend. Huldrych Zwingli prepared a document of sixty-seven points, outlining the central themes of his biblical preaching; the bishop decided to send a delegation, led by Johannes Fabri. The episcopal delegates were only supposed to protest the legality of the proceeding.

In spite of those instructions, Fabri found himself involved in a debate concerning authority before a throng of 600 people. Against Fabri's contention that only a duly constituted church council has authority in doctrinal matters, Zwingli defended the Zurich assembly as a congregation that had the right to judge, on the basis of Scripture. When

Hottinger and most probably Conrad Grebel planned a mass "welcome home" party for Zwingli's return from the baths, likely as a public demonstration of support for Zwingli. The council got wind of it and brought it to a halt. See Harder, *Sources*, 166-171 for a discussion and the relevant document; also Harder, *Sources*, 172-177 for two central documents.

19. Against Walton's conclusion in *Theocracy*, 62-65, that a "radical party" was already in action.

20. Gäßler, *Zwingli*, 56; Harder, *Sources*, 175.

21. In the *Apologeticus Archeteles*, Zwingli's published response to the bishop of Constance (Aug. 1522), he wrote, "It is not the function of one or two to expound passages of Scripture, but of all who believe in Christ."—Harder, *Sources*, 185. A month later, in *Of the Clarity and Certainty of the Word of God*, Zwingli maintained that the simple are more disposed to receive God's truth than are the so-called wise. George W. Bromiley, trans. and ed., *Zwingli and Bullinger* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1953), 80-81; 89 [*Huldreich Zwinglis sämtliche Werke*, 14 vols., *Corpus Reformatorum* (Leipzig, Berlin, Zurich, 1905-), 1: 367-368; 377-378. Hereafter cited as Z].

22. Zwingli's *Apologeticus Archeteles* concluded with a bombastic postscript written by Conrad Grebel.—Harder, *Sources*, 180-186.

Fabri argued that disputation concerning theological matters belonged in the universities "where learned judges sit," Zwingli answered that the only judge needed was Scripture itself.²³ The city council responded by proclaiming that since Zwingli had not been shown to have been teaching heretical things, he should continue as before "to proclaim the holy gospel." Furthermore, all "people's priests, curates, and preachers in their city and regions shall undertake and preach nothing but what can be proved by the holy gospel and the pure divine Scriptures."²⁴ With this proclamation, and with Zwingli's evident invitation to all diligent and humble readers to interpret Scripture, the Reformation path was affirmed and accelerated in Zurich and the surrounding countryside.

GROWING UNREST: FROM THE FIRST DISPUTATION TO THE SECOND, OCTOBER, 1523

Public provocation and disruptive activity continued following the first disputation, in both the city and the countryside, and then began to escalate. A colleague of Zwingli, Leo Jud, was particularly active, disrupting worship services in the Oetenbach cloister and interrupting the sermon of an Augustinian preacher. Several priests now married publicly—Zwingli not yet among them, although his preaching challenged the biblical legitimacy of clerical celibacy and he continued to be strongly critical of priests of the old church.²⁵

In the neighboring villages, the tithe and the establishment of pastors who would "preach the gospel" became reform issues, bringing together concern for biblical preaching with the political and juridical issues of who was responsible for the selection, oversight and payment of local pastors. Tithes had come to provide "livings" for absentee prebendaries, often with an inadequate amount left over for the pastoral care of local parishioners. The question of tithe payment thus exposed a potentially

23. Zwingli noted "every diligent reader, in so far as he approaches with humble heart, will decide by means of the Scriptures, taught by the Spirit of God, until he attains the truth." Samuel M. Jackson, trans. and ed., *Selected Works of Huldreich Zwingli* (Philadelphia: Heidelberg Press, 1901), 106.—Z 1: 561; Harder, *Sources*, 202. See also Zwingli's comments in his *Exposition and Basis of the Conclusions or Articles*, esp. in articles 15 and 32.—Z, 2: 74-76, 286-291. In the latter, Zwingli chides the bishop, noting that God's teaching has often come through "a poor woman or through unlearned, simple men." Edward J. Furcha, trans. and ed., *Selected Writings of Huldreich Zwingli*, vol. 1 (Allison Park, Pa.: Pickwick Publications, 1984), 236.—Z 2: 289.

24. As translated in Harder, *Sources*, 198.

25. Gäßler, *Zwingli*, 71-72. In just one of Zwingli's writings from 1523, the Catholic clergy were called "windbags," "distorters of the Word of God," "bellies," "unbelievers," "godless," "false priests" and "dishonest babblers."—"Von göttlicher und menschlicher Gerechtigkeit," in: Z 2:471-525. English translation, "Divine and Human Righteousness" in Wayne Pipkin, ed. and trans., *Selected Writings of Huldreich Zwingli*, vol. 2 (Allison Park, Pa.: Pickwick Publications, 1984), 1-41.

explosive complex of problems—social, ecclesiological, economic, juridical and ethical—all of which grew out of a biblical critique of the clergy, their manner of appointment and the traditional church practices they continued to perform.²⁶

By the spring and summer of 1523 the Zurich council had been forced to decide several cases involving tithe unrest and the election of evangelical pastors by local rural parishes.

Simon Stumpf, a pastor at Höngg who was connected with the humanist circle, preached openly in the summer of 1522 that the tithe did not need to be paid. This led at least one parishioner to withhold payment, for which he was imprisoned and fined by the Zurich council.²⁷ During Easter week in 1523, the Abbot of Wettingen complained to the Zurich city council that parishioners in the village of Kloten were demanding that he, as patron lord of the village church, provide them with a priest who would preach the Gospel. Two weeks later the villagers themselves brought their own complaint to Zurich, demanding that the Abbot use tithe income to pay a priest to preach “the gospel and godly scripture.” Zurich decreed that in this case an assistant should be hired to preach the Gospel, and that the assistant be supported by the Abbot.²⁸

The case of Wilhelm Reublin deserves particular attention, given his importance to the later development of Anabaptism. Stripped of his pastoral post at St. Alban’s cathedral in Basel for reformed activity, and expelled from the city in June 1522, Reublin came to reside in the village of Witikon. In a surprisingly bold move, the parishioners of the church of Witikon decided to call Reublin as their pastor in December, 1522. This took place without the permission of the chapter of the Zurich Great Minster, who collected the tithe from the parish and whose right it was to make pastoral appointments there. The matter was referred to the

26. Details in Christian Dietrich, *Die Stadt Zurich und ihre Landgemeinden Während der Bauernunruhen von 1489 bis 1525*, (Frankfurt; Bern; New York: Peter Lang, 1985). See also Peter Kamber, “Die Reformation auf der Zürcher Landschaft am Beispiel des Dorfes Marthalen. Fallstudie zur Struktur bäuerlicher Reformation,” in Peter Blickle, ed., *Zugänge zur bäuerlichen Reformation* (Zurich: Chronos, 1987), 85-125; Kurt Maeder, “Die Bedeutung der Landschaft für den Verlauf des reformatorischen Prozesses in Zurich (1522-1532),” in Bernd Moeller, ed., *Stadt und Kirche im 16. Jahrhundert* (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1978), 91-98.

27. Goeters, “Vorgeschichte,” 243-244; 246. Also Stayer, “Anfänge,” 29-30.

28. Peter Blickle, *Communal Reformation: The Quest for Salvation in Sixteenth-Century Germany*, trans. Thomas Dunlap (Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1992), 14-15. Documentation on the cases of Kloten and Witikon (Mar.-May, 1523) in Emil Egli, *Aktensammlung zur Geschichte der Zürcher Reformation* (Zurich, 1879), #351, 354, 359, 360. See also the extended treatment of events in the village of Marthalen in Kamber, “Reformation auf der Zürcher Landschaft,” and Dietrich, “Stadt Zurich,” 160.

Zurich city council. In March of 1523 the council rendered a decision that allowed Reublin to remain as pastor in Witikon as long as the tithe continued to be paid to the Great Minster chapter, and Reublin was supported with funds raised by the parish for that purpose.²⁹

In June of 1523 the communities of Zollikon, Riesbach, Fällanden, Hirslanden, Unterstrass and Witikon made a formal request to the Zurich council to be excused from paying the tithe.³⁰ Reublin, along with attacking the wealthy in general, had singled out the "stinking," high-living and immoral clergy for particular criticism. The council, for its part, decided immediately that the old tithe payments were to remain in place. The reorganization and beginnings of reform of the Great Minster chapter of September of 1523 can be seen as a partial response to the criticism of clerical high living and immorality.³¹

Sometime in 1523, the Zurich council collected testimony concerning Castleberger's study group.³² According to witnesses, Castleberger taught that anyone who lived by usury, with a benefice or such like, or who gathered more earthly goods than he needed, was certainly no better than a poor person who stole to feed his hungry children. Castleberger clarified that he did not mean that the usurer should be led to the gallows, but only that such a one was no better than a common thief.³³ The demand for the "pure gospel" had raised expectations for reform to high levels, well beyond the purely "religious" concern that biblical truth be proclaimed for its own sake.

Zwingli had written in 1520 (in Latin only) that the tithe "was not necessarily payable by divine law," and in a more public forum, the "Exposition of the Sixty-Seven Articles," he had hinted that he would oppose the tithe system that was in place at the time.³⁴ But contained in

29. Goeters, "Vorgeschichte," 247; 255-256. See also James Stayer, "Reublin and Bröli: The Revolutionary Beginnings of Swiss Anabaptism," in Marc Lienhard, ed., *The Origins and Characteristics of Anabaptism* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1977), 83-102; also James M. Stayer, "Wilhelm Reublin: A Picaresque Journey Through Early Anabaptism," in Hans-Jürgen Goertz, ed., *Profiles of Radical Reformers* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1982), 107-117.

30. Egli, *Aktensammlung*, #368; Dietrich, "Stadt Zurich," 164-165; Stayer, "Anfänge," 30.

31. The council decreed that "die Gemeinden den Zehnten wie von alterher . . . geben sollen."—Egli, *Aktensammlung*, #368. On the Chapter reform, see Egli, *Aktensammlung*, #426 (Sept. 29, 1523).

32. *Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer in der Schweiz*, I: Zurich, Leonhard von Muralt and Walter Schmid, eds. (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1952) [hereafter QGTS, I], #397, 385-386. Translation of a key descriptive document in Harder, *Sources*, 204-6.

33. QGTS, I, #397, 386. See QGTS, I, #398, 387-388 for corroborating testimonies.

34. George R. Potter, *Zwingli* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 162; Gähler, *Zwingli*, 50-51. See also "Auslegen und Grunde des Schlussreden," Z, 2:14-457. "Concerning tithes, imposed by sanctuaries or churches, I intend to respond, whether one is bound to pay these *on the basis of divine or human rights*."—Z 2:454-455; emphasis mine. Translation from "Exposition and Basis of the Conclusions or Articles Published by H.

his early writings—and arguing against a dramatic “turn” in Zwingli’s basic approach—were pointers to the theological solution he would soon adopt. Only days following the council’s first decree ordering continued payment of tithes,³⁵ Zwingli published *On Divine and Human Justice*, in which he set the theological and practical direction for future relationships between local parishes, the clergy and the government of Zurich.

In the matter of tithes, Zwingli now argued on the basis of Romans 13 that “every man is obligated to pay [the clerical tithes] as long as the government generally orders it.” Whoever would refuse to pay such a tithe “would be resisting the government; and he who resists the government resists God.” Although the divine Word was the highest authority, and governments could not act against divine commandments (Acts 5:29), there also were lower commandments over which God had established “the legitimate government.”³⁶ On the one hand, then, Zwingli maintained that obedience to God was primary (Acts 5:29). This was a key text for him in his struggle against the authority of the Catholic Church.³⁷ On the other hand, “Christian governments” had God-given authority in human matters (Romans 13), and the tithe was one such matter. With this key distinction—already suggested in his earlier writings on the tithe—Zwingli allowed the Zurich government power over the clergy in social, economic and political matters, while allowing himself space to criticize “un-Christian” or “tyrannical” governments that forbade evangelical preaching.³⁸ Zwingli’s interpretation of Romans 13 and Acts 5:29, while rooted in a desire to limit the power of the Catholic clergy in local affairs, also had the effect of extending the power of the Zurich government in church matters.

Zwingli’s public theological apology for Zurich’s centralization of power drove the thin edge of the wedge between him and his populist

Zwingli, Zurich, 29 January, 1523,” in Furcha, *Selected Writings of Zwingli*, vol. 1: *In Defense of the Reformed Faith*, 371.

35. June 22, 1523. See Harder, *Sources*, 208-10 for an English translation of the document found in Egli, *Aktensammlung*, #368.

36. “Von göttlicher und menschlicher Gerechtigkeit,” Z, 2: 471-525. Translation from Harder, *Sources*, 213; 218.

37. “From this principle Zwingli never wavered: if you were certain that a government order was contrary to God’s word then disobedience was necessary, even if this carried the death penalty.”—Potter, *Zwingli*, 119. Potter notes Zwingli’s constant reference to Acts 5:29 in this connection, Potter, *Zwingli*, 199, n. 3.

38. Dietrich, “Stadt Zurich,” 167. Zwingli had long hinted at this solution. See, for example, the argumentation in articles 35-38 in the “Auslegen und Gründe,” Z 2: 304-323; translation in Furcha, “Exposition,” 247-262.

followers, and marked the beginning of a serious rift in the Zurich reforming front. To take the example of Conrad Grebel, following the council's decision on tithes and Zwingli's exposition in *On Divine and Human Justice*, Grebel wrote to Vadian, reporting that "the people of our world of Zurich are doing everything tyrannically and like the Turk in this matter of the tithe." His disillusionment with Zwingli is palpable.³⁹

A public rupture was looming between the legitimist and centralizing Zurich reform community, on the one hand, and the popular, grassroots and locally-oriented reform communities on the other. Unruly acts of iconoclasm helped the process along.⁴⁰ The first impetus for iconoclasm came not from Zwingli and his pulpit in Zurich, but from Wilhelm Reublin, in the village of Witikon.⁴¹ By July 1523, Leo Jud was discussing the matter; by September, some spectacular acts of iconoclasm had taken place. The council punished the most obvious offenders, but eventually was forced to call a disputation to settle the matter of images and the Mass. At this disputation it became clear that a rupture between Zwingli and his more radical followers was well underway.

The second Zurich disputation was held October 26-28, 1523, to debate the biblical merits of images and the Mass; it resulted in a mixed victory for Zwingli's reforming efforts.⁴² On the one hand, the council affirmed the biblical correctness of Zwingli's understanding concerning images and the Mass, but on the other hand, the council reserved the right to institute concrete reforms at a pace that it deemed best.⁴³ Zwingli was in clear agreement with this policy. Repeatedly throughout the disputation he voiced his concern that "uproar" be avoided, and he publicly supported the council's authority to decide matters of implementation. His position was a practical application of his theological judgment concerning divine and human justice.

On the second day of the disputation, when Conrad Grebel called for the outright abolition of the "abomination" of the Mass, Zwingli replied: "Milords will discern how the mass should henceforth be properly observed." Simon Stumpf replied, "Master Huldrych! You have no

39. Ibid., 220.

40. See Martin Haas, *Huldrych Zwingli und seine Zeit: Leben und Werk der Zürcher Reformators* (Zurich: Zwingli Verlag, 1969), 125-133; Dietrich, "Stadt Zurich," 172ff.; Potter, *Zwingli*, 129-131.

41. Goeters, "Vorgeschichte," 261 comments that the question of images was "not a particularly Zwinglian theme," and suggests it had its origins with Karlstadt's writings on the matter.

42. Relevant documents translated in Harder, *Sources*, 234-243.

43. The city council's mandate, published after the disputation ended, decreed concerning the mass that "it shall remain as it is now," and concerning images, that no one was to add or remove images, unless one was removing one's own donated image. In any case, all "disorderliness" was to be avoided.

authority to place the decision in Milords' hands, for the decision is already made: the Spirit of God decides. If therefore Milords were to discern or decide anything that is contrary to God's decision, I will ask Christ for his Spirit and will teach and act against it." To this Zwingli answered with the carefully qualified distinction:

That is right. I shall also preach and act against it if they decide otherwise. I do not give the decision into their hands. They shall also certainly not decide about God's Word. . . . This convocation is not being held so that they might decide about that, but to ascertain and learn from the Scripture whether or not the mass is a sacrifice. Then they will counsel together as to the most appropriate way for this to be done without an uproar. . . .⁴⁴

According to Zwingli's answer, nothing had been conceded regarding divine truth; he simply was deferring to the divinely-instituted governmental authority in the "human" matter of the pace of institutional reform. Zwingli's public support for a centralized, government-led reform marked a key divisive moment within the reform movement, separating the populist reforming group from the more conservative, elitist movement led by Zwingli and controlled by the council. At the heart of the division lay two contrasting interpretations of how the "words of Scripture" were to be read, understood and applied in the concrete matters of church reform.

The second Zurich disputation featured a supporting cast of reform-minded men from nearby cities: Sebastian Hofmeister of Schaffhausen, who was chairman of the proceedings; Vadian from St. Gallen; Christoph Schappeler from Memmingen; and Balthasar Hubmaier of Waldshut. Their participation and support demonstrated the wider reach of Zurich's reformation. Their continued support for Zwingli's approach, as opposed to the radical insistence on immediate biblical reform, could not yet be taken for granted, however, as events were to show.

THE REFORMATION IN ZURICH'S WIDER SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

After the first disputation of January 1523, Zurich became the focal point of evangelical reform for the area. Zwingli had hopes of extending Zurich's reforms not only to all of the Swiss Confederacy, but even well beyond Switzerland. To that end he cultivated personal links with reform-minded people in the surrounding cities and towns.

44. Harder, *Sources*, 242.

Waldshut

The small city of Waldshut on the banks of the Rhine had approximately 1,000 inhabitants in the early sixteenth century. It was part of the Habsburg hereditary lands that were administered from Ensisheim in Alsace; as such, it was expected to maintain the "old religion" in the disputes that had arisen.⁴⁵ Waldshut, however, was located just thirty miles from Basel, Schaffhausen and Zurich, placing it in the immediate vicinity of Swiss reforming currents. As it moved toward a reformed stance in 1523 under the leadership of Balthasar Hubmaier, Waldshut placed itself in political jeopardy: it was "turning Swiss" in the face of Austrian protests and threats of military reprisals.

Balthasar Hubmaier had accepted the post of priest in the upper parish of Waldshut in 1521; he was appointed by the city council. Hubmaier's letters from 1521 to 1522 reveal him to be an "evangelical humanist" at this time, reading reforming literature, studying Scripture and cultivating contacts with humanists in Basel and other places. Hubmaier's reformation conversion seems to have taken place in Regensberg in the winter of 1523, during a brief absence from Waldshut. By March of that year he was back in Waldshut, preaching in an evangelical and anti-Catholic way.⁴⁶

Upon his return to Waldshut, Hubmaier immediately began cultivating relationships with reform-minded colleagues, above all in Switzerland. He had friendly contacts with sympathizers in Schaffhausen, including Sebastian Hofmeister. In May of 1523 he traveled to St. Gallen where he met with the leading reformer of that city, the doctor and humanist Vadian, and promoted reforming ideas with public preaching; he continued on to Zurich, where he met Huldrych Zwingli and had a fateful conversation with him that included a discussion of infant baptism.⁴⁷ According to both of their recollections, Zwingli at that time spoke against infant baptism.⁴⁸ In September, Hubmaier was back in Swiss territory, in Appenzell near St. Gallen, where he also preached, and shortly thereafter (October 26-28), he participated in the second Zurich disputation on images and the Mass.⁴⁹

45. Torsten Bergsten, *Balthasar Hubmaier, Anabaptist Theologian and Martyr*, trans. I. J. Barnes and W. R. Estep, ed. W. R. Estep (Valley Forge, Pa.: Judson Press, 1978), 68.

46. Bergsten, *Hubmaier*, 73-78.

47. It is likely that it was Hubmaier who raised questions about infant baptism while in St. Gallen; the issue was on his mind.

48. Bergsten, *Hubmaier*, 80-81.

49. According to Ludwig Hätscher, Hubmaier spoke five times during the disputation, three times at length. He spoke against the un-scriptural errors and abuses that had crept into the church.—*Ibid.*, 83.

Hubmaier was solidly in the reformed camp by the early fall of 1523, but the reform of Waldshut was just beginning. In December of that year the Austrian authorities charged that Hubmaier had joined the "Lutheran sect." Waldshut defied the Austrians and defended its preacher, symbolized by the public breaking of the New Year's fast by both Hubmaier and Waldshut's mayor on January 4, 1524—an act that seemed to mirror Zurich's own "Wurstessen" that had begun that city's public reforming process in 1522.⁵⁰ Waldshut's reform got well underway in 1524 with the apparent support of the majority of citizens and the city council. Hubmaier's Eighteen Theses (March 1524) argued on the basis of a strict application of the scriptural principle that the Mass was a memorial, not a sacrifice, and that purgatory and pilgrimages were to be rejected. Apart from a hint pointing to adult baptism, the Eighteen Theses closely reflected Zwingli's earlier Sixty-Seven Articles.⁵¹

There were many formative influences on Hubmaier as he moved to a reforming position, including Erasmus, Karlstadt and Luther, but certainly Huldrych Zwingli was the reformer who most influenced Hubmaier's mature reformed position. There is no evidence that Hubmaier was radically impatient at the second disputation. In fact, Hubmaier's reforming strategy in Waldshut reflected Zwingli's very closely, although Hubmaier seems to have had more direct influence over the small council in Waldshut than did Zwingli in Zurich.⁵² Certainly, until the rupture over baptism occurred, Hubmaier's reformation of Waldshut could be seen as an extension and mirror image of Zwingli's reformation of Zurich, in its general outlines; Zurich provided what political support it could afford to its religious ally.

Nevertheless, there were two indications of future problems already in October 1523: Hubmaier's strict scriptural principle (Matthew 15:13: "All that has not been planted by God should be uprooted")—which stood closer to Karlstadt and the Grebel group than it did to Zwingli's flexible distinction between divine and human justice—and Hubmaier's growing conviction that the practice of infant baptism had not been "planted by God." It was the issue of infant baptism—as an instance of biblical disobedience—that eventually sealed a religious break between

50. *Ibid.*, 96-97.

51. Hubmaier's eighth thesis reads: "Since every Christian believes and is baptized for himself, every one should see and should judge by Scripture, whether he is being rightly fed and watered by his shepherd."—H. Wayne Pipkin and John H. Yoder, ed. and trans. *Balthasar Hubmaier: Theologian of Anabaptism* (Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1989), 33.

52. Bergsten, *Hubmaier*, 87.

Hubmaier and Zwingli—as well as a political break between Zurich and Waldshut.

Schaffhausen

The city and canton of Schaffhausen, formerly a Habsburg territory, had bought its freedom in 1418 to become an “associate” of the Confederation in 1454.⁵³ Although it did not fully embrace evangelical reform until 1529, by mid-1524 it was voting in support of Zurich and its reform measures at the Confederate Diets. Caught between pro-Catholic and pro-Evangelical forces in the 1520s, Schaffhausen pursued a political policy in the Confederacy that advanced reform (in support of Zurich and Appenzell), but in practical matters protected both evangelical and old believers in the city.⁵⁴ Like Zurich, Schaffhausen had a Great Council that was more friendly to reform than its Small Council, hence its vacillations in policy in 1525.

Sebastian Hofmeister was the leading reformer in the city. Hofmeister had been born in Schaffhausen, received a doctorate in theology from the University of Paris in 1519 and pastored for brief periods in Constance and Luzern. In 1520 he came under Zwingli’s influence, and when Hofmeister became pastor in Schaffhausen in 1522 he worked successfully for reform, following Zwingli’s example. In October 1523 he presided over the second Zurich disputation and renewed his acquaintance with Balthasar Hubmaier, who later called Hofmeister his “special friend.”⁵⁵ He also was on friendly terms with Conrad Grebel. In September and October 1524, when Waldshut came under intense Austrian pressure, Hubmaier took advantage of his friendship with Hofmeister, and sought temporary refuge in neighboring Schaffhausen. As the division in the reforming ranks became more and more defined following the second disputation, Schaffhausen’s support and Hofmeister’s endorsement were eagerly sought by all parties.

St. Gallen

At the time of the Reformation, St. Gallen was a city of about 4,000 residents. The city had grown up around the large and powerful Benedictine monastery of St. Gallen.⁵⁶ Continuing tension took on overtly religious overtones when the Catholic order of things was challenged by

53. Bruce Gordon, *The Swiss Reformation* (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press., 2002), 23.

54. *Ibid.*, 125.

55. *Ibid.*, 127-128.

56. Details of the process in Werner Näf, *Vadian und seine Stadt St. Gallen*, vol. 1 (St. Gallen: Fehr’sche Buchhandlung, 1944), 1:21-63. See also Potter, *Zwingli*, 271-274.

reforming ideas in the 1520s, but never far behind the religious rhetoric lay the longstanding political struggle between "Stift und Stadt," monastery and city.⁵⁷ St. Gallen's merchants, craftsmen and weavers had strong political and economic links with the more powerful Zurich.⁵⁸ Once Zwingli and Zurich spearheaded the Reformation challenge in the Swiss territories, the abbot sought the support of Schwyz and Luzern.⁵⁹

There were significant differences in religious leadership between Zurich and St. Gallen: the latter had no Huldrych Zwingli dominating its early reform movement from the pulpit. Instead, reform in St. Gallen was spearheaded by a group of lay leaders who exercised political power, foremost among them Joachim von Watt (or Vadian), humanist scholar and teacher, friend of Zwingli, brother-in-law to Conrad Grebel, councillor and soon to become burgomaster of St. Gallen (1526-1532).⁶⁰ Finally, of St. Gallen's three churches, the Cloister church in the south (the "Münster") and St. Mangen church in the north were both staffed directly by the abbot. The clergy of these churches were not kindly disposed to the new teaching, nor would it be easy to dislodge the abbot's hereditary patronage rights. The church of St. Lawrence, located in the center of the city between the other two, had become the city's parish church proper, administered and staffed by the city.⁶¹

It was from the St. Lawrence parish that one might have expected reforming ideas to flow, but the appointed preacher, Benedict Burgauer, was a reluctant reformer who never quite emerged from the shadow of his former teacher, Vadian. His helper, Wolfgang Wetter, was neither imposing nor energetic.⁶² Thus the traditional channel of reforming

57. "Dass es nicht nur um Geistlich-Kirchliches, sondern wesentlich um Politisches ging, ist unverkennbar."—Werner Näf, *Vadian und seine Stadt St. Gallen*, vol. 2 (St. Gallen: Fehr'sche Buchhandlung, 1955), 2:51.

58. Emil Egli, *Die St. Galler Täufer* (Zurich: Schulthess, 1887), 5-6. St. Gallen did not have full confederate status, although its representatives were usually summoned to the Confederate Diets. In 1454 "the citizens of St. Gallen were accepted as perpetual confederates (*ewiger Eidgenossen*) by Zurich, Berne, Lucerne, Schwyz, Zug and Glarus."—Potter, *Zwingli*, 272.

59. Potter, *Zwingli*, 277.

60. The standard biographical study is the two-volume work by Werner Näf, already cited. See also Egli, *St. Galler Täufer*, 8-10; Harold S. Bender, "St. Gall," ME 4:401-2.

61. Näf, *Vadian*, 2:52.

62. Both pastors were installed in 1519. See Näf, *Vadian*, 2:129. Burgauer was only 25 years of age at the time of his appointment, and was patronizingly called the "pfaffelin," or "wee pastor." Burgauer held to a Lutheran understanding of the Supper, which resulted in his having to leave St. Gallen for Schaffhausen in 1528.—Egli, *St. Galler Täufer*, 11-12; also 12, nn. 2, 3, 4; *Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer in der Schweiz*, II: Ostschweiz, ed. Heinold Fast (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1973) [hereafter QGTS, II], #403, n. 1, 330. Emil Egli diplomatically said of Wetter that he was "not so intellectual or outstanding a man that

communication, preaching from the pulpits, was not a live option for those interested in promoting evangelical reform ideas among the populace of St. Gallen, even though one of the city's central churches was under the control of the city council.⁶³ In St. Gallen, laypersons like Vadian and Johannes Kessler worked for reform mostly outside the formal church structure.

As in Zurich and many other cities, the reforming movement in St. Gallen began with a small, educated minority who initiated Bible reading and study groups, under Vadian's leadership. The initial model seems to have been that of a learned humanist society, but in St. Gallen as in Zurich, the "Bible reading" movement spread quickly into the popular sectors.⁶⁴ The earliest reported public Bible reading activity in St. Gallen took place in 1523 by Balthasar Hubmaier, when he came on a visit to St. Gallen from Waldshut. According to contemporary chroniclers, Hubmaier preached in the churches of St. Mangen and St. Lawrence, in the open air near the chapel of St. Leonhard and also "in rooms and taverns."⁶⁵ These extraordinary, extra-ecclesial Bible "readings" (*Lesungen*) were sanctioned by the city council and would be continued in St. Gallen by laymen, especially Johannes Kessler. In St. Gallen, as in Zurich, the Bible in the vernacular was the undisputed focus of attention in this early period.

Johannes Kessler was a St. Gallen native and layman who had studied at Wittenberg, taught by the likes of Martin Luther, Philip Melanchthon, John Bugenhagen and Andreas Karlstadt.⁶⁶ Soon after Kessler returned to St. Gallen in late 1523 he began private "readings" with a small lay group. In January of 1524, he reported that there was such good attendance that the meetings had to be moved to the tailors' guildhall.⁶⁷ When more weavers also wished to join the readings, the meetings were moved to their guildhall, which was larger. Kessler reported that the meetings continued, twice a week, all summer and into the fall of 1524; they soon met with opposition from the abbot and the Catholic-minded clergy.⁶⁸

This opposition was not surprising, for iconoclastic, antisacramental and anticlerical activities had begun to take place with regularity in and

another couldn't have bested him."—Egli, *St. Galler Täufer*, 11.

63. Egli, *St. Galler Täufer*, 5-8; also Näf, *Vadian*, 2:183-184.

64. Näf, *Vadian*, 2:133-180 for the development of ideas in Vadian's writings.

65. See the reports of the chroniclers Kessler and Sicher, *QGTS*, II, 590-591; 586; *QGTS*, I, 194.

66. *QGTS*, II, 340, n. 24.

67. *QGTS*, II, 591-593.

68. *QGTS*, II, 593-595.

around the city, led primarily by artisans involved in Kessler's core group. Barely one month after Kessler began his readings, Beda Miles, a lathe operator in whose home Kessler had begun his readings, was charged with libel as a result of a direct confrontation with the Catholic-minded priest of Appenzell, in the abbot's territory. Miles, who later gained fame as an Anabaptist agitator, had asked the priest where his fool's cap was. Furthermore, Miles had called the man a "soul slayer and a thief," and had criticized the "villainous mass."⁶⁹ Likewise, in March two men were jailed and fined in St. Gallen for having destroyed a vessel for holy water.⁷⁰ There were many other such cases, and by late March and early April in 1524, the city council was trying hard to prevent the widening of partisan religious divisions in the city.⁷¹

At the April 1 meeting of Confederacy representatives in Luzern a complaint was lodged against St. Gallen for allowing a banned pastor to preach in taverns. The response of St. Gallen's city council was to promulgate a pro-evangelical mandate on April 4, 1524, which decreed that all priests in the church of St. Lawrence were to "preach the bright and clear holy gospel."⁷² The mandate clarified that Catholic practices would continue as before, and that no one should create uproar, on pain of a fine of two pounds. The council was attempting to maintain some control over disruptive events, while still pushing forward with grassroots reforming proselytization, which was working to the city's advantage, against the political interests of the prince-abbot.

The strong grassroots "Bible reading" movement in St. Gallen, which carried the burden of reform in the early 1520s, would provide a natural home for the incubation of radical reforming ideas, just as it had in Zurich.

From the time of the first reforming mandate in January 1523, Zwingli and Zurich were in the vanguard of reform in the southern German/Swiss area. The sight of churchmen from St. Gallen, Schaffhausen, Waldshut and Memmingen sitting next to Zwingli at the second Zurich disputation, approving of the removal of images and outlining fundamental changes to the Mass, demonstrated how serious the situation had become. It was noted in particular by Austrian authorities and the bishop of Constance,⁷³ and did not escape the notice

69. QGTS, II, 333

70. QGTS, II, #406, 334-335.

71. QGTS, II, #408, 337-338.

72. QGTS, II, #409, 338-340.

73. These appear as documents 13 and 24 in Tom Scott and Bob Scribner, ed. and trans., *The German Peasants' War: A History in Documents* (Highlands, N. J.: Humanities Press,

of peasants who had longstanding grievances against their secular and spiritual overlords.

With the questioning of Zwingli's reforming strategy at the October 1523 disputation, however, and the growing disaffection of the Zurich radicals, questions arose about Zurich's dominance of reform in the area. A competing evangelical reform movement would call into question Zwingli's authority and Zurich's leadership. The tensions that had become visible within the Zurich reform movement were compounded by external political events. Tithes, interest and taxes were a particularly volatile "scriptural" lightning rod because they were traditional peasant grievances. These issues soon gained prominence in the Peasants' War, not so much in the immediate area surrounding Zurich, but certainly in nearby Stühlingen, the Klettgau, in Hallau, Tablat and Grüningen—in short, in the rural territories north, east and west of Zurich, around Waldshut, Schaffhausen and St. Gallen. At the same time a complicated diplomacy was at work, pitting Catholic cantons against pro-evangelical cantons in the Swiss Confederation, arraying the forces of the Holy Roman Empire, under Austrian leadership, against any and all evangelical reform.

Would Zwingli and Zurich lead a wider reformation? Doubts began to appear among the radicals in Zurich. Long before baptism became the next divisive issue, for both biblical and practical reasons, the radicals were extending their arguments against Zwingli into the surrounding area and gathering theological and practical support wherever they could. Conrad Grebel carried on an extensive correspondence with his brother-in-law, Vadian, and his friend, Burgauer, in St. Gallen; Grebel and his associates also attempted to contact Thomas Müntzer; Mantz and Castelberger cultivated contacts with Andreas Karlstadt; and Hubmaier and Hofmeister stayed in touch with events.

GROWING DIVISIONS IN ZURICH, TO THE FIRST BAPTISMS: OCTOBER 1523 TO JANUARY 1525

Sometime in 1523 (as nearly as can be established) some private discussions took place between Huldrych Zwingli and Leo Jud, on the one hand, and Simon Stumpf, Conrad Grebel and Felix Mantz on the other.⁷⁴ All historians writing on the subject agree that the content of these discussions is important to subsequent interpretations of Swiss Anabaptist origins. Unfortunately, the historical record is problematic,

1991), 100-101 and 120-121.

74. On the dating of the documentation and various discussions of the meaning of the contents, see Strübird, *Eifriger*, 166-175; John H. Yoder, *Anabaptism and Reformation in Switzerland* (Kitchener, Ont.: Pandora Press, 2004), 18-21.

since the documentation of the discussions comes only from Zwingli himself, and a key document was written in late July of 1527—some four years after the events.⁷⁵ Zwingli's reconstruction has to be read with some suspicion, given his retrospective need to defend the heavy-handed policies he supported, which by the time of his later testimony and writing had led to widespread imprisonment and the implementation of capital punishment for the “civil crime” of religious dissent.

Two things are noteworthy in Zwingli's recollections. First, he testified repeatedly that Stumpf and Grebel had come to him and Leo Jud, at different times, and argued for the establishment of a church that would contain only “upright, Christian people” who lived according to the Gospel and who would not be burdened by “interest or with other usury.”⁷⁶ The key point, Zwingli repeated in his testimony, was that the radicals wished to establish a “special” or separate (schismatic) church (*ein besonndere kilchenn*). Furthermore, Zwingli reported that Stumpf had once told him that priests should be “struck dead,” that interest and tithes did not need to be paid, and that both Grebel and Stumpf had told him “more than once” that “all things must be held in common.” To compound the matter, Zwingli reported that Felix Mantz had told him that no persons should be admitted into the church who “did not know that they were without sin,” and that he had heard reports that the Anabaptists were saying that there should be no government at all.⁷⁷

Zwingli's testimony here, which dates from November 1525, suggests an amazing range of civil crimes, including outright economic communism, the elimination of church taxes, the elimination of government, the killing of priests and the establishment of a separated church. What ties these things together is that they were all unquestioned acts of sedition in the eyes of the Zurich magistrates—the proposed “separated church” no less than the alleged proposal to kill priests. Nevertheless, it appears undeniable on Zwingli's testimony that sometime in 1523, the Zurich radicals were proposing to establish what

75. The most extensive comments come from *In catabaptistarum strophas elenchus* (July 31, 1527); key passages translated in Harder, *Sources*, 278-79; earlier testimonies date from the summer and fall of 1525, after Zwingli's struggles with the early Anabaptists. See discussion in Stayer, *Sword*, 98ff.

76. QGTS, I, 120-121.

77. QGTS, I, 121-122, *passim*. The same basic charges had been laid by Zwingli in May, 1525, in his writing on baptism, dedicated to the city of St Gallen. See relevant sections in Harder, *Sources*, 363-367. The basic charge is the breaking of Christian peace by the desire to establish a “special church” that was without sin; some were said to be teaching community of goods.

he classed as a "special church." But what, exactly, was the nature of this church?

Two years later Zwingli remembered more details. The radical leaders approached the Zurich preachers, Zwingli recalled, and

They begged us to make a declaration to this effect: Those who want to follow Christ should stand on our side. They promised also that our forces would be far superior to the army of unbelievers. Next the church of the devoted itself was to appoint its own council from the devout prayerfully.⁷⁸

If this testimony is to be trusted, the "special church" that Grebel, Stumpf and Mantz were proposing to establish was not a sectarian, separatist church that turned its back on society and the world, but rather a "church of the majority" that would precipitate a political crisis, take control of political power by appointing a new council and proceed to institute "biblical reforms" unhindered by political interference.

Harold Bender concluded that Zwingli was simply "slandering" the radicals in hindsight, and that his testimony was not to be trusted.⁷⁹ John H. Yoder, on the other hand, argued that Zwingli's testimony demonstrated that no definitive break had yet occurred between the radicals and Zwingli, since they continued to bring reform proposals to the man they still saw as the leader of Zurich's reform.⁸⁰ James Stayer accepted Zwingli's testimony, but distrusted Zwingli's description of radical separatism, maintaining that the proposal by the radicals would have resulted in a drastic change for the church institution, but not the establishment of a sect, separated from the world or the masses of people.⁸¹ Hans-Jürgen Goertz likewise emphasized that the proposals for the election of a council by the radicals, far from demonstrating a latent "sectarianism," demonstrated rather that they, like Zwingli, "wanted to reform entire communes."⁸² Andrea Strübind, on the other hand, argues that the radicals had been intent on establishing "a priesthood of all believers in an autonomous community" from the start, and that their proposal to Zwingli would have established just such a separated church.⁸³

It is clear that the radical Zwinglians in and around Zurich were pushing for the establishment of reformed church communities

78. Translation from Harder, *Sources*, 278.

79. Harold S. Bender, *Conrad Grebel* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1950), 105.

80. Yoder, *Anabaptism and Reformation*, 18-19.

81. Stayer, "Anfänge," 31; Stayer, *Sword*, 100-101.

82. Goertz, *Anabaptists*, 11. Also James Stayer, "The Swiss Brethren: An Exercise in Historical Definition," *Church History*, 47 (June, 1978), 183.

83. Strübind, *Eifriger*, 167; 170. See 166-75 for the detailed argumentation.

throughout 1523, and that they supported autonomous action on the part of these communities. Decisions regarding the tithe presented a serious setback for the local reform movement; further challenges followed, soon after the second disputation, when the government moved to control the timing of reform with regard to images and the Mass. The outbreak of iconoclasm in the fall of 1523 that saw the imprisonment and banishment of two prominent members of the radical group, Lorenz Hochrütiner and Claus Hottinger, contributed to the growing schism. What is less than clear is what ecclesiological model, if any, was guiding the radicals up to the end of 1523.

Zwingli's testimony will never resolve the matter to everyone's satisfaction. However, between the extreme (and mutually exclusive) interpretations of outright sectarian separation, on the one hand, or a full-scale territorial reformation on the other, lies a third, more plausible, explanation: the Zurich radicals were envisioning and proposing a church that *simultaneously* would be supported by political power, but would define its own reform autonomously, without political interference, as a "church of believers." When we take Zwingli at his word, the ecclesial model the radicals were proposing in 1523 fits exactly with the model established later by Hubmaier in Waldshut and Nikolsburg, by Reublin and Brötli in Hallau, by Krüsi in Tablat and proposed by Grebel for the peasants in Grüningen: a reformed, baptized, disciplined church of the majority, not coterminous with the citizenry of a territorial government, but nevertheless counting on support from the political authority. It turned out that this model was not possible in Zurich or in its dependencies, but in places where it was politically feasible, early Swiss Anabaptists would establish churches that fit this model. This ecclesial model, while "separatist" to the extent that it insisted on visible boundaries for membership (thus breaking the political-religious unity of city states), was by no means sectarian, apolitical or "world-denying," as the cases of Waldshut, Hallau, Tablat and Grüningen demonstrate.

By the end of 1523, the radical Zwinglians were clearly disillusioned with their former leader. When Conrad Grebel wrote to Vadian on December 18, 1523, his judgment was scathing. After lumping Zwingli in with other "tonsured monsters," Grebel wrote, "Whoever thinks, believes, or declares that Zwingli acts according to the duty of a shepherd thinks, believes, and declares wickedly."⁸⁴ For the populist reformers, anticlericalism had come full circle and was now directed

84. Harder, *Sources*, 276.

against their "evangelical" clergy who were supporting the "tyranny" of the Zurich city council against local church communities.

By the summer of 1524 it had come to the city council's attention that five parishioners of Witikon and Zollikon had refused to bring their newborn children for baptism. The three parishioners from Zollikon explained that they had been instructed "from the chancel" with the words of Scripture that their children were not to be baptized until they had come of age and could claim faith for themselves.⁸⁵ The instigator was Wilhelm Reublin, the former tithe-agitator, who was promptly imprisoned and questioned. The council demanded that all unbaptized children be brought for baptism immediately, on pain of a fine of one mark silver.⁸⁶ Shortly after Reublin's imprisonment a group of radicals, led by Conrad Grebel, wrote a letter to Thomas Müntzer that ruled out baptism for children. Rather, the letter concluded, "only believers should be baptized."⁸⁷ By September of 1524, the question of a proper biblical baptism had joined the matter of tithes, selection of pastors and their support, images and the Mass as a church reform issue for the radicals in both the countryside and the city of Zurich. Furthermore, the radicals were now in search of "kindred spirits" outside the Zurich area who were in agreement with their more radical approach to reform.⁸⁸

The question of baptism had not been fully resolved in the reform movement, even though by 1524 some attempts had been made to update the Catholic rite of infant baptism, primarily by rendering the liturgy into German.⁸⁹ But fundamental questions had been raised about the baptism of infants. In seeking the origins of the baptismal views expressed in the letter of the Zurich radicals to Thomas Müntzer⁹⁰ one looks first to Huldrych Zwingli. Zwingli had questioned the validity of infant baptism before 1523, as he came to acknowledge and as the later Anabaptists recalled. This followed quite naturally from Zwingli's sacramental theology, which saw the visible elements as "signs" with no sacramental mediating power. Since the waters of baptism no longer removed original sin, it would have been natural for Zwingli to think of

85. QGTS, I, #11, 10-11.

86. QGTS, I #12, 11. See James Stayer, "Reublen and Brötli", 83-102; also James Stayer, "Wilhelm Reublin," in Goertz, *Profiles of Radical Reformers*, 107-117.

87. Harder, *Sources*, 291. Translation of the letter in *ibid.*, 284-294. Those signing the letter were Conrad Grebel, Andreas Castelberger, Felix Mantz, Hans Ockenfuss, Bartlime Pur, Heini Aberli "and others." In the postscript the names of Hans Brötli and Hans Hujiuff are also noted.—*Ibid.*, 292; 294.

88. See Strübind's discussion, in *Eifriger*, 219-221.

89. Grebel and friends mention the "senseless, blasphemous form of infant baptism" of Luther, Leo Jud, Osiander and "the Strasbourgers."—Harder, *Sources*, 291.

90. For the following I am indebted to Strübind's thorough discussion of baptism in the Letter to Müntzer and its possible influences, in *Eifriger*, 255-279.

baptism as a sign of faith and to call for its use when children had come to an age of understanding. Both these points were made by Reublin in the winter and spring of 1524 and were repeated by the radicals in their letter to Müntzer.⁹¹ Thomas Müntzer had also written against infant baptism and hinted at adult baptism in his "Protestation" of 1523, a treatise that the radicals said they had read with great profit.⁹² Likewise Andreas Karlstadt had written that children are not to be baptized before the age of understanding.⁹³ There were many reformers who questioned or rejected infant baptism at one point or another. Balthasar Hubmaier was studying the issue already in 1523, and seems to have made the connection between belief and baptism by the spring of 1524.⁹⁴ Andrea Strübind argues that the closest parallel to the baptismal ideas in the "Letter to Müntzer" is found in the writings of Jakob Strauß.⁹⁵

The letter of the Zurich radicals to Thomas Müntzer marks a significant step in their self-definition, demonstrating as it does their search for new conversation partners and mentors, and marking clearer outlines of an alternative church reform. The radicals were aware of the growing division between the reformers who were choosing to work with political authorities (those who "spared the weak," as they said), and reformers who proceeded directly to change, in spite of the political circumstances—and who were having to pay a social and political price for their "biblical" reforming zeal. An expectation of coming persecution pervades the letter.

For all its significance as the first major surviving writing of what would become the Anabaptist movement, the "Letter to Müntzer" has been overanalyzed by scholars. It does not reveal "a completely new

91. Strübind, *Eifriger*, 263-267. Strübind argues persuasively that Luther's baptismal writings are not reflected in the Letter to Müntzer.—*Ibid.*, 260-261.

92. Müntzer wrote in his "Protestation," ". . . only adults were admitted [into the church], and after a lengthy period of instruction. . . ."—Peter Matheson, trans. and ed., *The Collected Works of Thomas Müntzer* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988), 191.

93. This is assuming that Karlstadt was the author of the anonymously-published *Dialog von der Taufe der Kinder* (Worms: Peter Schöffer d. J., 1527). The case for its being Karlstadt's "lost" writing on baptism, dating from 1524, is made by Alejandro Zorzin, "Karlstadts 'Dialogus vom Tauff der Kinder' in einem anonymen Wormser Druck aus dem Jahr 1527," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 79 (1988), 27-58. Zorzin also documents other statements by Karlstadt, opposing infant baptism.—*Ibid.*, 52-53. See Strübind, *Eifriger*, 296-299 for a discussion.

94. Rollin Stely Armour, *Anabaptist Baptism: A Representative Study* (Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1966), 19-22.

95. *Eifriger*, 263. See John Oyer, "The Influence of Jacob Strauss on the Anabaptists. A Problem in Historical Methodology," in Lienhard, ed., *Origins and Characteristics of Anabaptism*, 62-82.

concept of the church;⁹⁶ nor is it accurate to call it a "consensus document" of the radical movement, in spite of the several signatures attached.⁹⁷ Some of the most striking passages in the letter, such as the initial review of church history, the emphasis on "sparing the weak" and the call to be as "sheep for the slaughter," are simply repetitions of language Müntzer used in the two books to which the radicals refer, and are not original with them.⁹⁸ Many of the peculiar "biblicistic" arguments in the letter concerning proper liturgical details are definitely from Grebel's pen alone. They match his documented interventions at the second disputation, correspond to no one else's concerns and, just as importantly, were never implemented as "Anabaptist" or radical reforms by the succeeding movement.⁹⁹ The strongly nonresistant phrases in the letter mirror the known views of only one of the signatories to the letter: Felix Mantz. Two signatories to the letter, Heini Aberli and Hans Bröti, were not consistently nonresistant in their later actions. In sum, the Müntzer letter is a mulligan stew of views and not the expression of theological consensus, even though it was signed by several of the Zurich radicals.

The matter of nonresistance and the rejection of war expressed in the letter are crucial points in determining the political stance of the radicals in September 1524. If nonresistance and "suffering passivity" can be said to be a "consensus" teaching of the radical movement, then an argument can be made for marginalizing subsequent events in Waldshut, Hallau and Grüningen, and arguing for an unbroken continuity of development of a separatist ecclesiology among the Zurich radicals, as does Strübind.

The letter to Müntzer makes two distinct points concerning government, the sword and coercion. The first point is that there is to be no coercion within the church for any reason. Those who will not reform following preaching should be admonished as per Matthew 18, but "such a man we say on the basis of God's Word shall not be put to death but regarded as a heathen and publican and left alone."¹⁰⁰ The traditional role of the medieval church in identifying "heretics" to be punished by

96. Yoder, *Anabaptism and Reformation*, 20.

97. "Der Müntzerbrief kann daher als ein theologisches Konsenspapier verstanden werden, das die Grundpositionen der radikalen Kräfte zusammenfaßte."—Strübind, *Eifriger*, 215. For a contrasting interpretation, see Hans-Jürgen Goertz, "'A common future conversation': a revisionist interpretation of the September 1524 Grebel Letters to Thomas Müntzer," in W. O. Packull and G. L. Dipple, ed., *Radical Reformation Studies: Essays Presented to James M. Stayer* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 73-90.

98. Noted by Strübind, *Eifriger*, 219; 254.

99. During the disputation, Grebel presented a long list of "biblical" concerns, such as the proper hour for the celebration of the Supper, the vestments to be worn, whether the bread should be unleavened or not, etc.

100. Harder, *Sources*, 290.

the sword of the state is hereby rejected. In this the Zurich radicals were in complete agreement with Balthasar Hubmaier, who published his views in *On Heretics and Those who Burn Them* at about the same time.¹⁰¹ It is important to note that the Zurich radicals and Hubmaier are of one mind in excluding state intervention and coercion in the church itself, which is to be governed only by the Word of God and God's Spirit.¹⁰² The exclusion of the state from interference in the church (including actual reform) was a crucial point on which the radicals and Hubmaier agreed, against Zwingli's practice, if not his theory.

The second point made in the letter is a recapitulation of a view that the radicals believed was held by Müntzer: the rejection of all warfare in defense of "the gospel and its adherents," and the acceptance by believers of being "sheep for the slaughter." The summary of this view is striking: "[Those who adhere to the Gospel] use neither worldly sword nor war, since killing has ceased with them entirely. . . ."¹⁰³ The state has no role within the church, but neither should it defend believers in the wider world. Here the writers appear to have understood Müntzer's radical language of spiritual yieldedness to mean a giving up by Christians of all state protection and of any use of violence whatsoever.¹⁰⁴ It is striking that no independent Scripture passages are cited here (such as Matthew 5:39), but rather there is an echo of what the group has read in Müntzer's tracts and what a messenger has conveyed about Müntzer's beliefs. Later, when word comes of Müntzer's aggressive "Sermon to the Princes" and of his preachments that the princes "should be combated with the fist," the writers ask him to desist from "defending war, the

101. Pipkin and Yoder, *Hubmaier*, 58–66, place the date of publication in September or October of 1524. On the parallels, see especially articles 3, 4, 5, 21, 22, 23 and 24.

102. Although the essential sentiments are the same—namely that those who are not convinced by preaching are to be "left alone"—there is no overt borrowing of texts or prose. The letter bases its summary argument on the fraternal admonitions of Matthew 18; Hubmaier ranges more widely, and does not cite Matthew 18.

103. Harder, *Sources*, 290.

104. The most striking passages in the letter are repetitions of Müntzer's prose in the two tracts to which Grebel refers. Grebel writes: "True believing Christians are sheep among wolves, sheep for the slaughter. They must be baptized in anguish and tribulation, persecution, suffering, and death, tried in fire, and must reach the fatherland of eternal rest not by slaying the physical but the spiritual." Müntzer had written in *On Counterfeit Faith*, "Christ . . . has shown no more winsome love to his elect than this: that he has labored to make them as sheep for the slaughter. . . ."—Matheson, *Collected Works of Müntzer*, 221. In the *Protestation* Müntzer had written (among many other things alluded to by Grebel) "what you must do is endure patiently, and learn how God himself will root out your weeds, thistles and thorns from the rich soil which is your heart."—Ibid., 299. See Matheson, *Collected Works of Müntzer*, 188–224 for the text of these two tracts.

tablets, chanting, or other things for which you do not find a clear word.
...¹⁰⁵

Insofar as the contents of the letter reflect the convictions of the signatories, the understanding seems to be that the church will exist entirely independent of the state and the state's protection, and that believers and the church will be "defenseless" in the world—a clear anticipation of the position that would be taken in the Schleitheim Articles and a stance in contrast to the position that would be taken by Hubmaier in Waldshut. The subsequent historical record, however, calls into question the commitment of the Zurich radicals to this nonresistant and separatist view. If Conrad Grebel personally wrote these lines—by no means a certainty—they would be the strongest statement on record by Conrad Grebel on nonresistance. The telling evidence is historical, not textual: when actual baptizing communities began to be planted and formed under his leadership throughout Switzerland, Grebel's commitment to a defenseless, separated church disappears from view, as does the nonresistance of two other signatories to the letter, Aberli and Brötli, as we will see below.

A significant new understanding of church discipline (the ban of Matthew 18) becomes visible in the letter: this "rule of Christ" was to be in force with baptism and the Lord's Supper, and was to be applied by the church, not the political authorities. The ban, or fraternal admonition, was an important step in a developing Anabaptist ecclesiology. Nevertheless, it is anachronistic to read back into this letter a full-blown separatist and sectarian ecclesiology—or even "analogies" leading directly and inevitably to such an ecclesiology—such as would emerge for most Swiss Anabaptists after Schleitheim. Ecclesiological ideas that in hindsight appear to point toward separatism (the ban and suffering, for example) were capable of being appropriated by politically engaged, majoritarian baptizing communities in 1525, as the historical record shows. Just six months after the first baptisms in Zurich and Zollikon—and a year and a half before Schleitheim—the first Anabaptist ecclesial outline appeared, firmly linking the ban to baptism and the Supper, and predicting suffering for those who followed believers' baptism. It was written by Balthasar Hubmaier in Waldshut for an emphatically nonseparatist Anabaptist church.

The Müntzer letter without a doubt reflected discussions that were taking place within the radical group in Zurich at the time of its composition, under the influence of a fresh reading of Müntzer's radical tracts. As such, the letter must be read as an exploration of biblical and

105. Harder, *Sources*, 293.

ecclesiological themes that were still in formation and—most important—that had the potential of being developed in more than one ecclesiological direction.

Just as Conrad Grebel and the Zurich radicals were reaching beyond Zwingli and seeking contact with kindred reforming spirits, the political situation turned immensely more complicated when peasants in neighboring territories began to defy their lords. On June 23, 1524, the peasants in Stühlingen, northeast of Waldshut, between Klettgau and Hegau, began an action against their political lord, the first of what would come to be called the Peasants' War.¹⁰⁶ Waldshut entered the conflict as a mediator between the parties, but the city had its own problems. Already in May 1524 Innsbruck had demanded that Waldshut surrender Hubmaier, but after two days of debate and public disturbances in Waldshut, eight priests of the old faith had to leave the city instead.¹⁰⁷ In keeping Hubmaier, Waldshut was defying Archduke Ferdinand and the might of Austria; for their part, the Austrians were concerned that the Swiss might make a play for Waldshut. Evangelical reform had bound Waldshut closely to Zurich.

By August 3, Archduke Ferdinand had ordered Ensisheim to "proceed with force" against Waldshut because the city refused to give up its heretical priest, but neither money nor troops were available to carry out the order. At the Diet of the Swiss Confederation, which convened on August 16 to 21, the Diet assured the imperial secretary that the Swiss would not allow any Confederate state to support Waldshut. But the Swiss were divided, with Zurich, Schaffhausen and Appenzell supporting Waldshut and its religious reforms, and the Catholic cantons opposing Waldshut. By the end of August, it looked as though an Austrian attack was imminent, and Hubmaier fled to Schaffhausen, where he remained until returning to Waldshut on October 27.

In the face of the expected attack, the city of Waldshut made common cause with the rebellious peasants from Stühlingen: in late August, 800 Stühlingen peasants entered Waldshut, and struck a "mutual assistance" agreement with the city. Since Balthasar Hubmaier was in Schaffhausen at the time, his biographer, Torsten Bergsten, concludes that he cannot be called an initiator of the Peasants' War. At the same time, Bergsten notes

106. This information and what follows is taken from Bergsten, *Hubmaier*, 107-120.

107. On the second day of debate, "Partially armed, the women of the town advanced on the Council House and demanded an assurance that Hubmaier would remain in Waldshut. As a result, eight of the twelve priests had to leave town. . . ."—Bergsten, *Hubmaier*, 100.

that "there is no doubt that Hubmaier's preaching greatly strengthened the peasants' claims."¹⁰⁸

On October 2, with Hubmaier still in Schaffhausen, the Waldshut councillor Junghans Schaller went to Zurich in search of military help. While the city was not willing to send its own troops, it did not prevent a group of armed volunteers from traveling to Waldshut under Captain Klaus Keller of Bülach; the scribe for this initial troop was Rudolf Clivanus, known as Collin, a friend of Conrad Grebel from their student days in Vienna. Zurich urged Bern, Basel, St. Gallen and Appenzell to support Waldshut. The armed volunteers in Waldshut, through Grebel's friend Collin, sent a letter to Grebel's reforming comrade and a signatory to the Münzter letter, Heinrich Aberli in Zurich, asking Aberli to see that forty or fifty "honest, well-armed Christian men" be sent to Waldshut.¹⁰⁹ The number of armed Zurich volunteers reinforcing Waldshut against the Austrian military threat varied from 100 to 300 at different times; they helped the citizens of Waldshut fortify the city, and guarded the walls.¹¹⁰ In their letter to Aberli, the volunteers stated that they were in Waldshut protecting the Gospel against the "enemies of the Word of God."¹¹¹

Those in favor of reform were excited by Waldshut's defiance of mighty Austria, but Zurich was in a difficult situation: it had to make official suggestions that it was preventing its citizens from helping Waldshut, because it did not want a war with Austria or with the pro-Catholic Swiss Confederates; at the same time, Zurich wanted to support the reform effort in Waldshut as much as it was able. The military victory of the French over the Austrians in Milan on October 26, relieved the threat of attack, at least temporarily: imperial troops and money were needed elsewhere. Hubmaier returned to Waldshut the following day, and was welcomed with great fanfare by the citizens.¹¹²

With the Austrians temporarily at bay, and with the informal military support of Zurich's citizens, the reform-minded cantons and the peasants, changes in Waldshut came quickly. On November 1, images, sanctuary lamps, chalices and tablets were taken out of two Waldshut churches, and the Mass began to be said in the vernacular. The

108. Bergsten, *Hubmaier*, 110.

109. *Ibid.*, 118.

110. At the October 13 Confederation Diet at Frauenfeld, imperial delegates claimed that there were 140 mercenaries from Zurich in Waldshut, and that Zurich had promised 6,000 troops in support. Zurich replied that the volunteers were there without pay, and so were not mercenaries; the city also denied promising troops to support Waldshut.—Bergsten, *Hubmaier*, 120.

111. *Ibid.*, 153.

112. *Ibid.*, 144-145.

destruction of images in the city was carried out by the people, in an unruly way, apparently with the permission of the city leaders.¹¹³ The council did not attempt to control the pace of religious change; the city had now passed the point of no return in its defiance of Austria, and there was no reason for restraint.¹¹⁴ In the negotiations that continued with Austria, Waldshut representatives repeatedly emphasized their demand that the Gospel be preached without hindrance (supposedly an imperial right) and that they be allowed to keep their pastor, whom they were not ready to relinquish "without a fight."¹¹⁵ The issue, Waldshut emphasized, was the Gospel, not political disobedience or rebellion as the Austrians and the Catholic cantons were insisting.¹¹⁶ But in fact, reform was inescapably a political issue; the insistence on religious autonomy by any community was invariably interpreted as political rebellion by those who had controlled, or were hopeful of controlling, the religious life and religious institutions of that community.

At the Diet of the Confederation in Luzern on November 8, 1524, Austria demanded that Zurich force its armed citizens in Waldshut to return home. By December 4, only thirty armed volunteers from Zurich remained; by January 10, Zurich could assure the Austrian government in Ensisheim that all of its citizens were now out of Waldshut.¹¹⁷ The volunteer troops were recalled because of irresistible political pressure on Zurich by Austria and the Catholic cantons; in fact, the Catholic cantons were attempting to expel Zurich from the Swiss Confederacy. In spite of Waldshut being a "reformed" ally of Zurich, there were clear political limits on the possibilities of direct support of the little Austrian city. From Waldshut's perspective, the distancing of Zurich meant that it needed other political allies.

The fall of 1524 saw the sharpening of the baptismal issue in Zurich itself, with unfruitful private discussions taking place between the Zurich preachers, on the one hand, and opponents of infant baptism on the other.¹¹⁸ As a result of the failed talks, Felix Mantz directed a "Petition of Defense" to the Zurich city council that focused on the

113. *Ibid.*, 145-146.

114. "Thanks to the help given by the Swiss allies, Hubmaier and his fellow citizens felt free to implement ecclesiastical reform which had been anticipated for some time."—*Ibid.*, 149.

115. *Ibid.*, 148.

116. *Ibid.*, 172.

117. *Ibid.*, 153-54.

118. These included the so-called "Tuesday discussions" that included Grebel, Mantz and Ludwig Hätzer.—See Bender, *Conrad Grebel*, 127-29; Yoder, *Anabaptism and Reformation*, 22-25.

biblical understanding of baptism.¹¹⁹ Whereas the Müntzer letter emphasized church discipline in connection with baptism ("Christ's rule of binding and loosing," in Matthew 18), Mantz mentions discipline not at all, but rather emphasizes new birth and new life. Baptism, Mantz explains, shall be performed

upon one who having been converted through God's Word and having changed his heart now henceforth desires to live in newness of life, as Paul clearly shows in the epistle to the Romans, the sixth [chapter], dead to the old life, circumcised in his heart, having died to sin with Christ, having been buried with him in baptism and arisen with him again in newness of life, etc. To apply such things as have just been related to children is without any and against all Scriptures.¹²⁰

Not only is infant baptism "unbiblical." In Mantz's petition, the baptism of adults who are ready to "die to sin" and "live a new life" emerges as the necessary, truly biblical form of baptism. By December 1524, the radicals had come to understand baptism in what would remain its essential form: a visible sign of inner faith and a commitment to live a new life in the community of faith, and consequently a rite to be reserved for adults.¹²¹

As a citizen of Zurich, Felix Mantz asked that Zwingli submit, in writing, biblical proof that infant baptism is correct—something that Mantz was sure would be impossible to do. A kind of reply came from Zwingli's publication, also in December 1524, of *Those Who Give Cause for Uproar*, in which he argued that the New Testament neither commands nor forbids infant baptism. Since such a command is absent in the New Testament, one must turn to the Old, where the analogue to baptism is circumcision. Baptism then, like circumcision, is a "sign of faith," argued Zwingli, and thus should be given to "children of Christians" much as circumcision was administered to infant boys.¹²² The basic biblical arguments against infant baptism had solidified among the radicals by the end of 1524; on the other side too, Zwingli had marshaled his biblical

119. Dated between December 13 and 28, 1524.—Translation in Harder, *Sources*, 311-15. Calvin Pater, argues that Mantz's "Protestation" was based on an unprinted writing by Karlstadt on baptism, since lost.—Pater, *Karlstadt as the Father of the Baptist Movements: The Emergence of Lay Protestantism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 163-167. Zorzin's contention that the "Dialogus" is in fact Karlstadt's lost writing contradicts Pater's thesis, since there is no textual borrowing or modeling of Mantz's "Protestation" on the "Dialogus."—Zorzin, "Dialogus," 40, n. 44.

120. Harder, *Sources*, 313.

121. Agreeing with the essence of Yoder's statement that by this time "for the people around Grebel, baptism already was what it would later remain for the Anabaptists."—Yoder, *Reformation and Anabaptism*, 23.

122. Relevant passages translated in Harder, *Sources*, 319-320.

position in defense of infant baptism. It appeared that all parties were moving steadily towards the rupture that came a few weeks later with the disputation on baptism.

In a letter that Conrad Grebel sent to Vadian on January 14, 1525, he reported that Jacob Hottinger of Zollikon had interrupted a sermon by Caspar Grossmann, who had been defending infant baptism, and that a disputation on the subject had been set for January 17. He reported a rumor that Hubmaier would be invited, but doubted the report "because he is against Zwingli on the matter of baptism and will write against him if he does not back away."¹²³ Clearly Grebel had up-to-date information about Hubmaier's views and intentions. Whether Hubmaier was invited or not, Grebel was correct about his baptismal views, as can be seen in the letter that Hubmaier wrote to Oecolampadius on January 16.¹²⁴ The disputation was not the public, formal affair of the previous two; there seem to have been no "invited guests," and no formal minutes were taken; Heinrich Bullinger, however, kept informal notes.¹²⁵ According to Bullinger, Mantz, Grebel and Reublin argued the case against infant baptism; Zwingli responded "methodically" with the arguments he later published for the people of St. Gallen, and at the conclusion, the authorities "admonished" the radicals to "forsake their opinion and be peaceful." According to Bullinger, the radicals were far from convinced, and replied with Acts 5:29: they had to obey God rather than men.¹²⁶

From Zurich's point of view, the timing of this latest religious dissent could not have been worse. Just a few months earlier, in July 1524, the Catholic cantons had been handed fresh ammunition when iconoclasm in the Thurgau resulted in the arrest of Zurich citizens and the storming and partial destruction of the Carthusian monastery of Ittingen by 3,000 irate peasants.¹²⁷ The Peasants' War was brewing, especially north of Zurich. Also in July of 1524, peasants from Hallau, subject to Schaffhausen, presented a letter of grievances against their lords; on July 22, Hans Müller led 800 rebellious peasants from Stühlingen into Waldshut, and concluded a defense treaty with that city; in early October

123. *Ibid.*, 331-332.

124. ". . . the very young should by no means receive baptism."—Pipkin and Yoder, *Hubmaier*, 70; for the entire letter, 67-72.

125. These are translated in Harder, *Sources*, 333-335; originals in Bullinger's *Reformationsgeschichte*, ed. J. J. Hottinger and H. H. Vögeli (Frauenfeld: Ch. Beyel, 1838), 238-239.

126. Harder, *Sources*, 335.

127. Documented in Scott and Scribner, *German Peasants' War*, #12, 97-100; described in Potter, *Zwingli*, 143-149.

the peasants of the Hegau rose up in revolt, and even closer to home, the Klettgau peasants soon followed. Zurich needed to demonstrate that reformation did not bring political rebellion in its wake by maintaining peace and order at home.

The two mandates against the radicals promulgated by the Zurich council (on January 18 and 21, 1525) made it clear that the city fathers were not in a tolerant frame of mind. The first mandate decreed that "all children shall be baptized as soon as they are born" and that all children hitherto unbaptized were to be baptized "within the next eight days." Those who refused to comply were to be banished.¹²⁸ The second decree closed the "special schools" where such matters were discussed, and specified that Grebel and Mantz were to be silent in the future. Any unresolved issues were to be brought (as in St. Gallen) to a four-person committee of the council. Furthermore, the decree banished Reublin, Brötli, Ludwig Hätzer and Andreas Castelberger (all noncitizens), and gave them eight days to comply. In an immediate response to this latest decree, the first baptisms of adults took place on January 21, just a few blocks from the Great Minster.

Conclusion

There is a wide range of interpretation of the historical data on the evolving relationship between Huldrych Zwingli and the increasingly visible "radical" elements. It is generally agreed that it is incorrect to say, on the one hand, that there was no "radical party" at all in Zurich (H. S. Bender), or, at the other extreme, to posit the existence of an independently radical party apart from Zwingli already in the spring of 1522 (R. Walton). The historical record documents the gradual emergence of a radical party within early Zwinglianism, initially indistinguishable from, and working in concert with, Zwingli, both theoretically and tactically. By October 1523 the harmony was largely gone, replaced by public and private discord within the Zwinglian camp, pitting an impatient, populist and more literally biblical faction against Zwingli's more theologically nuanced, conservative, elitist and centralized reform.

One line of interpretation of the emerging Anabaptism focuses on events in the city of Zurich, on the relationship between Huldrych Zwingli and Conrad Grebel and Felix Mantz, and on biblical and theological issues.¹²⁹ A very different line of interpretation opens with J.

128. Harder, *Sources*, 336.

129. Well summarized by Packull, "Origins," 36-37.

F. Gerhard Goeters's careful study of the "pre-history" of Anabaptism.¹³⁰ Goeters concentrated on reforming activity in the villages and the countryside, and documented the wider social, economic and political factors that played into the reform in Zurich. When attention was paid to the rural setting and the reception of reformation ideas by the lower social orders (craftsmen and peasants), Anabaptism emerged not so much out of a learned conversation of young humanists with Zwingli, but rather as a continuation of the aspirations of the common people in the countryside, who were hopeful of some independence from the centralizing power of Zurich.

Andrea Strübind's recent review of the evidence for this period concludes that the social-revolutionary aspects of tithe unrest and the cases of local election of pastors in the rural parishes have been overemphasized by what she calls the "revisionist" or "social historical" scholars, and that the religious motivations of the rural protagonists have been correspondingly underemphasized.¹³¹ Strübind's point can be well taken, if in fact her point is that religious *as well as* social, economic and political motivations are revealed in the events of 1522 to 1525.¹³²

The parishes that were agitating for pastoral changes through legal challenges to the existing tithe structures certainly were concerned with the preaching of the "pure word of God," and were echoing Zwingli in their sentiments. Nevertheless, there was more than just a whiff of "political rebellion" in the air, apparent not only in the narrow question of tithes and the right to pastoral election by communes, but also in the repeated challenges to political authority on clerical and ecclesiological issues, such as clerical marriage, appointment of clergy, keeping of church feasts, veneration of saints, the role of images and resulting iconoclasm, the Mass and, very soon, infant baptism. None of these issues could be unhooked from the question of political authority, since keeping or changing these "religious" practices was a question of political will and action.

When, at the second disputation in October 1523, Stumpf and Grebel voiced the view that reforming changes, once agreed to as "scriptural," should be carried out without deference to the decisions of Zurich's city council, they were articulating a position that supported the decision-making power of local church communities (by which they meant also

130. Goeters's work was published in 1969, and subsequently was supported by Martin Haas, James Stayer, Werner Packull and Hans-Jürgen Goertz.

131. See Strübind, *Eifriger*, 157-165.

132. Strübind claims to be wishing to correct an overemphasis on social and political factors, not denying their importance as such.—*Ibid.*, 164.

the Zurich parishes) over and against the centralizing policy of control by the Zurich city council, now supported openly by Zwingli and city pastors. Zwingli's theological distinction, which allowed the Zurich council control in these matters of "human justice," removed the possibility of independent action from local parishes and angered the radical Zwinglians. The key initiatory role of Stumpf and Reublin in agitating for change from their rural parishes is abundantly clear when one traces the origin and progression of protest concerning usury and tithes, pastoral appointments, images, the Mass and, finally, infant baptism.

The discordant line that publicly veered away from Zwingli at the second Zurich disputation deserves the label of "radical dissent" on at least two grounds: it was uncompromisingly and radically biblical, in that it expected a reformed church to conform to the express "commands" of Scripture (what is not commanded is forbidden), and, furthermore, it expected these commands to be clear enough to be interpreted by lay church members.¹³³ Andrea Strübind argues persuasively that this way of reading, appropriating and applying the biblical text, as well as the emphasis that lay church members formed the basic interpretive community, owes a heavy debt to Andreas Karlstadt, was nurtured in Castelberger's Bible study group and was a key point of division at the heart of the Zurich reform movement.¹³⁴

At the same time, however, this biblical dissent was also radical in a social and political sense, in that it proposed what can only be called a fundamental political realignment in by-passing clerical and political leadership when those authorities refused to implement the "biblical reforms" proposed by local church communities.¹³⁵ Zwingli recognized what was at stake, as is evident in his repeated calls for reform "without uproar or unrest"; the radicals were ready to proceed with some "uproar," if this was called for by the Bible. To express the point biblically, the radical dissenters did not agree with the way Zwingli finally distinguished between matters legitimately under government control (Romans 13), and those that were to be obeyed as direct commands of God (Acts 5:29). It was not yet clear how a process of

133. Agreeing with Strübind (*Eifriger*, 192), but only insofar as "radical biblicism" is not seen as the exclusive motive force in play.

134. Strübind does not support John Howard Yoder's contention that the Zurich radicals learned their radical biblicism from Zwingli, but that Zwingli then changed his mind.

135. In agreement with Goertz's central point, that the issue at this time was not so much "free church" vs. "territorial church," but rather in whose hands would rest the reform of entire communities.

biblical church reform in a congregational mode should relate to state power, but the issue was unavoidable in Zurich after October 1523.

It is, however, a mistake to extrapolate a coherent radical ecclesiological consensus—or even a coherent critique regarding the “sparing of the weak”—from the tensions that had arisen in Zurich and that swirled around Zwingli’s overpowering personality. The written record for the pre-Anabaptist radical group in Zurich is sparse, which means that conclusions about early radical thought and practice must include a careful analysis of what those radicals actually did, not simply what an occasional surviving letter might say. As is evident from that wider record, the Zurich radicals, including Conrad Grebel, were ecclesiologically flexible, rather than ideologically rigid in 1524 and 1525 when they looked beyond Zurich and attempted to lead baptizing reforms in various cities and villages throughout the region. No textual argument for a purely religious, “apolitical” motivation among the Swiss radicals as early as 1525 can be convincing, in the absence of an analysis of actual historical events.

The separation of political from religious motivations cannot be applied retrospectively to the sixteenth-century context without thoroughly falsifying the historical situation of the time. Religious disobedience was sedition in the eyes of sixteenth-century political authorities; the Anabaptists knew this well and were in search of solutions. Without a doubt there were layers of agreement and disagreement in the radical circle that have not survived in the written record, but the fact that “warring” could be roundly condemned in an exploratory letter to Thomas Müntzer and then passed over in silence one month later in the case of Waldshut leads to the conclusion, as Bergsten says, that “in the circle from which the later Zurich Anabaptists were to come, there was apparently at this time no coherent attitude regarding the use of the ‘sword.’”¹³⁶ Moreover, there was as yet no consensus regarding the ecclesiological boundaries appropriate to congregations of baptized adult believers.

Later Anabaptists came to agree with Zwingli that tithes were matters of civil taxation in which obedience was owed to governments (Romans 13), but far more significant is the fact that neither the early radicals nor the later Anabaptists would ever agree that governments could be left in charge of the election of pastors for local congregations, or be responsible for pastoral support and discipline—regardless of the “human” right of governments to demand taxation. Neither would later Swiss Anabaptists

136. Bergsten, *Hubmaier*, 153.

agree that true Christians would ever accept income from tithes or interest. The fundamental ecclesiological issue underlying arguments concerning the tithe was: who selects, supports and disciplines pastors of local congregations, and in what manner are they being supported? The stubborn biblical congregationalism that became visible with the tithe unrest, began to take form in the debates concerning images and the Mass, and finally coalesced around the issue of adult baptism, certainly was congregational in focus, but it was not committed to separatism from the start and it certainly was not "apolitical." From the beginning, the radical Zwinglians were not only engaged in resolving "religious" issues, but also social, economic and political issues that related to their understanding of a biblical church and its place in society.

II. ANABAPTISM AND ITS INITIAL SPREAD IN 1525

The first baptisms took place on January 21, 1525, as a result, says one of the earliest accounts, of the "fear of God" that gripped those meeting in the house of Felix Mantz's mother. The biblical bases for this and subsequent baptisms are not mentioned in the account, but had been presented at the first disputation on baptism in Zurich less than one week before. According to Heinrich Bullinger's report, Felix Mantz, Conrad Grebel and Wilhelm Reublin "drew on Scripture from the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles and pointed out that the apostles had not baptized infants but only adult discerning people."¹³⁷ From a biblical concordance composed by Conrad Grebel (1525) on faith and baptism¹³⁸ and from later Swiss Brethren testimonies, the central Gospel passages used undoubtedly were Matthew 28:18-20 and Mark 16:15-16; the book of Acts (2:38; 9:17-19; 16:17-34; 19:1-5) provided examples of apostolic baptismal practice.

For the Anabaptists, the Matthew and Mark passages outlined the "proper biblical order" concerning baptism, and linked water baptism to the Reformation dictum of "salvation by faith": first hear the Gospel, repent, believe and then accept baptism as an outward sign of that faith and a pledge of obedience. From the start baptism was nonsacramental in nature, a visible sign of an inner change, and also a visible commitment to henceforth live a new life. This basic line of biblical defense would reappear in virtually all branches of the Anabaptist movement, even when significant nuances were added.

137. Translation from Harder, *Sources*, 335; original in Bullinger, *Reformationsgeschichte*, I:238-239 (incorrectly cited as 258-259 in Harder).

138. Harder, *Sources*, 427-428 provides Grebel's scriptural references only. For the full impact of the argument the original must be consulted, in QGTS, II:265-273.

A notable emphasis in Grebel's concordance is the work of the Spirit of God in bringing about faith. This was the spiritualistic response to the desacramentalization of baptism: the water conveyed no power, but rather testified and confirmed a spiritual power (faith; inner baptism), received independently of the water. Hubmaier's detailed biblical defense of adult baptism, soon to appear in print, repeats and builds upon these earliest passages and interpretations.

Because so much meaning has been read back into the earliest baptisms, based on later developments, it is important to note several points:

- a) the first baptisms did not yet take place within a clear ecclesiological structure;
- b) the first baptisms did not yet imply a separation of the "inner" spiritual baptism from the "outer" baptism of water—that is, the first baptizers were not yet identifiable as either spiritualists or sectarians; and
- c) the first baptisms did not yet imply a separation of the "true church" from the world or society at large.

With the decision to baptize adults, the first baptizers in Switzerland took an independent reforming path; but they had barely begun the process of discerning and putting into practice ecclesiological models that would correspond to adult baptism.

The Zurich radicals quickly won adherents in neighboring towns and cities to their vision of reform, in what they understood to be a direct commandment of God regarding baptism. It helped the spread of the baptizing movement that all radical "foreigners" were exiled by the Zurich council, and that those who would not quietly conform were threatened with legal action. Conrad Grebel, Felix Mantz, Wilhelm Reublin, Johann Brötli and George Blaurock, who had recently arrived, were soon on the move, actively winning converts.¹³⁹ The first town to be evangelized by the Anabaptists was neighboring Zollikon, where the movement flourished for several months in spite of mass arrests by the Zurich authorities, but the baptizing movement simultaneously spread west toward Basel and Bern, and east to St. Gallen and Appenzell. More significant in the context of 1525 was the movement's advance to the

139. Blaurock's exact date of arrival in Zurich is not known; if he was at the January 17 disputation on baptism he must not have spoken, for he was not banished with the other noncitizens. He did play a prominent role in the first baptism on January 21, 1525 and subsequently in converting and baptizing Anabaptists in Zollikon.—ME, 1:354-59.

north of Zurich, to Schaffhausen, Hallau and Waldshut, where peasant unrest was erupting.

Zollikon

The story of Anabaptist Zollikon is wonderfully told in Fritz Blanke's small book, *Brothers in Christ*,¹⁴⁰ which documents the religious renewal that swept the village. The Zurich records also contain further details that are important in understanding the ecclesial boundaries of this earliest Anabaptist community.

The village of Zollikon, only three kilometers from the center of Zurich, numbered some 350 inhabitants (men, women and children) at the time of the Reformation.¹⁴¹ The primary economic activity of the village was vine tending and wine making.¹⁴² By the sixteenth century Zollikon peasants were free and relatively well off, although all citizens were under the judicial lordship of Zurich and also owed the customary church tithes and land taxes.¹⁴³ Most of the complaints aired by the Swabian peasants in 1525 in the famous "Twelve Articles"—with the notable exception of control over the tithe and the appointment of local parish clergy—were not live issues in Zollikon.¹⁴⁴ The village and the city were tightly integrated, politically, economically, religiously and militarily, but the villagers remained a stubbornly independent lot.

The quick acceptance of adult baptism by so many in Zollikon is not surprising, given the radical activities of the preceding three years. Participating in the *Wurstessen* of 1522 was Claus Hottinger, who was born in Zollikon but had become a resident of Zurich.¹⁴⁵ Claus was an active participant in Castelberger's "Bible school" and became a regular agitator for reform in and around Zurich. His brother Jacob Hottinger (the elder), soon to be a leader of the Zollikon Anabaptists, also participated in a variety of agitating activities, as did several of his children, notably Margret and Jacob (the younger).¹⁴⁶ Both elder

140. Blanke, *Brothers in Christ*..

141. Based on figures provided in Paul Guyer, *Die Bevölkerung Zollikons im Mittelalter und in der Neuzeit* (Zurich: Schulthess, 1946), 27; 45.

142. A. Nüesch and H. Bruppacher, *Das alte Zollikon* (Zurich: Zürcher u. Furrer, 1899), 19; 21.

143. Guyer, *Die Bevölkerung Zollikons*, 40.

144. A good translation of the Twelve Articles is found in Peter Blinkle, *The Revolution of 1525*, trans., Thomas A. Brady and H. C. Erik Midelfort (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), 195-201.

145. See Thomas Schärli, "Die bewegten letzten zwei Jahre im Leben des Niklaus Hottinger, Schuhmacher, von Zollikon, entthauptet zu Luzern 1524," in ed. Emil Walder, et al., *Zolliker Jahrheft* (Zollikon: Baumann, 1984).

146. Jacob could read and write. Hans Bichter names him as one of the primary "readers" in Zollikon, along with Rutsch Hottinger, the tailor Ockenfuß and "all who knew

Hottingers were close friends and confederates of Conrad Grebel, their earliest documented collaboration being the planned "welcome back" party (*Badenschenki*) for Zwingli in 1522, which the city council prohibited.¹⁴⁷

Jacob Hottinger, described as an "old, bearded peasant" in one court document, was confrontational, but he seems level-headed in comparison with his brother. Claus was a hothead, threatening violence on more than one occasion.¹⁴⁸ Jacob Hottinger disrupted public services several times, the first in June of 1523, when he and Claus attended the church in Zollikon. Jacob called Dr. Lorenz a "preacher of lies" and presented arguments for the celebration of the Supper in both bread and wine. The brothers were fined and told to desist and be quiet, and leave such things for the preachers to decide.¹⁴⁹ Neither brother remained "quiet." In late September of 1523, Claus Hottinger and Lorenz Hochrütiner dug up and removed a public crucifix in Stadelhofen, between Zollikon and Zurich, for which they were arrested, tried and banished.¹⁵⁰ Claus subsequently was arrested by Catholic authorities in Klingnau, tried and put to death by the sword on March 9, 1524, in Luzern.¹⁵¹ Although Bullinger claimed him as a martyr for the Reformed cause,¹⁵² there is little doubt that Claus Hottinger was on the same radical path and trajectory that led his fellow agitators Aberli, Hochrütiner, Ockenfuss, Grebel, and his brother Jacob to Anabaptism. The iconoclasm he had begun continued in Zollikon, the most spectacular action being the destruction of the "palm Sunday donkey" by some village youth.¹⁵³

how to read."—QGTS, I., #56, (Mar. 16-25, 1525), 64; 66. Jacob Hottinger's two extant letters are found in STAZ, EI, 7.2, nrs. 44 and 45; printed in QGTS, I, #103 and #113.

147. See the translation of testimony from Claus Hottinger in Harder, *Sources*, 170-171; Egli, *Aktensammlung*, #246. On Claus Hottinger, see Schärli, "Die bewegten letzten zwei Jahre."

148. When the *Badenschenki* was forbidden by the council, Heinrich Aberli and Claus Hottinger made threats outside the chamber, which they later had to explain. Claus said, "Yes, some years ago they wanted to forbid the country people from taking part in parties and other such gatherings." Aberli had answered him, "Yes, and they had their heads cut off."—Egli, *Aktensammlung*, 83-84. Harder's translation dulls the obvious threat. Aberli's retort was "Ja, man hätte ihnen den Kopf abgehauen. . ."—Schärli, "Die bewegten," 32. For more instances, Schärli, "Die bewegten," 33-4; Egli, *Aktensammlung*, #252, 85-86.

149. Egli, *Aktensammlung*, #369, 133-134. Other instances in Egli, *Aktensammlung*, #438, 176; Egli, *Aktensammlung*, #495, 216 (Feb. 6, 1524).

150. Egli, *Aktensammlung*, #421, 164; #442, 178.

151. Documented in Bullinger, *Reformationsgeschichte*, 1:150.

152. *Ibid.*, 150-151.

153. Some Zollikon youth broke into the church, hauled out the "Palm donkey" (complete with a mounted Christ figure), chopped at it a few times with daggers and swords, took it down to the lakeshore, weighted it with stones and threw it into Lake

Claus and Jacob Hottinger were among many in Zollikon who were not pleased with the pastoral care provided by Zurich. Early in 1524 the Zollikon congregation accepted their own "helper" into their community church: the former priest Johannes Brötli, who co-signed the letter to Müntzer in September 1524, preached radical reform in Zollikon, supported himself by "working with his own hands," and lodged with his wife and child in the home of Fridli Schumacher—whom he baptized.¹⁵⁴

The first documented adult baptism in Zollikon took place the day after the first baptisms in Zurich, with the baptism of Fridli Schumacher by Johannes Brötli at the public well in Hirslanden on January 22, 1525, observed by Hans Ockenfuss.¹⁵⁵ For eight days a fever of baptizing spread through the village, carried out mostly by Brötli and George Blaurock, with Felix Mantz also baptizing; Conrad Grebel was also present in the village promoting baptism, but he soon left for Schaffhausen, and did not baptize in Zollikon. The villagers had promoted, in succession, tithe reform, the installation of an independent "pastoral helper" by the village, iconoclasm, anticlerical outbursts, open resistance to the continuation of the Mass with church disruptions, active resistance to infant baptism (including failing to baptize newborn infants) and the carrying out of adult baptism. It was no wonder Zollikon cohered so quickly as a baptizing "community."¹⁵⁶ On January 30, Zurich began to actively counter the movement with mass arrests. About thirty-five people, or roughly a tenth of the inhabitants of the village, had been baptized.¹⁵⁷

A close reading of events in Zollikon provides an outline of the ecclesiological assumptions that accompanied the first baptisms, and challenges the conclusion that the "Letter to Müntzer" can be read as an

Zurich.—Nüesch/Bruppacher, *Zollikon*, 52. Documentation in Egli, *Aktensammlung*, #462, 189-190.

154. In December, 1524, the Zurich council adjudicated a conflict between the appointed and beneficed chaplain at Zollikon (Billeter) and Brötli because of the words they had spoken against each other in the Zollikon church.—QGTS, I, #19, 31. Stayer, "Reublin and Brötli," 86; Blanke, *Brothers*, 21-22.

155. Described in Blanke, *Brothers*, 21-22; QGTS, I, #31, 41-42. The baptism by Brötli on January 22 suggests strongly that he was present at the first baptism with Grebel and Mantz. The same argument can be made for Wilhelm Reublin's being present, given Reublin's immediate activity in Zollikon.

156. No doubt the "reading circles" played a role here, as Strübind argues, but the "quick" development of a "community consciousness" in Zollikon had a long history of social-religious grievance and agitation that also played a role. Strübind reviews the evidence from Zollikon in *Eifriger*, 363-384. Strübind's analysis of the actual "ecclesiological structure" of Zollikon Anabaptism, however, is not adequate.

157. Blanke, *Brothers*, 41.

early "consensus" document.¹⁵⁸ First of all, baptism in Zollikon was seen primarily as a penitential response; in no documented case was it understood as a separatist ecclesiological marker. Blanke has aptly described the "revival movement" atmosphere that seemed to pervade the village. Tears and wailing were common in these first baptisms: Conrad Hottinger, Jörg Schad, Hans Bruggbach and Rudolf Breitiner all did so when they requested baptism, and committed themselves with that baptism to stop sinning and to live new lives.¹⁵⁹ Blanke has concluded, with good reason, that repentance and commitment to a new life was the "theological motive" of this early baptizing movement. Although emotional conversions would not be the norm elsewhere in early Swiss Anabaptism, repentance from sin would remain central in subsequent Anabaptist understandings of baptism.¹⁶⁰

Dissatisfaction with the Catholic Mass predated questions about baptism in Zollikon, so it is not surprising that a series of simple "Lord's Supper" celebrations took place in the village. More surprising is the fact that those partaking in the Supper celebrations in Zollikon had not necessarily been baptized yet as adults.¹⁶¹ The first record of a celebration of the Lord's Supper in Zollikon relates Blaurock's leading of the ceremony. He said that those who wished to join him in this union (*Vereinigung*) were invited to partake; in this case the Supper seemed to function as a kind of initiatory rite, rather than baptism.¹⁶² Many joined in, with no great concern being shown about who had or had not been baptized as an adult; certainly no communal discipline was indicated by participation. Felix Mantz testified at about the same time that the Supper signified the unity of brothers and sisters in Christ, emphasizing like Blaurock, the *Vereinigung* that was being established.¹⁶³ Marx Boßhart said that the Supper was the bread of love and signified having

158. Andrea Strübind must grant that Zollikon Anabaptism did not display the "free church" characteristics that would emerge later, but was rather a "spontaneous" movement.—Strübind, *Eifriger*, 404.

159. Blanke, *Brothers*, 32-34; the eight women baptized on February 26 also came weeping, requesting baptism.—Ibid., 51.

160. Blanke, *Brothers*, 35-36; C. Arnold Snyder, *Following in the Footsteps of Christ: The Anabaptist Tradition* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 2004), chap. 1.

161. See Blanke, *Brothers*, 23ff. Heinrich Aberli, for example, celebrated the Supper with George Blaurock and Jacob Hottinger two days before his baptism.—Ibid., 49-51. The celebration of the Supper in several documented cases with no necessary theological or ecclesiological connection to a previous commitment of adult baptism points to a strikingly "inclusive" practice in light of both the foregoing Letter to Müntzer and the later Schleitheim Articles. This supports Haas' view, against Strübind's, *Eifriger*, 371.

162. QGTS, I, #29 (Jan. 30 or Feb. 6, 1525), 38.

163. QGTS, I, #42a, (ca. Feb. 18, 1525), 50.

a Christian frame of mind; Conrad Hottinger testified that they partook of the bread and wine as signs of brotherly love and peace; Hans Ockenfuß said that the meaning of the Supper was a sign that "they wished from now on to lead and keep to a Christian life."¹⁶⁴ George Blaurock is also reported to have said that the Lord's Supper was intended for those who believed that Jesus' death and blood had saved them.¹⁶⁵

The celebration of the Supper in Zollikon was not yet linked to a separatist church, but rather emphasized the commitment of repentant believers to one another, some of whom had been re-baptized. The "community of goods" that was rumored to have been practiced among the Anabaptists in Zollikon may simply have been pointing to fraternal sharing of goods, as dictated by need, that was cemented in the celebration of the Lord's Supper of "brotherly love and peace": the Supper was a sign of union and unity among believers, a union that extended to material sharing of some kind.¹⁶⁶

It is significant that the ban (Matthew 18) is virtually absent in early Zollikon records in connection with either baptism or the celebration of the Lord's Supper: when theory turned to practice in Zollikon, the ban played no visible role. There is one single report, at second hand, that mutual discipline had been discussed and urged by Grebel's good friend Jacob Hottinger, but there is no further evidence in the court records of discipline being taught in connection with baptism or the Supper, or of a disciplinary procedure having been initiated or carried out.¹⁶⁷ All other testimonies concerning the application of the ban in the Zurich Anabaptist records date from 1527 or later—unless the undated "church order" may be taken as evidence of teaching on the ban from this early period in Zollikon.¹⁶⁸ For all its suggestive ideas, it is an overstatement to claim that the Münzter letter offers a theological "consensus" on the shape and the boundaries of a baptized, separated church of believers on either baptism, the Lord's Supper or the ban.¹⁶⁹

164. QGTS, I, #31, 40-42.

165. QGTS, I, #32, 43.

166. Strübind agrees: "Das Koinonia-Verständnis der Mahlfeiern tritt ebenfalls aus dem Schreiben deutlich hervor."—*Eifriger*, 381.

167. QGTS, I, #58, 66 (Mar. 16-25, 1525). This is the only testimony from Zollikon explicitly referring to the ban, although both Grebel and Blaurock testified that they had taught that open sinners should be excluded from the church. See QGTS, I, #122, 124-125 (Nov. 9-Mar. 7, 1525), and QGTS, I, #200, 217. There is testimony from 1525 from Hallau (perhaps under Reublin's influence?) that describes the exact procedure outlined in Matt. 18:18.—QGTS, I, #391, 382.

168. Cf. QGTS, I, #212, 234-239; #247, 271-272; #249, 272-273; #391, 382.

169. Against Strübind (*Eifriger*, 296-335; esp. 331-335), the biblical argumentation in Mantz's "Protestation" does not coincide with that of the Münzter letter. No Zollikon

Oddly enough, an idea not mentioned in the letter found strong resonance in Zollikon in the first Anabaptist congregation: there was explicit teaching, especially by Felix Mantz, concerning the New Testament pattern of sharing of goods by Christians. In a letter to the Zurich council dated February 18, 1525, he explained that he had taught salvation from sin by faith; following confession of sin, baptism was given as an external sign. He also said that he had taught love, unity and community of all things, as per Acts 2:42-47.¹⁷⁰ Zwingli claimed that both Conrad Grebel and Simon Stumpf had told him "more than once" that all things should be held in common. Furthermore, Zwingli had heard a report from Bern that the Anabaptists there were teaching community of goods.¹⁷¹ Of the Zollikon Anabaptists, only Heini Fryg said explicitly that Christians ought to have all things in common.¹⁷² However, Johann Kessler, chronicler of St. Gallen, claimed that the Anabaptists in Zollikon undertook, like the early Christians, to practice community of temporal goods (as can be read in the Acts of the Apostles), broke the locks off their doors, chests, and cellars, and ate food and drink in good fellowship without discrimination.¹⁷³

Felix Mantz and George Blaurock denied that they had taught community of goods, but their respective testimonies concerning what they *had* taught—namely, that true Christians would share with those who had need—amounted to something rather close to a teaching of community of goods.¹⁷⁴ There is no evidence that a commitment to a *structured* community of goods was integrally connected with adult baptism at this time, but Zollikon testimonies do explicitly link love and a heightened emphasis on "fraternal sharing" to baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Zollikon testimonies say very little concerning the government and the sword. There is not a single testimony in which a Zollikon Anabaptist (Felix Mantz excepted) states unequivocably that a repentant and baptized Christian is not to kill another human being for any reason.

witnesses mention the teaching in connection with their baptisms by Mantz. Johannes Brötli, though he also signed the Müntzer letter, neglected to put the ban into effect when he began baptizing.

170. QGTS, I, #42a, 49-50

171. QGTS, I, #120 (Nov. 9-Mar. 7, 1525), 121-122. Conrad Grebel denied knowing anything about the Bernese teaching concerning community of goods.—*Ibid.*, #122, 124.

172. QGTS, I, #39, 48 (after Feb. 8, 1525). Blanke doubts the reliability of this testimony, *Brothers*, 40-41.

173. Harder, *Sources*, 345.

174. Mantz's testimony in QGTS, I, #200, 216, Blaurock's in QGTS, I, #200, 217, and Hubmaier's in QGTS, I, #147, 148, agree in underlining radical sharing with those in need.

This is surprising, in light of the strong nonresistant statements in the "Letter to Müntzer," but less surprising in light of Brötli, Reublin and Blaurock's apparent equivocation on the matter, not to mention Hubmaier's own position. There are, to be sure, occasional questions in Zollikon concerning the proper wielding of political power or the sword. One testimony could be read as a critique of individuals accepting mercenary service;¹⁷⁵ others seem to reflect more a critique of Zurich's repressive policies; none suggest commitment to a nonresistant position.

In one of his recantation statements (ca. August 19, 1525) Jacob Hottinger clarified what seems to have been the essential position of the Zollikon Anabaptists concerning the government and the sword—namely, that *it had no place in the church*. Concerning the authorities, Jacob Hottinger believed that no civil authority should protect God's Word with its power, since the Word should be free. He clarified further that it is for Christ to rule the Scriptures, not for the authorities. The essential Anabaptist position in Zollikon did not deny the sword to the government, but emphasized that government had no place within the church.¹⁷⁶ This understanding goes only a short distance toward Schleitheim separatism and in fact fits quite well with the church-state relationship that Hubmaier developed in Waldshut.

The cumulative evidence is persuasive in the case of Zollikon Anabaptism: holding a doctrine of "apolitical nonresistance" was not a requirement for baptism in the first Anabaptist community of Zollikon, and neither was a commitment to forswear oaths. What is visible in the numerous Zollikon testimonies is an incipient doctrine favoring a voluntary, unstructured community of goods. The testimony of Arbogast Finsterbach is interesting for what it reveals about Grebel's basic teaching at this time. When Finsterbach asked Grebel what he needed to do to be baptized, Grebel had answered: "one must first of all stop adultery, card playing, drinking too much, and charging interest."¹⁷⁷ Grebel's baptismal ecclesiology had strong moralistic implications,

175. Valentin Gredig, baptized with the early Zollikon group, said in answer to the direct question of whether a Christian may use the sword or not, that God chose some to use the sword, but that one may not take the sword for oneself. QGTS, I, #60, 68.

176. QGTS, I, #101, 103. On September 5, 1525, Anthony Roggenacher simply denied preaching against civil authority, but did not elaborate a position of nonresistance.—QGTS, I, #106, 108. An undatable fragment (but most likely from 1525 or 1526) says simply "Hottinger says that a Christian may also be a magistrate."—QGTS, #390, 382. All this stands in stark contrast to Felix Mantz's testimony (in repeated locations in the sources) that a Christian is not allowed to use the sword. See, for instance, QGTS, I, #200, 216: "It had always been his [Mantz's] opinion, and still was, that no Christian could be a magistrate nor condemn one with the sword or kill or punish anyone. . . ." Or again, Mantz said concerning authority, that "no Christian may kill with the sword nor resist those who are evil."—QGTS, I, #124, 128.

177. QGTS, I, #98, 101 (Aug. 19, 1525).

perhaps pointing to an interest in church discipline, but he was not yet drawing clear ecclesiological lines, let alone separatist conclusions.

Even more interesting is the testimony concerning Heini Aberli, the man who uttered threats outside the council and was entrusted with recruiting Zurich soldiers for Waldshut. Aberli celebrated the Lord's Supper with George Blaurock and others before receiving baptism. During his baptism two days later, Blaurock simply asked Aberli if he believed that Christ had died for the sins of humankind, and that what was written of Jesus Christ was true, and when Aberli affirmed that he did, Blaurock then baptized him in the name of the Trinity.¹⁷⁸ Aberli was not asked to repudiate violent resistance with his baptism, and he was quite comfortable celebrating the Lord's Supper with Anabaptists even before his baptism. In Zollikon we see a baptizing ecclesiology in the making, not an ecclesiology already formed in a separatist mold.

The lack of an explicit connection between baptism and a teaching of nonresistance at Zollikon does not mean that the Zollikon Anabaptists were contemplating or plotting armed resistance, but it does mean that they did not recognize their baptism to indicate a *de facto* repudiation of the use of any and all lethal force by Christians, including Christians in government. Baptism in Zollikon did not bind the baptized to nonresistance, or a structured community of goods, or the ban, or oath refusal or any number of other later developments that took Swiss Anabaptism in a separatist direction.

The Zurich authorities did not assume that the nascent Anabaptist group in Zollikon had accepted nonresistance along with water baptism, but rather expressed fear of an armed uprising. On October 9, 1525, the council gave confidential orders that six men from each of the twelve guilds be prepared secretly with weapons and armor, ready to travel, fully armed, by armored ship to Zollikon to arrest the Anabaptists if the need arose.¹⁷⁹ Zurich thus readied a troop larger than the armed group Zollikon mustered for military expeditions.¹⁸⁰ If there had been—as there clearly was not—a principled “laying down of arms” as an integral part of Anabaptist baptism in Zollikon, there would have been no reason for

178. Blanke, *Brothers*, 51.

179. QGTS, I, #110, 111. Evidence summarized in Arnold Snyder, “Zollikon Anabaptism and the Sword,” *MQR* 64 (Apr., 1995), 205-225.

180. Zurich's military census of 1529 lists 150 men from Zollikon liable for military duty. See STAZ, A 29.1, nr. 42. (Verzeichnis der Mannschaft zu Statt und Land 1529.) During full muster in 1529, Zollikon armed and fielded sixty men.—Johannes Häne, *Militärisches aus dem Alten Zurichkrieg* (Zurich: Arnold Bopp, 1928), 143-144.

Zurich's secret military measures.¹⁸¹ But the documentation demonstrates that there was as yet no clear definition on matters of the sword in the earliest Anabaptist community of Zollikon, and this same ambiguity would be present in early Swiss Anabaptist congregations that sprang up elsewhere in 1525.

The undefined ecclesial situation seen in the early Anabaptist documents from Zollikon corresponds closely to the picture one receives on reading the undated *Swiss Order*, strengthening the hypothesis that this "church order" originated in Zollikon and describes the practices of this earliest Anabaptist congregation.¹⁸² The *Order* does not mention baptism and indicates no commitment to "separation," the election of pastors, rejection of the oath or rejection of the sword. A rudimentary congregational order for the baptizers was emerging, but was not yet defined with the clarity seen in Hubmaier's writings or with the separatist finality that would be found in the Schleitheim Articles.

The documentation for the first months of Anabaptist activity reveals a rediscovery of the personal and communal *religious* significance of the act of baptism and celebration of the Lord's Supper: these first baptisms were acts of repentance, not overt calls to social revolution.¹⁸³ A strong penitential and congregationalist vision came to expression with the baptisms in Zollikon. Those in power, however, saw this declaration of religious independence as a *de facto* act of sedition. The escalating reforming actions by the community in Zollikon had now come to include baptisms and Supper celebrations, but the relationship of that community to government (and so, its ecclesial boundaries) was not defined by a programmatic ecclesial plan on the part of Grebel and his radical friends. Rather, ecclesial boundaries would be determined, in large measure, by the reactions of the governments in question. Once baptizing began in the political context of 1525, the hints of a separatist church vanished like mist in the sun.

The Zurich council was ready to enforce conformity: the *limits of obedience* to Zurich's authority had been questioned repeatedly in

181. Zwingli remained unconvinced that the Anabaptists were truly committed to nonresistance. See Leland Harder, "Zwingli's Reaction to the Schleitheim Confession of Faith of the Anabaptists," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 11 (Winter 1980), 62-63.

182. The frequent meetings for scriptural study, communion and sharing correspond closely to what we know of the first Anabaptist congregation in Zollikon. The "Order" does call for church discipline according to Matthew 18, corresponding with the interests of Grebel and Jacob Hottinger, but going beyond documented early Zollikon practice. See the detailed discussion in Packull, *Hutterite Beginnings*, 37-46. Translation of the "Order" in John H. Yoder, *The Legacy of Michael Sattler* (Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1973), 44-45.

183. The thesis that Anabaptist baptism was essentially a manifestation of anticlericalism is not sustained by evidence from Zollikon.

Zollikon, although never with explicit reference to the sword.¹⁸⁴ But the baptizers refused to be silenced: by the second week in March of 1525, the baptizing of adults had spread from Zollikon to the neighboring villages of Höngg (where Stumpf had pastored) and Küschnacht. The justification was biblical and charismatic, but the results were political: many Anabaptists freed from prison following recantations turned again to Anabaptism because "they had to obey God more than human beings."¹⁸⁵ Zurich needed obedient citizens and willing combatants and it needed them badly, as the disastrous second Kappel war would demonstrate.¹⁸⁶ Events in Zollikon suggested that it could count on neither one of these from the Anabaptists of that village. The independent acts of baptism, Supper celebration and the commitment to sharing goods were "religious" acts, in the minds of the participants; seen from Zurich's perspective, they were seditious acts that threatened the political solidarity of the canton, Zurich's ability to control events in its own territory and Zurich's position within the Swiss Confederation.

Schaffhausen, Hallau and Waldshut

The territory north and northwest of Zurich was in turmoil beginning with the rebellion of the Stühlingen peasants in the summer of 1524. At the same time that baptismal disobedience was emerging on Zurich's doorstep, the reforming efforts in the region just to the north were coming unraveled, as the "Word of God" was used to justify all manner of political rebellion. It was to this unsettled region that the leaders of the baptizing reform now moved.¹⁸⁷

184. Typical of early Zollikon testimonies is affirmation of obedience to the authorities, unless there was a "higher call" from God. See QGTS, I, #64, 73 (Jacob Hottinger and Blaurock); QGTS, I, #84, 89-90 (Conrad Grebel); QGTS, I, #170, 176 (Hans Ockenfuß).

185. Strübind's observation about the essentially charismatic underpinning of the Zollikon movement is well taken.—*Eifriger*, 380-381.

186. In the second Kappel War of 1531, in which Zwingli lost his life, local opposition to Zwingli and that war led to Zurich fielding only 2,000 men against 8,000 from the five Catholic Cantons. The number of eligible men in arms for Zurich in 1529 was tallied as no less than 12,338 men. More were added to the list in June 1529, when war did break out. Johannes Häne, "Der Zürcherische Kriegsrodel des Ersten Kappelerkriegs," Sonderdruck aus *Nova Turicensia* (Sept. 1911), 171. See also Johannes Häne, "Zürcher Militär und Politik im zweiten Kappelerkrieg," *Jahrbuch für Schweizerische Geschichte*, 38 (1913), 1-72; and Potter, *Zwingli*, 412. For a detailed study, see Emil Egli, *Die Schlacht von Cappel*, 1531 (Zurich, 1873).

187. Subjects of St. Blasien monastery also made demands, and the peasants of Hallau submitted their grievances to Schaffhausen.—Scott and Scribner, *German Peasants' War*, 21; see Hallau grievances in *ibid.*, doc. #5, 81. In November the Klettgau peasants rebelled against their lord.—Bergsten, *Hubmaier*, 173; documentation in Scott and Scribner, *German Peasants' War*, #124, 251-252 (Mar. 25, 1525); #155, 320-321 (Nov. 1, 1525). Thomas Müntzer

On January 26, 1525, Wilhelm Reublin and Hans Brötli left the emerging baptizing group in Zollikon and traveled directly to Hallau, accompanied by Brötli's wife and child and a "Merger" who had been baptized in Zollikon.¹⁸⁸ Reublin and Brötli then went on to Schaffhausen, where they met with Conrad Grebel; together they all spent an evening with Sebastian Hofmeister and Sebastian Meyer, pastors in the city.¹⁸⁹ Grebel remained in Schaffhausen where he would reside for two months, until the end of March; Reublin and Brötli returned to Hallau, and then Reublin and Merger continued on to Waldshut, where they arrived on January 29. It is notable that just one week after the first baptisms in Zurich, the "Grebel circle" had started a baptizing group in Zollikon and was fanning out to gain support for its vision of biblical reform in Schaffhausen, Hallau and Waldshut. The baptizing movement was actively seeking support in those areas already favorable to Zwingli's reformation, but where Zurich's hold was tenuous.

On the same day that Reublin and Merger arrived in Waldshut with their Anabaptist message, a contingent of Klettgau peasants marched into the city, disappointed in the lack of support from Zurich and seeking Waldshut's support in their demands for tithe relief.¹⁹⁰ The arrival of newly-minted Anabaptists and rebellious peasants in the city of Waldshut on the same day in January 1525 was without doubt a "coincidence," as Bergsten notes, but it points to the way in which the peasant agenda and the baptizing agenda had begun to overlap and intertwine in the territories north of Zurich, where Zurich had both political and reforming interests. In Waldshut Reublin urged Hubmaier to openly join the baptizers. Reublin left Waldshut already on January 31, and two days later Hubmaier released a "Public Challenge" for a disputation on baptism.¹⁹¹ Hubmaier seemed to be waiting for the

was in Klettgau and Hegau for eight weeks beginning in November, 1524. Summary in Stayer, "Reublin and Brötli," 90, n. 43; Münzter's confession in Scott and Scribner, *German Peasants' War*, #112d, 239-240.

188. This was most likely "Heini Merger's son," Uli Merger. Heini denied being baptized as of February 18, 1525.—QGTS, I, #41, 48-49, although he was fined for resisting infant baptism. His son, later identified as Uli, was listed among those who had allowed themselves to be baptized.—QGTS, I, #31, 41; note the greeting from Gabriel Giger to Uli.—QGTS, I, #66, 75.

189. QGTS, I, #36, 45. Brötli reported the meeting in a letter to Fridli Schumacher.

190. Bergsten, *Hubmaier*, 188-89.

191. On February 1, 1525, Waldshut replied to a letter from Zurich that had alerted the Waldshut authorities to be on the lookout for those expelled from Zurich. Waldshut replied that the people had been with Hubmaier, had caused no trouble, and had left Waldshut already on January 31.—Bergsten, *Hubmaier*, 189; Hubmaier's "A Public Challenge" in Pipkin and Yoder, *Hubmaier*, 80, dated February 2, 1525. Bergsten concludes that this writing demonstrates "that the Waldshut reformer stood close to the Zurich Anabaptists."—Bergsten, *Hubmaier*, 191.

appropriate time to take the next step of adult baptism, preparing the ground with preaching and public discussions. In fact, he continued to "spare the weak," still baptizing infants if the child's parents so desired.¹⁹² This did not seem to trouble the Zurich radicals unduly—there is no record of their taking Hubmaier to task for "moving slowly" as they had Zwingli in Zurich. The "radicals in a hurry" became notably patient radicals (in Waldshut, Schaffhausen, St. Gallen) when it appeared that they had a chance of eventual success.

In Waldshut the old believers were overmatched and rather quickly overcome by reform-minded citizens; in Schaffhausen the Catholic party was strong among the patricians and would not be dislodged from the city council, which was controlled by the patricians—even though Schaffhausen supported evangelical Zurich and Appenzell at the diets of the Swiss Confederacy. The vine-dresser's guild supported Sebastian Hofmeister's Zwinglian policy of reform, which was still primarily in the preaching stage. As the Peasants' War gained strength in 1525 in the territory surrounding Schaffhausen and its dependencies, such as Hallau, the city granted reforming concessions to Hofmeister and his supporters, allowing, for example, the removal of images from the churches. Hofmeister's base of political support, however, remained with the vine-dressers and peasants.¹⁹³

As long as the Peasants' War was underway, Hofmeister not only promoted evangelical reform, but also considered the Anabaptist model of reform for Schaffhausen. He even supported adult baptism openly before the city council. Certainly Conrad Grebel, Felix Mantz and Wilhelm Reublin did what they could to bring him into the Anabaptist camp, and it appears that they very nearly succeeded.¹⁹⁴ The Schaffhausen vine-tenders, however, were surprised by city troops in early August, after which the council expelled the troublesome Hofmeister and turned the city again in a Catholic direction. After some wandering and uncertainty, Sebastian Hofmeister fled to Zurich where he ceased his flirtation with Anabaptism, accepted Zwingli's views on baptism and gained a post as preacher in the city.¹⁹⁵

192. According to Hubmaier's letter to Oecolampadius, January 16, 1525.—Pipkin and Yoder, *Hubmaier*, 72.

193. Stayer, "Reublin and Brötl," 90-92.

194. Well summarized in Stayer, "Reublin and Brötl," 91-92. In a letter written to Hubmaier in February, 1525, Hofmeister wrote that Zwingli was wrong in saying that infants were to be baptized, that he had not been able to bring himself to baptize his own child, and that he had "spoken the truth" about baptism to the city council.—QGTS, II, #11, 13-14; Bergsten, *Hubmaier*, 200-202.

195. Bergsten, *Hubmaier*, 259-261.

When Johannes Bröthli wrote to Fridli Schumacher from Hallau, sometime in February 1525, he reported "great need" among many of the people there.¹⁹⁶ The previous year a disastrous hailstorm had passed through the district, beginning at Neunkirch in the Klettgau. The regional devastation was tremendous.¹⁹⁷ The real economic misery in this region added urgency to the demands for relief from tithes and taxes. The Hallau peasants submitted such demands to Schaffhausen already in July of 1524, asking to have no lord but God alone, that tithes be applied where they were collected and that clergy should live from tithes alone; these demands and more were repeated early in 1525.¹⁹⁸ Reublin and Bröthli already were sympathetic to having communities control their own tithes and pastoral appointments, as their preaching and their actions in Witikon and Zollikon demonstrate. They brought these concerns to a sympathetic audience in Hallau in late January; in addition, they brought their new understanding of church reform, which now included adult baptism, a memorial Lord's Supper and a commitment of the baptized to share with one another, as need demanded. They were successful in being accepted as pastors in Hallau and in establishing their Anabaptist program by April of 1525; it lasted until early November 1525, when the peasant resistance collapsed.¹⁹⁹ Exact numbers are not available, but the historical record demonstrates that these Anabaptist pastors had the support of the majority of Hallauers, who accepted baptism as adults, and that they centered their activities in the village church, where at least some documented adult baptisms took place.²⁰⁰

There is not enough surviving documentation for the Anabaptist community of Hallau to allow us to detail its ecclesiology. We can safely assume the same general outlines that were operative in Zollikon, since Reublin and Bröthli baptized believers in both places within the space of weeks. On one matter of ecclesiology, however, events in Hallau speak loudly, clearly and unequivocally: the baptized members of the Hallau community had not made a commitment to separatism, apoliticism or nonresistance with their baptisms. Coextensive with the baptism of most

196. QGTS, I, #36, 46.

197. Scott and Scribner, *German Peasants' War*, #25, 121 (July 14, 1524).

198. The 1524 demands reproduced in Scott and Scribner, *German Peasants' War*, #5, 81; the 1525 demands are summarized in Stayer, "Reublin and Bröthli," 94-95.

199. Sometime before Apr. of 1525, the resident pastor had been dismissed.—Stayer, "Reublin and Bröthli," 93.

200. In 1529, Christian Kranz, at that time pastor in Hallau, reported to Zwingli that Reublin had baptized "nearly all" the people there, and that many still followed him, although most had since recanted. Heini Aberli confessed that his brother-in-law was baptized in the church at Hallau.—QGTS, I, #157, 162.

of the village was the continued participation of Hallauers in the Peasants' War. Most dramatically of all, when Schaffhausen sent troops to arrest the Anabaptist preachers of Hallau in August 1525, they were prevented by the villagers who protected Reublin and Brötli with "weapons in hand."²⁰¹ Faced with armed resistance, the Schaffhausen troops retreated without the pastors.

The two Anabaptist pastors who formed the Hallau church by adult baptism were members of the Grebel circle of radicals; in fact, Conrad Grebel himself was essentially next door, only seven miles away in Schaffhausen, as the church in Hallau unfolded, in a perfect location to correct any deviance from a nonresistant, separatist ecclesiological understanding such as was expressed in the letter to Müntzer. There is no record of Grebel attempting to do this in the case of Hallau, nor is there any record of a protest when he visited armed Anabaptist Waldshut at least twice during the height of the Peasants' War (only nineteen miles from Schaffhausen). The Hallau pastors accepted armed protection without protest—they did not take the option of surrendering in a suffering, nonresistant fashion to the troops from Schaffhausen who had come to arrest them, or admonish their parishioners to do the same.²⁰² The Anabaptist church of Hallau was a voluntary church of the baptized majority that had won local political support and whose members continued to be active in the Peasants' War. That is, it was a church of baptized believers, but it was not separatist, apolitical, nonresistant or ready to suffer passively.²⁰³

Waldshut was in a desperate situation by January 1525 as Austria continued to threaten military action. Zurich's careful support in the fall of 1524 was being withdrawn by January, at which time the peasant bands had begun to appeal explicitly to the "Word of God" in support of their demands.²⁰⁴ In short order the Peasants' War had become a

201. Stayer, "Reublin and Brötli," 95-98.

202. Brötli had declared in 1523 that he opposed violence personally and in his congregational teaching, and also that he had signed the letter to Müntzer.—QGTS, II, #682, 558-61. If he was nonresistant, it was a limited, personal nonresistance that Brötli still did not apply as an ecclesial rule of conduct.

203. It seems an overstatement to describe Anabaptism in Hallau as "revolutionary." "Opportunistic" is a better word to describe this early Anabaptist community, vis-à-vis political events, but Stayer is correct in emphasizing that this early Anabaptism was not "purely religious" in the sense of being separated or isolated from the social, political and economic events that surrounded it. Stayer, "Reublin and Brötli," 102.

204. The articles that the Klettgau peasants drew up in January 1525, appealing to "godly justice" as the only norm for a Christian society, are among the first to explicitly link grievances to the "Word of God."—Scott and Scribner, *German Peasants' War*, 251. The famous "Twelve Articles" of the peasants, with their explicit appeal to Scripture, was

“religiously legitimated revolt,” placing evangelically reformed states on the defensive. On March 25, 1525, the Klettgau peasants—already in an alliance with Waldshut—appealed again to their protector Zurich for help in mediating their dispute with Count Rudolf von Sulz, asking the city to settle the disagreement according to Scripture and “godly law.”²⁰⁵ Zurich refused to intervene in what would be a watershed event for both the Klettgau peasants and Waldshut.²⁰⁶ For Waldshut, Zurich’s refusal ended all hope of a political or military alliance with the powerful evangelical canton. With this hope gone, Waldshut cemented its political and military alliances with the peasants. Not coincidentally, it seems, Balthasar Hubmaier now moved to accept Anabaptism for himself and the city, accepting baptism on April 15 at the hands of Wilhelm Reublin.²⁰⁷ Waldshut became an Anabaptist city and would remain so for seven and a half months, until it capitulated to besieging Austrian forces on December 5, 1525.²⁰⁸ Hubmaier must have known that this act would alienate him from Zwingli and would lose Waldshut any chance of future support from Zurich.²⁰⁹ A “reformed” Waldshut had become a political liability for Zurich; an Anabaptist Waldshut simply moved Zurich from an attitude of reluctant neutrality into one of hostility.

Warfare had broken out in the area in late March, and by April had spread to the Black Forest region. On April 14, the day before Hubmaier’s baptism, Waldshut dispatched two squads of soldiers to join the Black Forest troops, and in early May the city sent troops to support the peasant army besieging Rodolzell. By the beginning of June, the peasant “Christian Union” controlled a large area of southern Germany, with Waldshut supporting its military actions. The most remarkable victory for the Christian Union was the taking of the city of Freiburg im Breisgau on May 23, after a siege by Black Forest peasant troops that included fighters from Waldshut and Hallau. On their march to the city,

composed by the end of February, 1525. See Scott and Scribner, *German Peasants’ War*, #125, 252-57 for a recent translation.

205. Nevertheless, when the Klettgau peasants marched into Waldshut on January 29, they carried a banner with the blue and white colors of Zurich.—Scott and Scribner, *German Peasants’ War*, 25.

206. According to a contemporary chronicle (Valerius Anshelm of Bern), in their negotiations with count Rudolf von Sulz, the Klettgauers “turned for consolation to their Swiss neighbors and especially to those of Zurich, who had promised protection and aid. Yes, [the Zurichers replied,] they were willing [to aid] the Word of God but not rebellion, which overturned the same Word of God and was not to be tolerated.”—Scott and Scribner, *German Peasants’ War*, #142, 302.

207. Bergsten, *Hubmaier*, 176; 230.

208. *Ibid.*, 269.

209. Bergsten concludes that Hubmaier’s reluctance to introduce baptism in Waldshut between Jan. and Apr. 1525 was his desire not to antagonize Zurich.—*Ibid.*, 192.

the Black Forest peasants had taken over many monasteries and castles, including the Benedictine monastery St. Peter's of the Black Forest (before May 12, 1525). The prior of that monastery, Michael Sattler, would appear later in 1525 in Zurich in the company of Waldshut Anabaptists. No other points of Anabaptist contact are known for this Benedictine monk. A plausible hypothesis therefore suggests that this future Swiss Brethren leader was introduced to Anabaptist ideas and led to leave the monastery as a result of the peasant takeover of his monastery.²¹⁰ He would later author the Schleitheim Articles.

The most stable, numerous and important Anabaptist community in 1525 was, without a shadow of a doubt, the church of Waldshut, but historians have not quite known what to do with this fact. In part this is the result of the ecclesial model established in Waldshut and the military and logistical support that Anabaptist Waldshut provided to the peasants-in-arms—so at variance with later Schleitheim separatism. In part it has to do with Hubmaier's unique position among the early Anabaptists, as the doctor of theology who was the "Zwingli" of Waldshut. But, most significantly, it has to do with confusion about the nature of Waldshut's ecclesial model itself.

John H. Yoder notes in passing that Hubmaier "had his own 'state church'" (*Staatskirche*) in Waldshut,²¹¹ and this shorthand description has often been adopted by historians. The term, however, is not used with sufficient accuracy.²¹² To avoid semantic wrangling, we can fix the baseline definition of "state church," as we are using it here, by the structure established in Zurich and against which the radicals rebelled: a structure in which church membership and citizenship in the city-state are essentially coterminous, with citizens at once members of the church, and vice versa. Furthermore, as applied in Zurich, this understanding of the church-state relationship assumed that the state had the right and responsibility to enforce religious conformity in its territories according to the pattern of the "state church"—on the advice of state-sanctioned clergy. This was the mold in Zurich, where Zwingli's infant baptism

210. C. Arnold Snyder, *The Life and Thought of Michael Sattler* (Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1984), 61–65. In response to Strübind's critique (*Eifriger*, 548–550), there is no reason to pass over in silence what few facts are known about Sattler and the spread of early Anabaptism into the Black Forest, even if the conclusions remain hypothetical.

211. Yoder, *Anabaptism and Reformation*, 133.

212. Strübind, *Eifriger*, 287–291, critiques the use of the terms *Freikirche* and *Volkskirche* in the historical literature. The key point to be made is that among the Zurich radicals ("Letter to Müntzer") and later for Hubmaier, a majoritarian church of baptized believers was conceived that nevertheless did not follow the coercive pattern seen in Zurich, in which all citizens were made to conform to the state-sanctioned church.

guaranteed that children of citizens would become baptized members of the state church. It was this right of the state to interfere in concrete matters of church reform, claimed by the Zurich city council and upheld by Zwingli, that surfaced as an issue at the second Zurich disputation, and that was identified as the basic problem by the Zollikon witnesses.

Hubmaier's reform had been sanctioned by the majority of the city council, but the similarity to Zurich stops there. When the Zurich example is taken as the baseline, the church-state relationship in Anabaptist Waldshut was of a completely different order. The unbaptized minority of Waldshut citizens were not coerced by the state into joining the majoritarian Anabaptist church. This unbaptized minority—both Catholic and Evangelical—remained in the city and remained opponents of Hubmaier and the Anabaptist majority to the end. In fact, the Catholic minority still within the city negotiated the surrender of the city to the Austrians in November of 1525.²¹³

Hubmaier established a church of baptized believers that, by definition and practice, was based on conviction and not on coercion.²¹⁴ Hubmaier's stance on the voluntary baptism of convinced adults was a logical extension of his earlier widely published conviction, that faith must be uncoerced and that religious dissidents should be convinced by Scripture or left alone to "rant and rage."²¹⁵ The result was a unique Reformation phenomenon: the governing majority in Waldshut had to learn to live with religious pluralism. The Waldshut Anabaptist community of 1525 was a believers' church of the majority, supported by political power but not extending its membership to all within the city-state—that is, the Anabaptist church in Waldshut was neither a "state church" (on the Zurich model) nor a "separatist minority" (sect).²¹⁶

There has been a strong tendency among historians to conclude that Hubmaier and the Zurich radicals were two dramatically different kinds of Anabaptists. Harold Bender minimized the relationship,²¹⁷ and while

213. See the documentation and discussion in Bergsten, *Hubmaier*, 267-269.

214. Hubmaier had expressly written against coercion in matters of faith in 1524. There is no evidence that he changed his mind as the Anabaptist pastor of Waldshut. See *On Heretics and Those who Burn Them* (September, 1524), in Pipkin and Yoder, *Hubmaier*, 58-66. The one hostile report, from the Abbot of St. Blasien monastery, that reports religious coercion is contradicted on all sides by ample evidence.

215. *On Heretics*, Pipkin and Yoder, *Hubmaier*, 60.

216. John H. Yoder, "Balthasar Hubmaier and the Beginnings of Swiss Anabaptism," MQR 33 (Jan. 1959), 5-17 is a pointed argument marginalizing Hubmaier from the Zurich Anabaptists. As a central point of difference, Yoder states that unlike the "true" Anabaptists, Hubmaier allowed the state to interfere with the reform of the church. This goes contrary to Hubmaier's own stated position and the evidence from both Waldshut and Nicholsburg.

217. Bender suggests, by way of a rhetorical question, that Grebel was "disappointed"

John H. Yoder's treatment of Hubmaier is more nuanced, he described Hubmaier as an "in between figure" (*Zwischengestalt*) and marginal to the "real" debates happening in Zurich between the Grebel group and Zwingli.²¹⁸ As further proof, Yoder notes that Hubmaier recanted under pressure in Zurich unlike Grebel, Mantz and Blaurock.²¹⁹ Torsten Bergsten, Hubmaier's biographer, asserts, on the one hand, that Hubmaier's Anabaptism developed "in close relationship to the Anabaptist circle in Zurich," but Bergsten then echoes Yoder's conclusion that Hubmaier was too theologically-minded to be like the other Anabaptists.²²⁰

Revisionist historiography only marginally reduced the distance between the Zurich radicals and Hubmaier, perhaps because it seemed more than clear that Hubmaier and Grebel were espousing vastly different views on the sword—especially since Grebel was assumed to be staunchly nonresistant.²²¹ The resulting distance between Reublin, Brötli and Hubmaier, on the one hand, and Grebel and Mantz on the other, was explained by positing two divergent positions within early Anabaptism: the original Zurich group was sectarian and nonresistant from the start (Grebel and Mantz, as per the "Letter to Müntzer"); the other, rurally-based, politically-involved group was open to using the sword in defending a "non-separating congregationalism," to use Stayer's phrase. Andrea Strübind is confident enough in marginalizing Hubmaier from the Zurich circle that Waldshut Anabaptism is omitted entirely from her analysis. This is a glaring omission,²²² but her

at how Hubmaier turned out.—Bender, *Grebel*, 147-148. In a note commenting on Sebastian Franck's *Chronica*, Bender places Hubmaier in a list of "South German semi-Anabaptists."—Ibid., 22, n. 15.

218. See Yoder, *Anabaptism and Reformation*, 39; 40; 133. Yoder says that Hubmaier was "counted among the Anabaptists without fully agreeing with the way and essence of the community as it was expressed at Schleitheim." Hubmaier's lack of agreement with Schleitheim's teaching on the sword is certainly true, but the suggestion that Schleitheim teachings were, from the start, the measure of true Anabaptism, is anachronistic. By this measure, most of Swiss Anabaptism in 1525 and 1526 would have failed the test.

219. Yoder, *Anabaptism and Reformation*, 133. Hubmaier's experience of human "weakness" in the face of torture, however, was shared by many other baptizers, not all of whom had the strength to become martyrs. Lack of courage may have made baptizing recanters "weak Anabaptists," but it did not make them "non-Anabaptists."

220. Bergsten, *Hubmaier*, 206-207.

221. Stayer described Hubmaier's view as a "Zwinglian" realpolitical position and accepted Grebel's "nonresistant separatist" position essentially as defined in the previous historiography. See the discussion in Stayer, *Sword*, 95-113.

222. In arguing for an unbroken separatist believers church lineage, Strübind does painstaking analysis of Grebel's "Letter to Müntzer" and Mantz's "Protestation" but then ignores the significant historical and theological development of Swiss Anabaptism north of Zurich. This critical omission leads to distorted conclusions.

marginalization of Hubmaier and Waldshut from a Zurich "mainstream" has a distinguished pedigree among Anabaptist historians of all stripes.

In fact, Hubmaier has genuine credentials as heir to, and participant in, the baptizing group that had its origins in Zurich and that spread to neighboring Swiss and South German territories in 1525. As with the Zurich group's efforts to gain support by making connections with Karlstadt and Münzter, Hubmaier also made an effort to cement support for his opposition to infant baptism, and the understanding that baptism was a central issue of church reform. In later writings, whose credibility is uncontested, he claimed to have obtained that support—at one time or another—from Zwingli, Oecolampadius and Hofmeister. But Hubmaier did not learn "Anabaptism" from these reformers; rather, Hubmaier's primary base of support for the institution of adult baptism was the group of Zurich radicals, including Conrad Grebel, as an analysis of their continuing contact and his earliest Anabaptist writings make clear. The central evidentiary question centers on the "Letter to Münzter," as Stayer argued long ago: What was meant by the nonresistant statements made in that letter "and to what extent [were] these ideas normative for the Swiss Brethren at the time?"²²³

A careful rereading of the evidence leads to the conclusion that the strongly separatist and nonresistant statements in the "Letter to Münzter" were most likely placed there at the insistence of Felix Mantz rather than Conrad Grebel, and that in his functioning ecclesiology, Conrad Grebel was not a committed nonresistant separatist. That is, there was a distinction to be made between separatists and opportunists among the early Zurich radicals, but the line of distinction (with no signs that the distinction was yet divisive) ran between Grebel and Mantz, not between city and country radicals.

Balthasar Hubmaier was wooed for the baptizing cause by Conrad Grebel, who during his two-month stay in Schaffhausen made one documented trip to visit Hubmaier in Waldshut, and could easily have made more.²²⁴ Hubmaier was baptized by Wilhelm Reublin, a charter member of the Zurich radical group, and maintained continuing contact with individual Zollikon Anabaptists (all Anabaptists of the Grebel circle), who moved in and out of Waldshut throughout 1525. Several months after Hubmaier had accepted baptism—and in the midst of the Peasants' War that surrounded and involved Waldshut—Conrad Grebel

223. Stayer, *Sword*, 103.

224. At least once, between February 1 and March 20, 1525.—Bergsten, *Hubmaier*, 229. According to Kessler, Grebel was responsible for convincing Hubmaier to accept rebaptism, although it was Reublin who later did the baptizing.

returned to Waldshut with Jacob Hottinger, at Hubmaier's request.²²⁵ The Zurich authorities were sure that insurrection was being planned with the Zollikon group and sniffed around for evidence, but according to Hubmaier, they spoke only of baptism and nothing else.²²⁶ This visit—just preceding Hubmaier's first two Anabaptist writings, of July 1 and July 11—and the numerous connections between Hubmaier and the Grebel circle, shed light on Hubmaier's first Anabaptist writings.²²⁷ There is every reason to read these writings as a further development of ideas of the Grebel circle in Zurich and, in fact, to read Hubmaier's writings as having developed in dialogue with Grebel himself.²²⁸ Hubmaier's early Anabaptist writings—published less than six months after the initial adult baptisms in Zurich—are the first to present a theologically coherent Anabaptist ecclesiology that was reflected by actual ecclesial practice.

A Summary of the Entire Christian Life was written in Anabaptist Waldshut and published on July 1, 1525.²²⁹ In it Balthasar Hubmaier described the essence of being an Anabaptist believer and church member in five points. Hubmaier began with repentance, as did the Zollikon Anabaptists, and points to Mark 1:15 as identifying the first step in the Anabaptist [Christian] life: "Repent and believe the gospel." Hubmaier called for a fundamental human reorientation, concluding, "Such a miserable little thing is the person who ponders and recognizes himself."²³⁰ Hubmaier was convinced that profound self-examination, lamentation, despair and repentance occupy the first step on the way to a truly Christian life, a sentiment that resonated with the Zollikon experience.

225. See Jacob Hottinger's letter to the Zurich Council, excusing his actions, in QGTS, I, #113, 113 (before mid-October, 1525), and Hubmaier's own testimony concerning the visit, *ibid.* #179, 194. Jacob Hottinger made yet another trip to Waldshut with Anthony Roggenacher, as Hubmaier testified later, before the November disputation of 1525, and Heini Aberli and Uli Hottinger of Zollikon had also visited and talked with him. QGTS, I, #179, 194. When Hubmaier had to flee Waldshut, he was given refuge in Zurich by Aberli.

226. Hubmaier testified later regarding the "Zollikoners" that they had spoken together only about baptism, and besides baptism he knew of no other "league" (or "covenant": *verpüntnus*).—QGTS, I, 196.

227. Bergsten dates the visit between Easter, 1525 and the end of July.—Bergsten, *Hubmaier*, 242.

228. Against Yoder's conclusion that "even after his turning to Anabaptism, we hear little of Hubmaier's relationship to the other Anabaptist leaders."—*Anabaptism and Reformation*, 41.

229. Pipkin and Yoder, *Hubmaier*, 81-89. Oddly, Yoder omits mention of this writing and reports that Hubmaier's "first contribution to the dialogue" was *On the Christian Baptism of Believers*.—Yoder, *Anabaptism and Reformation*, 41.

230. *Ibid.*, 84.

The second step is accepting healing by the Great Physician. This is the step of faith or believing the Gospel, an inward surrender of the heart.²³¹ Along with this trust and surrender come healing and power, so that the sinner sets out on a new life, "according to the rule and teaching of Christ, the physician who has made him whole, from whom he received life."²³² The strong linking of faith with fruit, or a new life, which is so evident in the Zollikon testimonies, is prominently highlighted by Hubmaier, who emphasizes the grace and power of God's Spirit in the process.

The third step in the Christian life, according to Hubmaier's tract, is the public action of baptism.²³³ Baptism is a public "registry" into the Christian community, and as such it is also a commitment to church discipline. Baptism signifies, says Hubmaier, that if the new believer "henceforth blackens or shames the faith and name of Christ with public or offensive sins, he herewith submits and surrenders to brotherly discipline according to the order of Christ, Matt.18:15ff."²³⁴ Here we see for the first time the programmatic institution of church discipline *in connection with* adult baptism and the celebration of the Lord's Supper. The linking of baptism and the Supper to church discipline had a lineage among the Zurich Anabaptists that points back to Conrad Grebel and Jacob Hottinger. It may well be that Hubmaier learned this connection from the Zurich group, but in any case, it was he who first gave it theological and programmatic expression in the context of a functioning Anabaptist community.

The fourth point in a truly Christian life, said Hubmaier, is dependence on the power of God, joyful proclamation and bearing good fruit in spite of persecution. The repentant and baptized believer must be prepared to confess publicly that all the good that has happened has taken place "in the grace and power of God."²³⁵ Part of the good fruit that results, says Hubmaier, is an evangelistic explosion.²³⁶ The missionary impulse, seen in Zollikon and other places, is embedded by Hubmaier in Anabaptist ecclesiology, based in the powerful inward work and grace of God in believers. The flesh and the world, however, will resist the proclamation of such a message and the witness of such a changed life, even in a "majoritarian" baptizing church, as Hubmaier knew well.

231. "Through such words of comfort the sinner is enlivened again, comes to himself, becomes joyful, and henceforth surrenders himself entirely to the physician."—Ibid.

232. Ibid., 85.

233. Ibid.

234. Ibid., 85-86.

235. Ibid., 86.

236. Ibid.

Hubmaier wrote from Waldshut, "Here follow persecution, the cross, and all tribulation." Although Hubmaier sought political legitimacy for a church of baptized believers, nevertheless this was not a triumphant church of those who rule others, but rather a church that could expect persecution. Hubmaier reminds his readers that faith "is not idle but is industrious in all good Christian works," underlining again the central linkage of faith and works that would remain a hallmark of Anabaptist teaching.

The fifth point is the thankful celebration of the Lord's Supper with the brothers and sisters in the community of faith, celebrating the fact that the will of Christ is that members share materially with one another, in their mutual need. Hubmaier accepted the memorial shape of the Supper as outlined by Zwingli and accepted by the Zurich radicals, but he also incorporated the marked emphasis (seen in the Zollikon testimonies) that the celebration of the Supper by members in the community is a pledge by believers to share with one another to the highest degree, giving "life, property, and blood" for each other.

Hubmaier returned to the theme of grace, saying, "For if [God] does not give us grace, we are already lost. We are human, we have been human, and we will remain human beings until death."²³⁷ This emphasis on human limitations was quite deliberate. Hubmaier's carefully nuanced theology of grace and works was a response to Zwingli's published criticism of perfectionism (which Zwingli aimed specifically at Felix Mantz, not Grebel, in court testimonies); it also reflects a theological point of tension that would continue to work itself out in the Anabaptist movement. Hubmaier's writing was aimed externally as a response to Zwingli, but internally as a response to a perfectionist and separatist strand of Anabaptist thought, articulated directly by Felix Mantz—though not by Conrad Grebel.

In May of 1525, Zwingli had published *Of Baptism, Rebaptism and Infant Baptism*, written specifically to combat the growing Anabaptist movement in St. Gallen.²³⁸ Two months after the appearance of Zwingli's book, and just ten days after the publication of *A Summary*, Hubmaier published a small masterpiece, *On the Christian Baptism of Believers*, his second Anabaptist writing, apparently composed in five days; it included the previously-published *Summary of the Entire Christian Life* as

237. *Ibid.*, 88.

238. Potter, *Zwingli*, 190-92. English translation (abridged) in "Of Baptism," ed. and trans. G. W. Bromiley, in *Zwingli and Bullinger*, 129-175. Some sections untranslated in Bromiley are available in Harder, *Sources*, 362-374.

an appendix.²³⁹ *On the Christian Baptism of Believers* was an explicit reply to Zwingli, but it also provided detailed scriptural argumentation for adult baptism.²⁴⁰ It soon was circulating far and wide, known in Basel, in the Zurich area, in Zollikon and especially in the Grüningen district where Conrad Grebel was now active.²⁴¹

Whereas the "Letter to Müntzer" and Mantz's "Protestation" were private communications, known to historians today only because they happened to be preserved in archives, Hubmaier's baptism book was printed, published and widely distributed, and it had an immediate impact on the baptizing movement and the wider reform stream. It was the first publication to present systematic biblical arguments for adult baptism and, furthermore, it concluded with a clear and simple ecclesiology based on adult baptism. The nonpolemical tone of the book, its clear organization, straightforward language and convincing presentation of a wide range of biblical evidence made it the essential Anabaptist handbook. The biblical evidence Hubmaier presented would be presented throughout the movement's history.

The fact that Hubmaier's two publications of July 1525 have either been passed over in silence or marginalized as idiosyncratic by historians writing on Swiss Anabaptism is undoubtedly due to Hubmaier's support for the military action of his baptized and non-baptized Waldshut parishioners, and the conclusion by many historians that Conrad Grebel was intransigently nonresistant—the primary (and virtually only) evidence supporting the latter conclusion being the "Letter to Müntzer." Hubmaier's position in this regard has never been in doubt: he was not then, nor would he be later, nonresistant.²⁴² But there are also very good reasons to doubt Conrad Grebel's ecclesiological commitment to nonresistance, especially given the concrete fruits of his Anabaptist leadership in Zollikon, Hallau and Waldshut, and later in St. Gallen, Tablat and Grüningen, as we will see momentarily.

239. Pipkin and Yoder, *Hubmaier*, 93-149.

240. Even supporters acknowledge that Zwingli's writing is scattered and exegetically thin, and that it fails to demonstrate the need for infant baptism. See Bromiley, *Zwingli and Bullinger*, 125-126; Yoder, *Anabaptism and Reformation*, 43. Zwingli undertook a printed refutation of Hubmaier in November, 1525 entitled "A True and Well-Grounded Answer to Doctor Balthasar's Booklet on Baptism"; Hubmaier responded with "A Dialogue on Zwingli's Baptism Booklet."—Bergsten, *Hubmaier*, 264.

241. Bergsten, *Hubmaier*, 262; the chronicler Johannes Stumpf noted that the treatise "enjoyed quick and wide distribution."—Pipkin and Yoder, *Hubmaier*, 96. Zwingli received his copy in October from Oecolampadius (Basel) and Oecolampadius reported that others had it long before he did.—Bergsten, *Hubmaier*, 261-262. Berchtold Haller in Bern reported that "Balthasar's clear exposition of Scripture is misleading many."—Cited in Yoder, "Balthasar Hubmaier," 11.

242. See the discussion in Stayer, *Sword*, 104-107.

There was documented resistance to the use of the sword in Waldshut by individual Anabaptists, but none of it involved Conrad Grebel, Wilhelm Reublin, Johannes Bröti or the Zollikon Anabaptists. Jakob Groß and Ulrich Teck of Waldshut agreed to take up arms in defense of Waldshut, but refused to promise to use them to kill, and so were expelled from the city.²⁴³ Hubmaier testified later that he had been called a "blood sucker" by some in Waldshut for allowing the use of arms by Christians. Certainly the question of the legitimate use of the sword was being debated here and there in early Swiss Anabaptism, but it was Felix Mantz who championed a strongly nonresistant position throughout.²⁴⁴ We search in vain for evidence of friction on questions of the sword between Hubmaier on the one side, and Grebel and the Zollikon Anabaptists on the other.

Hubmaier's writing on baptism of July 11, 1525, described an Anabaptist position on "Christian government" that reflected the actual practice of the Anabaptist communities founded by the Grebel circle throughout 1525. Hubmaier wrote:

We confess publicly that there should be a government which carries the sword, that we want and should be obedient to the same in all things that are not contrary to God, and the more the same is Christian the more it desires from God to rule with the wisdom of Solomon so that it does not deviate either to the right nor to the left against God.²⁴⁵

Hubmaier's position on government and the sword was not in line with the statement in the Müntzer letter in 1524 that Christians never take weapons, nor did it agree with Felix Mantz's testimony to the court

243. Historians sometimes point to Jakob Groß's refusal of the sword as the product of his being won for Anabaptism by Grebel; such suggestions leave unmentioned that he was actually baptized by Hubmaier, in Waldshut. The suggestion that Grebel was responsible for Groß's "pacifism" is simply reading back from the assumption that Grebel was militantly nonresistant. See QGTS, I, #107, 108-09, for testimony concerning Groß and Teck. There is no evidence that they were expelled from the Waldshut church; their expulsion appears to have been a strictly civil matter.

244. The November 1525 accusations and court testimonies in Zurich are revealing. Grebel is accused of saying that government should be abolished—an accusation he denies—but Mantz is accused of teaching that no Christian may use the sword—an accusation he affirms. Grebel is not accused of teaching nonresistance by either Zwingli or Hofmeister, the latter of whom distinguishes clearly between the subjects Grebel and Mantz addressed when they spoke with him in Schaffhausen. It was Mantz, said Hofmeister, who held to nonresistance and denied that Christians could be in government. See QGTS, I, #120, 121, 122, 124, pp. 122-128, *passim*; translation of relevant passages in Harder, *Sources*, 436-442.

245. Balthasar Hubmaier, *On the Christian Baptism of Believers*, in Pipkin and Yoder, *Hubmaier*, 98.

in November 1525, or Schleitheim's later separation of Christians from the sword of government. But Hubmaier's position coincides with Zwingli's report of the 'believers' church of the majority" proposed in 1523 by Grebel and Stumpf (and Mantz, Zwingli says), and also coincides with the practiced ecclesiology of the Anabaptist communities founded by the Grebel circle in 1525. Wherever possible, the first Anabaptists moved to establish baptizing communities with local political support. The Anabaptist communities founded in the spring of 1525 in St. Gallen, Tablat and Grüningen demonstrated the same pattern of believers' churches seeking and welcoming local political support wherever possible. Again, Conrad Grebel was hard at work in those communities.

St. Gallen

The political and religious directions of St. Gallen in this period were linked to the leadership of Joachim von Watt, better known as Vadian, who contemporaries described as "an imposing figure," but also "the personification of friendliness."²⁴⁶ After a career at the University of Vienna, where he became rector in 1516, he returned to St. Gallen in 1518, never to leave again; the following year he married Martha Grebel, Conrad Grebel's sister. His political career in St. Gallen began in 1521, when he became a member of the Great Council. In 1523 Vadian was hired as city physician, a position that was renewed three years later. As already noted, he represented St. Gallen at the second disputation held at Zurich. In 1526 he was elected burgomaster of the city.²⁴⁷

St. Gallen was governed by two city councils: the more powerful small council, consisting of twenty-four members, represented wealthy interests; members of the small council also sat on the large council of ninety members, a majority of whom were rank-and-file guild representatives, of which the weaver's guild (linen workers) was the largest. In St. Gallen, the political struggle between the guilds and the patricians took shape in the 1520s in the struggle for and against reforming ideas, with Vadian leading the "democratic" reform movement. For a time the established ecclesial organizations in the city lost the initiative in religious matters, giving way to private meetings and gatherings led by members of the laity.²⁴⁸

Lay-led Bible study groups carried the burden of reforming ideas in St. Gallen beginning in the early 1520s, initially led by Johannes Kessler.

246. Emil Egli, *Die St. Galler Täufer* (Zurich: Schulthess, 1887), 10.

247. Egli, *St. Galler Täufer*, 8-10.

248. Egli, *St. Galler Täufer*, 7-11.

His Bible studies led to the city council's mandate of April 4, 1524, which called for the teaching and preaching of the Gospel, but Catholic opposition within St. Gallen and from the Catholic cantons led to his being silenced.²⁴⁹ Wolfgang Uliman, a son of the guildmaster Anders Uliman and a former monk at St. Luke in Chur, was asked to read in place of Kessler. Uliman began reading to ever-larger crowds, finally ending up in the spacious churchyard of St. Mangen. On November 14, 1524, the St. Gallen council decreed that only those who had been ordained to preach in the churches were to preach there; however, the council did not wish "either to forbid or encourage reading outside the church."²⁵⁰ This was at least a partial victory for the lay readers, while protecting St. Gallen from Catholic charges that they were allowing preaching by pastors who had not been ordained for that purpose. It was a transparent sleight of hand, involving the casuistic fiction—consistently maintained by the St. Gallen council—that lay Bible "reading" was not "preaching."

When winter came, the reading assembly moved to the marketplace, into the butchers' hall.²⁵¹ This was the largest hall in the city outside the churches, and was frequently used for dances, parties and entertainment. The hall was capable of accommodating about 1,000 people, and it soon filled to capacity for the readings. In response to continued complaints, the council decided to allow the lay-reading crowd to move their readings from the butchers' hall into the church of St. Lawrence.²⁵² On Sunday, February 2, 1525, "for the first time, against the old custom, common people (ungwichten Personen) read or taught in the church." So reports Kessler, noting further that the readings took place every Sunday and Friday morning at 5 and at 6.²⁵³ The council decree marked the end of uncontrolled, extra-ecclesial lay reading in the city. Now that the pressure for reform was virtually irresistible in the city, the council set out to control the pace. There were many adherents of reform, however, who were not disposed to limit themselves to the more formal and monitored church setting. Extra-ecclesial lay reading continued after the council decree on February 3, and became the natural context for the reception of Anabaptist ideas, soon to arrive from Zurich.

249. QGTS, II, #417, 354; QGTS, II, #418, 354; and Kessler's account, *ibid.*, 594-595.

250. QGTS, II, #424, 359.

251. QGTS, II, 596.

252. See QGTS, II, #430, 364-365 for rumors reaching the council concerning the lay reading in the marketplace. The decision to move the reading into the church of St. Lawrence is dated Feb. 3, 1525; QGTS, II, #432, 367-368.

253. Kessler, *Sabbata*, QGTS, II, 597.

Serious opposition to infant baptism arrived in St. Gallen in the summer of 1524, in the person of Lorenz Hochrütiner.²⁵⁴ According to Kessler, Hochrütiner objected to infant baptism when Kessler began expounding the beginning of Romans, chapter 6, which speaks of baptism as dying to sin and rising to a new life.²⁵⁵ Lorenz Hochrütiner provided an immediate connection to Andreas Castelberger's Bible study group and the radical party that grew from it. Hochrütiner had been present at the famous sausage-eating episode of 1522 in Froschauer's house, and had returned home to St. Gallen after being banished from Zurich. He maintained his connections with Grebel and the radical circle after his banishment.²⁵⁶

There were strong connections between the broader reform movement in Zurich and the efforts in St. Gallen. Vadian maintained close ties with Zwingli,²⁵⁷ and in the early years of Zurich's reform, Conrad Grebel provided a personal connection to Zwingli and carried on a constant correspondence with Vadian, in whom he confided and whose reform efforts he encouraged. As Grebel found himself at odds with Zwingli, he attempted to influence Vadian in the same direction, as correspondence shows.²⁵⁸ By the fall of 1524, however, Grebel's attempt to turn Vadian against Zwingli had received a "paternal" rebuff. Vadian was not disposed to radical solutions and appears to have written Grebel in support of infant baptism already in November of 1524.²⁵⁹ When Grebel's break with Zwingli became irrevocable with the adult baptisms

254. Already on July 21, 1523, Benedict Burgauer had written to Conrad Grebel from St. Gallen that he was having to struggle against people who were saying "that infants who have no faith of their own should not be baptized."—Harder, *Sources*, 223; QGTS, II, #403, 330, and n. 4.

255. Egli, *St. Galler Täufer*, 17; translation in Harder, *Sources*, 297-298. See also Heinold Fast, "Die Sonderstellung der Täufer in St. Gallen und Appenzell," *Zwingliana* 11 (1960), 223-240.

256. See Packull, "Origins of Swiss Anabaptism," 36-59; Goeters, "Vorgeschichte." Kessler attributed Hochrütiner's opposition to infant baptism in 1524 to his being a "zealous disciple" of Conrad Grebel.—Harder, *Sources*, 297.

257. Both the city preacher, Benedict Burgauer, and Vadian's cousin and council member, Georg von Watt, leaned in Luther's direction in the interpretation of the Supper.—Egli, *St. Galler Täufer*, 10.

258. See Harder, *Sources*, for the full collection of fifty-six extant letters written by Grebel to Vadian.

259. Grebel disavowed Zwingli as a "true shepherd" already in December 18, 1523, in a letter to Vadian. See Harder, *Sources*, #59, 276. His letters to Vadian from September and October, 1524 continue to depict Zwingli negatively.—Harder, *Sources*, #62, 282-84; *ibid.*, #65, 294-296. Vadian wrote to Grebel on November 23, 1524, sending along a "booklet" (no longer extant) which appears to have defended infant baptism.—Harder, *Sources*, #66, 298-299. In Grebel's reply of December 23, 1524, he is still attempting to turn Vadian against Zwingli.—Harder, *Sources*, #67, 301-303; see also Vadian's response of December 23, in which he counsels Grebel to patience and an attitude of "humble propriety" towards Zwingli and the preachers.—Harder, *Sources*, #67D, 321-322

of January of 1525, Grebel continued to hope that St. Gallen could be turned in an Anabaptist direction, but Zwingli was also writing directly to Vadian, and clearly had Vadian's ear.²⁶⁰

The beginning of adult baptism in St. Gallen was connected directly to Zurich and the Grebel circle. Early in February, Gabriel Giger of St. Gallen reported that he had been "told by Spirit" to get baptized in Zurich, and that he had obeyed the Spirit and accepted baptism in Felix Mantz's house, at the hands of Conrad Grebel.²⁶¹ About a month after the first baptisms in Zurich, the new leader of the lay-reading movement in St. Gallen, Wolfgang Uliman, met Conrad Grebel near Schaffhausen²⁶² and, in Kessler's words, "was led by (Grebel) into such a high knowledge of baptism that he did not wish to be merely sprinkled with water from a pitcher, but rather dunked under, entirely naked, in the Rhine by Grebel."²⁶³ He returned to St. Gallen and began the baptizing movement there.²⁶⁴ Hochrütiner had provided the link between Uliman and Grebel.

Kessler reported that Uliman was a changed man when he returned from his baptism. A large meeting was held in mid-March 1525, in the weavers' guild hall, at which Uliman was asked to assist Zili in the lay readings at the church of St. Lawrence. Uliman refused, and offered to share what the Lord had given him in any other place but the church.²⁶⁵ Those who were promoting adult baptism did not wish to be restricted to official times and parish churches. By March 25, Conrad Grebel was present in St. Gallen, and working there for the baptizing movement that was already underway. He was reported to have baptized an estimated 300 people in the Sitter River on Palm Sunday, on April 9, 1525, and to have preached to crowds in the Weavers' hall.²⁶⁶ That same week, however, Grebel left the city.

Shortly after Grebel's visit to St. Gallen, but before April 16, 1525, a commoner from Schwyz named Bolt Eberli came to St. Gallen along with Anthony Roggenacher, an unnamed priest and one of the many Hottingers from Zollikon. Once in St. Gallen, Eberli accepted baptism

260. See Zwingli's letters to Vadian in Harder, *Sources*, #68D, 336-37 (Jan. 19, 1525) and #68M, 356 (March 31, 1525). In this latter writing Zwingli exhorts Vadian to "strengthen yourself, lest you be seduced by his [Grebel's] opinion."— Harder, *Sources*, 356.

261. QGTS, I, #41, 49 (testimony dated Feb. 18, 1525).

262. Bender, *Grebel*, 143.

263. QGTS, II, 604 (Mar. 18, 1525).

264. Egli, *St. Gallen Täufer*, 23.

265. QGTS, II, 604 (March 18, 1525).

266. Kessler's account translated in Harder, *Sources*, 361; QGTS, II, 605.

and began a remarkable preaching mission. Kessler reports that he preached on "the hill known now as Berlisberg," and that "almost the entire town gathered there to hear the peasant."²⁶⁷ Kessler continues the story by noting that "after this, [Eberli] preached at the Butcher's Hall in the city on the Easter holidays and every day of the following weeks." The Anabaptist movement continued to gain strength as news spread. Kessler reports derisively that "many of the citizens and rural people consented [to rebaptism], especially from Gotzhus and Appenzell. They came to the city daily and asked where the baptism house was and then left again as if they had been to the barber's."²⁶⁸ Eberli was expelled from the city soon after Easter, and shortly afterwards met a martyr's death in his native Schwyz.

At the end of April, Wolfgang Uliman was accused of saying publicly at his reading that the truth was not being preached from the pulpit. It was reported also that he had been baptizing adults and preaching here and there. There was an obvious and growing division in the pro-evangelical ranks among the readers as well as among the common people.²⁶⁹ Kessler estimated that the Anabaptists numbered some 800 baptized members. In April and May of 1525, Anabaptism took on the character of a mass movement in the political space that St. Gallen provided; that space would soon disappear inside the city.

As the growth of an Anabaptist party increased religious conflict in the city,²⁷⁰ there were two neighboring reform models to consider: the embattled and newly-minted Anabaptist city of Waldshut under Hubmaier's guidance,²⁷¹ and the powerful reformed city of Zurich under Zwingli's leadership. In what undoubtedly was the only prudent political course, St. Gallen looked to Zurich and Zwingli for guidance. Both Vadian and Conrad Grebel composed writings on the issue of baptism; their writings were read before the council on May 19, 1525, and read publicly on June 5. The most significant writing, however, was Zwingli's first book on baptism, published on May 28, 1525, and

267. QGTS, II, 606; translation from Harder, *Sources*, 377. Historians have generally followed Kessler, who inverted Eberli's names. Most of the literature speaks of "Eberli Bolt," when in fact his given name "Bolt" was a shortened form of Hypolitus; his family name was Eberli. See Harder, *Sources*, #69E, 376.

268. *Ibid.*

269. QGTS, II, #444, 378-380 (Apr. 25-26, 1525).

270. See QGTS, #437, 372; #436, 371-372; #439, 373-375; #440, 375-376, Apr. 7 and 10, 1525.

271. Hubmaier was well-known in St. Gallen. Vadian reported some years later that "more than once I tried to divert Balthasar Hubmaier from the madness of my friend Grebel." These efforts would have taken place after April 1525 and indicate correspondence and/or personal contact between Vadian and Hubmaier.—Harder, *Sources*, 525.

dedicated to the city of St. Gallen. The city council ordered the entire book to be read in the church of St. Lawrence to all and sundry; those supporting Anabaptism especially were to be present.

On the occasion of the reading of Zwingli's book, Anabaptist supporters stationed themselves at the back of the balcony, and when Dominic Zili raised the book to start reading, Uliman shouted out, "Oh, I am sorry that the poor people present here are to be misled by such a book. Stop reading and give us God's Word instead of Zwingli's." Kessler reports that the majority of those present were won over by the Anabaptists.²⁷² But as May led to June, the political tide turned against Anabaptism in St. Gallen. By June 6 the St. Gallen council had decreed against Grebel and the Anabaptists, in favor of the infant baptism of Vadian and Zwingli: henceforth all were to stop baptizing adults and celebrating the Supper. One day of "reading" at the church of St. Lawrence church was still allowed—presumably as long as it was not done in defense of Anabaptist beliefs.²⁷³

The Anabaptist movement in St. Gallen took on the general outlines that were seen in early Swiss Anabaptism elsewhere, with some local distinctives. It was a reform movement based on the voluntary baptism of believers that was, at the same time, working for mass appeal and hoping to win political support from the city. Uliman's refusal to "read" in the council-controlled church was not so much a separatist move as it was a move to remain independent of council control. The pivotal figure in St. Gallen was Vadian. If Vadian could have been convinced to at least allow a continuing space for Anabaptism in St. Gallen (as Grebel begged him to do in his letter of May 30, 1525),²⁷⁴ St. Gallen might have moved slowly in the Waldshut direction of a religiously pluralist city, perhaps eventually with an Anabaptist majority. Of course this was immensely more politically complicated for St. Gallen than it was for Waldshut, and would have been suicidal in the context of Swiss Confederation politics. Vadian did not choose this course.

For the brief period when it was allowed to flourish in St. Gallen, Anabaptism displayed the same flexible ecclesiology that was visible in Swiss Anabaptism elsewhere. The mass baptisms and mass celebrations of the Lord's Supper in St. Gallen mirror the practice in Zollikon and the mass baptisms in Waldshut. While there were calls for a "new life" in

272. QGTS, II, 610; Harder, *Sources*, 383.

273. QGTS, II, #457, 389-390 (June 6, 1525).

274. Grebel wrote "If you do not want to stand with the brethren, at least do not resist them. . . ."—Harder, *Sources*, 379.

connection with baptism, the baptismal celebrations in St. Gallen did not indicate a rigorous commitment to communal discipline, to nonresistance or to a "separated church." In the countryside and the neighboring villages—especially those under the control of the abbot and monastery—the acceptance of baptism mirrored events in Hallau, with some peasants accepting baptism as part of their manifestation of religious independence and political protest.

In St. Gallen, the council now took control of ecclesiastical reform, moved reforming activity into the churches and increasingly implemented reform by legal means: the June decree against Anabaptist activity was followed by another in September 1525, which strictly forbade any meetings outside the church; people also were forbidden to give shelter to any strangers, be they men or women, who dealt with Anabaptist matters.²⁷⁵ There was a further strengthening of the decree in February, 1526,²⁷⁶ and by 1527 St. Gallen had joined Zurich and Bern in signing a mandate against the Anabaptists.²⁷⁷

Tablat and St. Georgen near St. Gallen

In the second week of June, in 1525, Melchior Degen, officer for the St. Gallen abbey, reported by letter that on June 3 he had been traveling from Frauenfeld to St. Gallen when he heard that an Anabaptist by the name of Hans Krüsi was reading and baptizing in the villages of St. Georgen and Tablat, less than a kilometer from St. Gallen. On the basis of a mandate just released concerning Anabaptism, he along with another officer and several soldiers rode to St. Georgen and read the mandate to the Anabaptists there. The large crowd, however, abused the officers verbally and eventually began pelting them with stones. Degen reported further that on June 6—the day the mandate against Anabaptism was published in St. Gallen—the "entire community" in Tablat elected Krüsi to read, baptize and celebrate the Lord's Supper, and proclaimed that they would continue doing this regardless of what anyone said.²⁷⁸

Hans Krüsi had been born in St. Georgen and was part of the numerous Krüsi clan there, to which his mother belonged. His name actually was Hans Nagel and he resided in his paternal home town of Klingnau; he was a teacher's assistant who worked for a time in the

275. QGTS, II, #474, 401-402 (Sept. 11, 1525). The prohibition against giving shelter to strangers may have been connected to the presence and activity of Hans Denck in St. Gallen at this time. See QGTS, II, #476, 402-403; esp. 403, n. 5.

276. QGTS, II, #485, 408-409 (Feb. 9, 1526).

277. Text of the "Abschied" in QGTS, II, 1-7 (Aug. 14 and Sept. 9, 1527).

278. QGTS, II, #349, 251-253.

village of Wil, some thirty kilometers west of St. Gallen.²⁷⁹ He appears to have joined the Anabaptist movement in St. Gallen at the beginning of April of 1525; in his first prison testimony he identified as his companions all the leading Anabaptists of the city. He testified that he was won over to the movement by Conrad Grebel himself, and further testified that Grebel had left a small, handwritten book with him and explained it to him.²⁸⁰ Krüsi appears to have spent a short time back at Wil, promoting Anabaptism, before returning to the St. Gallen area again, this time attempting to learn the trade of weaver while remaining involved in Anabaptist matters.

The peasants under the lordship of the abbot of the monastery in the countryside and villages surrounding St. Gallen were at the point of open rebellion.²⁸¹ The abbot's legal representative, Dr. Christoph Winkler, was particularly reviled. It came to such a point that in March 1525, the peasants of Tablat actually arrested Winkler for a time, a case that was heard at the Confederate Diet. It was amid this tension-filled atmosphere that Krüsi preached his Anabaptist message.

Hans Krüsi had been active in preaching and baptizing in the abbot's villages well before Melchior Degen and his men were insulted and pelted with stones. In his court testimony, Krüsi told a slightly different story than did Degen. Krüsi said that he had been preaching to the crowd when Degen came, and he told the assembled that they should pray for Degen, so that he might come to a true faith. Krüsi had told the crowd that they were to be more obedient to God than to men, and that according to the living Word of God no one should pay tithes.²⁸² It appears that the peasants who heard Krüsi's words took them as confirmation of their rebellion. Krüsi's election as pastor by the Tablat community was a religious act of rebellion that had significant political overtones.

Krüsi's activities as an Anabaptist pastor did not last long, but he testified that he preached against images, which led to acts of iconoclasm; he performed marriages; he promoted a voluntary

279. Krüsi's biography is found in Heinold Fast, "Hans Krüsis Büchlein über Glauben und Taufe," in ed. Cornelius J. Dyck, *A Legacy of Faith* (Newton, Kan.: Faith and Life Press, 1962), 213-222. See also Stayer, *Sword*, 110-111.

280. This was the "Concordance" on Faith and Baptism. See the case made for Grebel's authorship by Fast, "Hans Krüsis Büchlein," 228ff.

281. Fast mentions Rotmonten, Tablat, Straubenzell and Bernhardzell as representative of even more communities.—Fast, "Hans Krüsis Büchlein," 217.

282. From Krüsi's confession in Luzern, QGTS, II, #354, 262-265; trans. in Harder, *Sources*, 424.

community of goods in which those with means were to share with those in need; all was to be shared in the love of God and in faith; he baptized so many people that he confessed he did not know the number. As in Hallau, the baptizing movement in the villages outside St. Gallen turned into a mass movement that merged with the local rebellion of the common people.²⁸³

Krüsi was soon arrested in St. Gallen for uttering defamatory statements about the authorities in public. He was released on oath on June 16, having promised never to reveal what had gone on during his imprisonment. He was allowed to stay in the city as long as he stuck to his weaving, and left baptism, preaching and the Lord's Supper alone. Krüsi weakened, however, when Beda Miles begged him to "read" again, and not to fall away from the faith; the congregation in St. Georgen also pressured him, and soon he was preaching and baptizing again.

This time the monastery authorities saw to his arrest. Melchior Degen surprised Krüsi at night in mid-July, asleep in his bed in St. Georgen. Krüsi's supporters had organized for this eventuality, and a large number of the neighboring villages had pledged to protect and defend Krüsi with life and limb, but his arrest in the dead of night took them by surprise. Degen began transporting the arrested Krüsi to the castle of Oberberg, west of St. Gallen. As they passed through a small village on the way, Krüsi began shouting loudly, "Where are you now, you who promised me help?!"²⁸⁴ No help came at that hour, although Krüsi's followers did set up a watch around the castle, ready to free Krüsi if there were an attempt to move him. The authorities were anxious to get Krüsi out of the St. Gallen region and to Luzern for trial, but the travel promised to be dangerous, given the mood of the local peasants.²⁸⁵ Finally on July 20, Krüsi was successfully transported to Luzern, the militantly Catholic canton. There Krüsi was condemned to death by fire as a heretic, a sentence that was carried out on July 27, 1525.

The case of Krüsi, Tablat and the villages around St. Gallen is another concrete historical instance in which the Anabaptism taught and promoted directly by Conrad Grebel and his circle in 1525 took full advantage of peasant dissatisfaction and unrest. Anabaptism in these villages made common cause with peasant resistance and moved into the political space that resistance created. This Anabaptism was not apolitical, separatist or nonresistant.

283. Fast, "Hans Krüsi's Büchlein," 218. See Krüsi's confession, QGTS, II, #354, 262-265.

284. Cited in Fast, "Hans Krüsi's Büchlein," 221; original from Rütiner's "Diarium," QGTS, II, 583.

285. QGTS, II, #351, 256-257.

The Grüningen District

We return to the peripatetic Conrad Grebel to continue the story of the spread of Swiss Anabaptism in 1525. When Grebel left St. Gallen before Easter, April 16, 1525, his movements fall into the shadows for a time. It is assumed that he resided quietly in Zurich, with some possible activity indicated in Oberwinterthur.²⁸⁶ In early June he traveled with Jacob Hottinger to Waldshut, to confer with Balthasar Hubmaier, as already noted.²⁸⁷ On his return from Waldshut, Grebel moved to the area southeast of Zurich, and worked in and around Grüningen from the end of June until his arrest by Zurich authorities on October 8.²⁸⁸

Grebel was familiar with the Grüningen area, having spent significant time there in his youth, when his father was the magistrate representing Zurich in Grüningen (1499-1512). The peasants in the Grüningen district had formerly been independent, but increasingly they were coming under the control of Zurich; the tension between the local population and the city had already broken into open revolt. Opposition to tithes was widespread in the spring of 1525, and in April the monastery of Rüti was plundered by a peasant mob.²⁸⁹ Among the demands of the peasants was the power to choose their own pastors, a request rejected by the city.²⁹⁰ Conrad Grebel and his companions again came preaching Anabaptism into a situation that was ripe with rebellion, and Grebel was not above fanning the flames with inflammatory reports of Zwingli's intentions. According to one witness Grebel reported to the assembled at Hinwil that Zwingli wanted 300 to 400 peasants shot to death, and that Zwingli had said (according to Grebel) that three or four of the leaders who were refusing to pay tithes should have their heads cut off, and then the rest would think twice.²⁹¹ While Grebel was not the instigator of tithe unrest in Grüningen, and was primarily preaching adult baptism, he was again ready to capitalize on local political unrest to create a space for his

286. Harder, *Sources*, #70E, 411, introduction.

287. Hottinger's letter of apology is found in Harder, *Sources*, #70E, 411-412.

288. Bender, *Grebel*, 148-149.

289. On the question of the tithe unrest and its relationship to later Anabaptism, see Matthias Hui, "Von Bauernaufstand zur Täuferbewegung," *Mennonitische Geschichtsblätter* 46 (1989), 113-144; on the Rüti episode and political background, 117-119. See also James Stayer, "Anabaptists and Future Anabaptists in the Peasants' War," *MQR* 62 (1988), 99-135, esp. 114-116 for Grüningen.

290. Bender, *Grebel*, 148.

291. Harder, *Sources*, #70F (3), 415; see 732, n.15 for a brief summary of the tithe issue in Grüningen.

counter-Zwinglian reform—buzzing around scenes of peasant unrest “like a bee seeking pollen,” to use James Stayer’s words.²⁹²

As in Hallau, Waldshut and the villages around St. Gallen, the population of Grüningen was receptive to the message and the baptizing movement quickly gained strength. Conrad Grebel won local support with a combination of public preaching, private reading and meetings with local pastors.²⁹³ On July 2 he preached to large assemblies in the villages of Hinwil and Bäretswyl.²⁹⁴ It is known that he was planning to preach publicly at Gossau on July 9 and at Dürnten on the 16th, he did not make the first date but may have preached at Dürnten. Grebel was assisted by Anabaptists from Zollikon, and part of their message was plainly anti-Zwinglian, for Grebel and Marx Bosshart of Zollikon were ordered to appear in Zurich to defend themselves against the charge that they had said that Zwingli had written outright lies. Grebel refused to go without assurances that he would not be arrested; Bosshart, Fridli Schumacher and Hans Oggemfuss of Zollikon did go, and were arrested immediately.²⁹⁵

Grebel and his Zollikon friends were joined by other Anabaptists, including Ulrich Teck and Jakob Groß, the furrier from Waldshut, both of whom carried out an active Anabaptist ministry in the Grüningen district. Both had been expelled from Waldshut for refusing to kill to defend the city, and were expelled from Grüningen on September 20 for Anabaptist activity: Groß had baptized thirty-five people in a single day.²⁹⁶ Along with the Anabaptists from Waldshut, Hubmaier’s baptism book also was circulating freely in the Grüningen district.²⁹⁷ Sometime in late summer, Grebel was joined in Grüningen by George Blaurock and Felix Mantz, who had been active together in Chur and Appenzell in the previous months. All of this activity came to a head on October 8, 1525, at the village of Hinwil.

The magistrate (bailiff) representing Zurich in Grüningen was Jörg Berger, who kept a worried eye on developments and dutifully reported back to Zurich.²⁹⁸ For Berger, the earlier tithe resistance and present baptizing issues were of a piece: both involved disobedience to the

292. Stayer, “Anabaptists and Future Anabaptists,” 116.

293. See the translated documentation in Harder, *Sources*, 412-422; 429-431.

294. Harder, *Sources*, #71C, 420.

295. Bender, *Grebel*, 149-50; Harder, *Sources*, #71; 71A, 416-417.

296. Bender, *Grebel*, 152; QGTS, I, 108-109.

297. Bergsten, *Hubmaier*, 264. When Zwingli wrote to Vadian, October 11, 1525, he noted Grebel’s arrest, but also noted that he needed to write in opposition to Hubmaier’s writing on baptism.—Harder, *Sources*, #71I, 431.

298. For example, Harder, *Sources*, #71C, 420.

Zurich authorities, and obedience had to be enforced by arrest and punishment or things would get out of hand. Berger got word that Grebel, Blaurock and Mantz were going to be preaching at Hinwil on Sunday, October 8. According to Berger's report, Blaurock had begun preaching from the pulpit of the village church, with the village pastor, Hans Brennwald, remaining silent until Blaurock got to baptism. At that point Brennwald interrupted Blaurock. A commotion resulted among the 200 people gathered in the church, such that the deputy bailiff immediately sent for Berger. When Berger arrived he addressed the crowd and Blaurock, and eventually arrested Blaurock outside the church. He reported that a large crowd followed them. The crowd was set to gather in the open air at Betzholtz, another location in the district. He ordered all of this to stop, but the Anabaptists in the crowd were not disposed to obedience, saying that they would baptize anyone who asked for it. The meeting continued at Betzholtz with Grebel and Mantz present, along with a great crowd of people. Berger reported that he rode immediately to Ottikon, gathered reinforcements, and sent them back to help the deputy bailiff. This group managed to arrest Grebel, but Mantz escaped; he was arrested only three weeks later.²⁹⁹

The events in Grüningen led directly to the so-called third disputation on baptism in Zurich, November 6-8, 1525.³⁰⁰ The Anabaptists had repeatedly charged that Huldrych Zwingli's position had no warrant in Scripture and that debate was being stifled; Hubmaier's well-circulated baptism book also had made public the scriptural case for adult baptism. The November disputation in Zurich was intended to present the biblical case for Zwingli's position and to give a public hearing to the Anabaptist view. On November 5, the day before the opening of the public disputation, Zwingli published his *Answer to Balthasar Hubmaier's Baptism Book*; Bullinger remembered that it was Hubmaier's book and Zwingli's particular responses to it that dominated the agenda of the disputation.³⁰¹ The disputation was not recorded by a notary, and there is only fragmentary evidence of the long discussions.³⁰² The primary disputants were Conrad Grebel, Felix Mantz and George Blaurock on the Anabaptist side, with Zwingli, Leo Jud and Caspar Grossman opposing

299. Harder, *Sources*, #71H, 429-431.

300. A good summary is found in Yoder, *Anabaptism and Reformation*, 48-56.

301. Harder, *Sources*, 434.

302. The primary documentation is a letter from the Zurich council to Grüningen magistrates, QGTS, I, #129, 131-33, and recollections by Bullinger. See QGTS, I, #139, 141-142 for a summary of Bullinger's report. Partial translations in Harder, *Sources*, #71J, 432-436.

them. Hubmaier, who was expected to attend, dared not travel because of the presence of imperial troops in the vicinity of Waldshut. There were four presidents: Wolfgang Joner, Conrad Schmid, Sebastian Hofmeister and Vadian.

After three consecutive days of debate, the judges declared Zwingli's side to have won the scriptural debate. The council prepared a statement to that effect, and demanded obedience to their decree that adult baptism cease; the Anabaptists were not convinced. Johannes Kessler has preserved a vivid scene from the last day of the debate that aptly summarizes the divide that now existed. A peasant from Zollikon arose and adjured Zwingli by the power of the living God to tell the truth; the peasant was still convinced that Zwingli was lying. When Zwingli paid no attention, the peasant adjured him two more times to tell the truth, whereupon Zwingli replied: "I tell you one truth, that you are a rude, unskilled, seditious peasant."³⁰³ Zwingli's comment encapsulated the social, educational and political divide that had come to exist between community-oriented, lay Bible readers and the clergy sanctioned by the Zurich council. The council responded by putting the recalcitrant Anabaptists on trial, expelling those who recanted and swore oaths to desist, and imprisoning those who refused.³⁰⁴

The Zurich council still had a political and religious problem in Grüningen: the twelve local magistrates (*Amtleute*) who were supposed to carry out Zurich's orders in Grüningen were linked by family ties to local Anabaptists, and they moved at a snail's pace. Eventually a meeting was called and around 100 Anabaptists were questioned into the night at the Grüningen castle. Thirteen recanted; about ninety stood firm—or "were disobedient" as the document says. The disobedient were subsequently fined each one mark silver.³⁰⁵ On December 26, Berger summoned the Anabaptists again, and this time he imprisoned a group in the Grüningen castle, only to have all the prisoners escape a few days later, on the night of December 30.³⁰⁶ By early January, however, many Grüningen Anabaptists began to choose recantation. The mass movement in Grüningen had come to an end, although a stubborn underground Anabaptist presence remained in the district for some years to come.

303. Translation in Harder, *Sources*, 435.

304. Documentation in QGTS, I, #120-124; #133-134. Conrad Grebel, Felix Mantz, George Blaurock and Margret Hottinger all refused to recant and were locked away in the Wellenberg tower "until it pleases milords"; Ulrich Teck of Waldshut, Martin Link of Schaffhausen and Michael Sattler were all released after swearing oaths.

305. QGTS, I, #136-139, 138-142.

306. QGTS, I, #150, 151-153; #167, 171-172; summary in Yoder, *Anabaptism and Reformation*, 55-56.

Harold Bender concludes that the period of four months during which Conrad Grebel spent promoting the Anabaptist movement in Grüningen was "one of the most successful of his career as a leader of the Brethren."³⁰⁷ One could argue that Grebel's role in winning Hubmaier and Waldshut to Anabaptism in 1524 and early 1525 had a much larger long-term impact on the movement, but more significant is the question of how to characterize Grüningen Anabaptism, which was so clearly the direct product of Grebel's own proselytizing activity. Harold Bender maintained that in Grüningen, "Grebel delivered a purely religious message." John H. Yoder nuanced Bender's conclusion, recognizing a certain mixing of peasant unrest with Anabaptism. Nevertheless Yoder postulated that with the recantation of the rebaptized erstwhile peasant leaders, Hans Gyrenbader and Hans Golpacher (also called Vontobel), the provisional political elements were purged from the movement: there had been some "political" infiltrators, but after late December 1525, only "genuine Anabaptists" were left.³⁰⁸

A very different conclusion was drawn by Matthias Hui's concentrated study of events in Grüningen. Rather than making a firm distinction between rebellious peasants and Anabaptists in Grüningen, Hui concluded that some of the central leaders among the peasants, such as Gyrenbader, not only had played an earlier leading role among the rebellious peasants, but also later accepted adult baptism—in Gyrenbader's case, sometime before November 17, 1525.³⁰⁹ Furthermore, Hui concludes that Grebel, Blaurock and Mantz did not simply work alongside the peasant movement, but rather "were engaged *within* the people's movement for their own territorial reformation."³¹⁰ Hui concludes that "for the 'early Reformation period' ... no clear barriers can be drawn between the various groups (peasant-reforming movement and Anabaptism) or their guiding principles (evangelical proclamation, lay preaching, rejection of tithes, complete community autonomy, church discipline, believers' baptism)."³¹¹ Hui's conclusions concerning Grüningen echo those of James Stayer, who made clear connections between peasant unrest and Anabaptism in Grüningen, and Hans-Jürgen Goertz (who examined Hallau and Waldshut primarily) that Anabaptism

307. Bender, *Grebel*, 149.

308. Bender, *Grebel*, 153-154; Yoder, *Anabaptism and Reformation*, 56.

309. Hui, "Von Bauernaufstand," 120-121. Others who similarly participated in both movements were Hans Vontobel (or Golpacher), "bad" Uli Seiler, and Hans Maag.—*Ibid.*, 121-23.

310. Hui, "Von Bauernaufstand," 131. Italics his.

311. Hui, "Von Bauernaufstand," 137; translation mine.

arose "in, with and under" the revolutionary peasants' movement.³¹² These conclusions have been challenged by Andrea Strübind, specifically with respect to events in St. Gallen and its environs and in Grüningen. Strübind's study raises the larger question of how to interpret the events of 1525 in general, and leads us to a concluding discussion of this section of our study.

Conclusion

Andrea Strübind challenges the revisionist view that there was a "two phase" development of early Anabaptism, and sets out to demonstrate the counter-thesis that there was a "theological continuum" from Anabaptist beginnings in Zurich running directly through the events of 1525 to the separatist "free church" ecclesiology of Schleitheim in 1527. Anabaptism developed in "one phase," in other words, and was congregational and separatist from its beginnings in Zurich. A central element in Strübind's thesis, then, is her explanation of how Anabaptism developed in the midst of the events of 1525 as "primarily" a religious movement rather than "primarily" a social-revolutionary movement (as she characterizes the revisionist position).³¹³

Strübind's study is careful and thorough, within narrow limits, but falls short of providing a detailed and balanced examination of the Swiss Anabaptist movement on two counts: it fails to examine the nature and development of Swiss Anabaptism in Waldshut and Hallau, ignoring the role of Balthasar Hubmaier;³¹⁴ and secondly, her study fails to examine with sufficient rigor the actual practice of Anabaptist communities established in 1525 and 1526.

Our study has shown that when the "Letter to Müntzer" is read in light of actual ecclesiological practice in 1525, there is a marked discontinuity rather than continuity of separatist ideas.³¹⁵ The Anabaptist

312. Stayer, "Anabaptists and Future Anabaptists," 99-135; Hans-Jürgen Goertz, "Aufständische Bauern und Täufer in der Schweiz," *Mennonitische Geschichtsblätter* 46 (1989), 108; Goertz, *The Anabaptists*, 10-11.

313. Strübind, *Eifriger*, 15.

314. Strübind says only that "Because of geographical and chronological restrictions, the independent influence (eigenständige Prägung) of Balthasar Hubmaier, and of the Anabaptism influenced by him, must be excluded [from this study]."—*Eifriger*, 17; translation mine. There really are no good "chronological" or "geographical" reasons for excluding Hubmaier from a study of early Swiss Anabaptism. To call his influence "independent" simply accepts uncritically the marginalization of Hubmaier from the rest of Anabaptism. The sources demonstrate otherwise.

315. Strübind concludes, at the end of her study, that Anabaptist separatist theology and practice in 1527 finds "analogies" in early Swiss writings. This states a truism, but does not qualify as a "revision of the revisionists." Early Swiss writings contained an equal potential for establishing majoritarian believers' churches, as events in 1525 demonstrate. The majoritarian churches happened first; the separatist ones happened later; both grew

ecclesiological model that went into practice all around Zurich in 1525 was emphatically "congregational," but not separatist.³¹⁶ Throughout 1525, churches of baptized believers were ready to embrace political majoritarian power when it was available. The early Swiss baptizers did not reject military protection when it was offered (Waldshut, Hallau, Tablat), worked actively to gain a political space where possible (Schaffhausen, St. Gallen, Grüningen) and only moved underground when political circumstances made it necessary (Zollikon, Grüningen). It is probably true to say, with Strübind, that calling this Anabaptism a "revolutionary mass movement with territorial ambitions" is an overstatement, but to call Swiss Anabaptism in 1525 a continuation of earlier separatist ideas is simply misrepresentation.

There are theological marks of separatism suggested in the letter to Müntzer that are taken up later at Schleitheim, most specifically the idea that baptism and the Lord's Supper must be linked to the ban, and a nonresistant stance concerning the sword, the latter of which would disqualify those holding this view from participation in, or cooperation with, government and government-sponsored violence. If the unbroken theological continuity of Anabaptist *separatism* is to be demonstrated as a guiding theological and ecclesiological principle, these very specific separatist ecclesiological understandings need to be visible in the Anabaptist communities established in 1525—but they are emphatically absent. As we have seen, the first programmatic Anabaptist ecclesial writing (July 1525) did establish the necessity of linking the ban to baptism and the Supper, but this occurred in the midst of the establishment of a majoritarian believers church in Waldshut. In other words, as Hans-Jürgen Goertz has said, the original establishment of the ban in Anabaptism was not synonymous with separatism.³¹⁷ Hubmaier's institutionalization of the Anabaptist ban, first in Waldshut and then in Nikolsburg, was in the service of church discipline for a believers church (it was congregational) and it was to function in helping separate believers from sinful living. But it did not separate baptized believers

out of the same Zurich roots.

316. Strübind's conclusion (p. 581) that a "congregational and separatist ecclesiology," visible already in the reading circles, proved to be the "identity-granting, theological center of early Anabaptism" (*Identitätsstiftende theologische Mitte des frühen Täuferiums*) is half right. Congregationalism certainly was at the center; separatism was not.

317. Goertz's observation is correct: "Use of the 'Rule of Christ' does not . . . necessarily imply the existence of a free church."—*The Anabaptists*, 88. See his useful discussion of the "Letter to Müntzer," in *The Anabaptists*, 87ff., and more recently, "A common future conversation": a revisionist interpretation of the September 1524 Grebel Letters to Thomas Müntzer," Packull and Dipple, *Radical Reformation Studies*, 73-90.

from the social and political "world" or from government. Furthermore, the practice of discipline in Hubmaier's churches was tempered by his anthropology and anticipation that spiritual regeneration would be a long process, rather than result in instantaneous sainthood. In other Swiss Anabaptist communities in 1525, such as Zollikon, Hallau and Tablat, the ban played no visible ecclesial role in 1525, in spite of an occasional mention here and there. It was Schleitheim's revised understanding of the ban, and optimistic understanding of regeneration, that turned the ban into a rigorous instrument of discipline and a separatist ecclesial instrument.

The conclusion must be that there was a "phased" ecclesiological development concerning the understanding of the ban and "separation from the world" in early Swiss Anabaptism. The same conclusion must be drawn concerning the ecclesiological development of Anabaptist nonresistance. We fail to find a single separatist, nonresistant baptizing community established in the areas surrounding Zurich in 1525. In fact, outside of Felix Mantz's writings and statements, there is not a single record documenting the necessary linking of adult baptism to nonresistance in 1525. We will find that even after the composition and distribution of the Schleitheim Articles in 1527, a separatist ecclesiology gained ground slowly and unevenly, depending on local political circumstances. The separatist ecclesiological hints in the "Letter to Müntzer" remained just that—hints at the direction in which the baptizing movement might possibly develop, given the right set of negative political circumstances.³¹⁸ In 1525, however, in the midst of the Peasants' War, Swiss Anabaptism established itself across a wide territory, building on the notion of a noncoercive, pluralist believers church of the baptized that still had not determined how exactly its members would relate to political power.

Strübind's insistence that the religious aspects of Anabaptist beginnings be considered historically significant is welcome, but it seems a particular mistake to study Anabaptist beginnings and development in an "either/or" mode, characterized as either "primarily" social or "primarily" religious, as if the victory of one area of concern means the defeat of the other. The events of 1525 demonstrate that Swiss Anabaptism was intimately involved with *both* social and religious issues, based on its biblical understanding of church reform: religious issues were *de facto* social and political issues in this time and place. James Stayer's description of the situation in 1525 is still valid: "In the

318. The fact that those in the Grebel circle were writing from Zurich, and were facing imminent legal sanctions, may well have occasioned their reflections on separatism. See Goertz, "A common future conversation," 86-87.

Waldshut-Schaffhausen-St. Gallen area, particularly in the rural villages, [the Peasants' War] provided a temporary breakdown of magisterial authority for most of 1525, thus enabling Swiss Anabaptism to spread behind its smoke screen.³¹⁹ The Anabaptists of the Grebel circle were quick to enter and promote their vision of congregational reform, free from state interference, based on the freely-chosen baptism of adults, wherever political openings allowed, and they showed themselves to be politically astute in capitalizing on local grievances for the advancement of their religious cause.³²⁰ Only with the failure of the Peasants' War, and the closing of political space in the face of intense political repression, did Swiss Anabaptism establish an ecclesial understanding of the baptized church as a persecuted, separated minority. A careful review of the theological and ecclesiological evidence thus confirms, and in fact strengthens, a "two phase" narrative of Swiss Anabaptist beginnings.

III. REPRESSION, CONSOLIDATION AND MIGRATION, 1525-1530

As the eventful year 1525 came to a close and the peasant uprisings were crushed, magistrates passed increasingly stringent anti-Anabaptist legislation, and began to reestablish firm religious control over their territories. The baptizing movement came under growing pressure, in varying degrees of intensity, depending on the location. In urban centers like Zurich, Waldshut and Schaffhausen, where the political will was present, it was virtually impossible to maintain a significant Anabaptist presence. In St. Gallen, where official repression was less rigorous, Anabaptism maintained a cautious existence.

Throughout 1525 the baptizing movement had rippled out from Zurich, both to the west of Zurich and to the east of St. Gallen. In ways not always well documented, Anabaptism also spread and took root in some key imperial cities, among which Augsburg, Esslingen and Strasbourg were particularly important, and soon had migrated as far east as Moravia, the land of religious toleration. The wide movement of proselytizing Swiss Anabaptist missionaries and refugees is an important part of the story of the beginnings of Anabaptism in areas outside Switzerland—even though it is not the whole story.³²¹

319. Stayer, "Anabaptists and Future Anabaptists," 135.

320. In agreement with Heinold Fast, who wrote that "Anabaptism was not a political movement, but it was a movement that had political relevance."—Fast, "Sonderstellung," 224; translation mine.

321. In spite of some details having been superceded, a balanced post-polygenesis assessment remains James Stayer, "The Swiss Brethren: An Exercise in Historical Definition," *Church History* 47 (June 1978), 174-195. While not accepting Swiss Anabaptism

*Anabaptism in Zurich and Neighboring Territories, 1526-1530**Zurich*

The year 1525 ended on an inauspicious note for Anabaptists in and around Zurich. The November disputation marked a decisive turn. The leading Zurich radicals—Grebel, Mantz, Blaurock and Margret Hottinger—were placed in prison for refusing to recant. Less zealous sympathizers and Anabaptists from Zollikon and elsewhere did what was necessary to get out of dungeons, and recanted in large numbers. Some, such as Michael Sattler and Ulrich Teck, swore oaths to desist, and fled Zurich territory for a time; many local people simply stopped "having anything more to do with the baptism business," as some said in their own defense when facing renewed arrest.

Balthasar Hubmaier managed to flee Waldshut on the fifth of December, just one day before the city was handed over to the Austrians—a total surrender of the city by Catholic factions within, with no fighting or bloodshed. Hubmaier chose to flee to Zurich, probably because the Austrians controlled the roads from Waldshut to Basel and Strasbourg. He likely arrived in Zurich on the seventh of December.³²² He stayed first with Heini Aberli, who on the following day arranged to have him lodge with the Anabaptist widow, Anna Widerker. By December 11 he had been arrested by the Zurich authorities. A private disputation was arranged after which Hubmaier declared himself ready to recant, and composed a recantation to that effect.³²³ Why Hubmaier was now ready to retract his views on baptism has led to some speculation and difference of opinion.³²⁴ Whatever the underlying reasons, Hubmaier had changed his mind by December 29, when instead of reading the first of three planned Zurich recantations, he instead mounted the pulpit in the Great Minster in Zurich and publicly recanted his recantation. Immediately he was thrown into the infamous Wellenberg tower and subjected to torture; he remained in prison there

as the sole source of all pre-Melchiorite Anabaptism, Stayer concludes that it is undeniable that "the legacy of early Swiss Anabaptism spread far beyond the limits of the Swiss Brethren sect."—*Ibid.*, 195.

322. For this and the following outline, see Bergsten, *Hubmaier*, 300-311; key documents for his time in Zurich are found in QGTS, I, #147 (recantation statement), #156-157, #170, #179, #402; see *ibid.*, 160, n. 5 for details of Hubmaier's movements.

323. Translation in Pipkin and Yoder, *Hubmaier*, 151-153. For relevant texts from this period, see *ibid.*, 151-165.

324. Compare Yoder, *Anabaptism and Reformation*, 56-64, esp. 59-60, with Bergsten, *Hubmaier*, 302-304.

until late April, when he performed a second set of more private recantations as the price for expulsion from Zurich territory.³²⁵

Once free from Zurich, Hubmaier turned to Constance, where he stayed a brief time with former parishioners of the Waldshut church, now refugees in that city. By the beginning of May in 1526, he was in Augsburg, where he remained for two months. During his stay there two future Anabaptist leaders also were present in the city: Hans Denck, the spiritualist Anabaptist, had been in Augsburg since September of 1525, and Hans Hut, a former follower of Thomas Müntzer, also was present in the city in the spring. Denck baptized Hans Hut in Augsburg on Pentecost Day, which fell during Hubmaier's stay in the city. One can guess that these three Anabaptists could hardly have avoided meeting each other during their mutual time in Augsburg, but there is no documentation that speaks to the question. The three very different Anabaptist emphases of these leaders—spiritualist/mystical, apocalyptic/revolutionary and Swiss/ecclesiological—provided strands of influence that would eventually give South German Anabaptism its distinctive character. By late summer all three had left the city, although Denck and Hut would return; Hubmaier continued on to Nikolsburg in Moravia, where he would establish an Anabaptist church under the protection of the lords of Liechtenstein.

In Zurich the year 1526 witnessed the continued arrests and hearings of local Anabaptists. The legal situation for persistent Anabaptists had entered a more deadly and serious phase: the only option in Zurich and its territories was an underground existence for those committed to the Anabaptist path. On March 7, 1526, the Zurich city council sentenced eighteen persistent Anabaptists to perpetual imprisonment on rations of bread and water and bedding of straw, until recantation or death. Furthermore, anyone who baptized in the future would be drowned "without mercy."³²⁶ A large group of male prisoners, however, managed to escape two weeks later (on March 21, 1526) through an open window in the tower.³²⁷ On March 26 the city council officially decreed death by drowning for persistent Anabaptists, not as a religious penalty, but as a

325. Bergsten notes that Hubmaier recanted in three Zurich churches, Apr. 13-15, 1526, and subsequently in Gossau in the Grüningen district.—*Hubmaier*, 307.

326. QGTS, I, #170a, 178; translation of relevant documents in Harder, *Sources*, #71K, 71L, 71M, 436-48.

327. See the testimony concerning the escape in QGTS, I, #178, 191-93; translation in Harder, *Sources*, 71O, 450-52.

penalty for civil disobedience. By late March and early April, the prisoners who remained in Zurich's prisons began to recant.³²⁸

The March prison break scattered the Zurich radicals in all directions. Conrad Grebel was last seen headed in the direction of Glattfelden; he died in anonymity some months later.³²⁹ Mantz and Blaurock returned to Grüningen where they worked for several months. In Zurich territories in 1526 a second rank of Anabaptist leadership emerged that had to deal from the start with an implacable enemy in Zwingli and an immovable political force in the Zurich council. Two later Anabaptist missionaries, Carli Brennwald and Konrad Winkler, abjured Anabaptism and left the Zurich prison in March of 1526, even while others refused to recant and remained in prison.³³⁰ Later that year, however, they joined an underground Anabaptist movement that was nurtured by itinerant leaders, such as Mantz and Blaurock in Grüningen; Pfistermeyer in the Aargau; Margret Hottinger in St. Gallen; Wilhelm Reublin, Martin Weninger and Jacob Groß in various locations.³³¹ As part of this second wave of Anabaptist leaders we find the ex-Benedictine prior Michael Sattler. He had sworn out of the Zurich prison in November 1525 along with Martin Weninger and Ulrich Teck of Waldshut, but by the summer of 1526 the first records appear of his teaching and baptizing activity, in and around Bülach, just north of Zurich.³³²

In December 1526 (either the 3rd or the 13th), Felix Mantz and George Blaurock were again arrested by the Grüningen authorities.³³³ This time Zurich showed no forbearance: Felix Mantz was condemned to death by drowning, a sentence that was carried out on January 5, 1527; George Blaurock was beaten out of the city with rods, with the promise of

328. The mandate announcing the penalty of death by drowning is in QGTS, I, #172, 180-81; the mandate was expanded to include those who preach, teach and hold meetings, on November 19, 1526. QGTS, I, #192, 210-11. Documentation of 1526 recantations in QGTS, I, #173, 181-183 and *passim*.

329. His place and cause of death are a matter of speculation. The relevant documents are translated in Harder, *Sources*, #71Q and 71R, 454-56.

330. See Arnold Snyder, "Konrad Winckler: An Early Swiss Anabaptist Missionary, Pastor and Martyr," *MQR* 64 (Oct. 1990), 352-361.

331. Martin Weninger (Linck) had recanted along with Michael Sattler in November, 1525. See QGTS, I, #133, 136; discussion in Snyder, *Life and Thought*, 79ff. Weninger's stature as a Swiss leader is clear at the Zofingen Disputation of 1532, where he led the Anabaptist contingent. See Yoder, *Anabaptism and Reformation*, 102-106 and *Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer in der Schweiz*, IV: *Drei Täufergespräche*, ed. Martin Haas (Zurich: Zwingli, 1974) [hereafter QGTS, IV] for the Zofingen disputation. See also Weninger's important writing explaining Anabaptist non-attendance at Reformed churches in QGTS, II, #141, 108-13; trans. J.C. Wenger in *MQR* 22 (July 1948), 180-187. Notice of Weninger's recantation in QGTS, II, #160, 125 (Dec. 8, 1535).

332. Details in Snyder, *Life and Thought*, 83-86.

333. QGTS, I, #195, 212-13.

execution should he return.³³⁴ Michael Sattler, who began teaching and baptizing north of Zurich in the summer of 1526, reappears in the judicial record in December 1526 or early January 1527 in the city of Strasbourg, now acting as an Anabaptist leader, pleading with Bucer and Capito for the release of Anabaptist prisoners. His surviving letter to the Strasbourg reformers not only marks a decisive new direction in Anabaptist ecclesiology; it also identifies Sattler as the primary author of the influential Schleitheim Articles, which were composed just a few weeks later, on February 24, 1527.³³⁵

Michael Sattler's ecclesiological vision for the Anabaptist church, visible in the "Letter to Bucer and Capito" and given substance in the Schleitheim Articles, mirrors significant points made in Balthasar Hubmaier's "Summa" of July 1525. Like Hubmaier (although in less detail), Sattler also bases his ecclesiology on repentance and adult baptism following faith, with baptism that binds believers to church discipline. These believers then celebrate the Lord's Supper together, as members of Christ's body. What sets Sattler's ecclesiological vision apart from the earlier Swiss Anabaptist understanding is his conviction that the true church of the baptized will be visibly separated from the world, according to a strict Christocentric vision.³³⁶ Not only are Christians to be "minded as Christ is minded" following their repentance and rebirth, but they will also be "conformed to the image of Christ" in their daily walk.³³⁷ The early calls for a "new life" of sharing with brothers and sisters become, in the hands of Sattler, a very specific walk defined in content by the life of Christ himself. The focus on Christ defines the church as the body of Christ—the "perfection of Christ" in the words of

334. Testimony concerning Mantz and Blaurock and the sentence, in QGTS, I, #198, #199, #200, #204, #205, pp. 214-218, 224-228. For further executions by Zurich, see *ibid.*, 290-291 (Falk and Reimann from Grüningen), *ibid.*, 332-334 (Konrad Winckler, who worked around Bülach), *ibid.*, 363-364 (Karpfis and Herzog), and QGTS, II, 290-291 (Konrad Wick). Potter states that Mantz's martyrdom was followed by only three others (*Zwingli*, 188), which is incorrect. Fierce repression began again in Zurich in the seventeenth century. An appendix to the *Ausbund*, for example, chronicles forty more martyrs from the Zurich district from 1635 to 1645; see "Ein wahrhaftiger Bericht von den Brudern in Schweizerland in dem Zürcher Gebiet," *Ausbund, das ist: Etliche schone Christliche Lieder* (Lancaster, 1868), part 3, 1-52.

335. The evidence is reviewed in Snyder, *Life and Thought*, 97-100.

336. "The most idiosyncratic part of the Schleitheim Confession was article 4 on Separation. Most of the other articles were, to one degree or another, logically subordinated to it."—Stayer, "The Swiss Brethren," 191.

337. "Christ is the Head of His body; i.e., of the believers or the congregation. As the Head is minded, so must its members also be. The foreknown and called believers shall be conformed to the image of Christ."—Sattler to the Strasbourg reformers, in Yoder, *Legacy*, 22.

Schleitheim's article 6—separated from all that is not Christ. Baptized believers will not swear any oaths, and will not use violence or participate in government.³³⁸ In this separatist ecclesial understanding, church discipline (the ban) takes on added importance as the means by which the separated purity and perfection of Christ's body is maintained. Looking outward to the world from the vantage point of the separated perfection of Christ's body, Sattler concluded that just as Christ was persecuted, so also would the members of his body on earth be persecuted.

With an emphatic insistence on persecution as a legitimating mark of the true church, Michael Sattler gave a Christocentric interpretation to the reality of persecution and martyrdom that Anabaptists everywhere were experiencing, and drew the radical separatist conclusion that "Christ is despised in the world. So are also those who are His; He has no kingdom in the world, but that which is of the world is against His kingdom." The decisive division between the true church of the baptized and the world outside is thus drawn by Sattler: "Flesh and blood, pomp and temporal, earthly honor and the world cannot comprehend the kingdom of Christ. In sum: There is nothing in common between Christ and Belial."³³⁹

The radical polarity between Christ and Satan—and correspondingly between church and world as two kingdoms each manifesting the "minds" of their respective masters—is something new in Anabaptist ecclesiology.³⁴⁰ The strongest hints in this direction, apart from the "Letter to Müntzer," came from Felix Mantz who saw Christocentric, nonresistant suffering as definitive for the Christian life—a view he sealed with his martyr's death in the Limmat River in January 1527. Significant themes emphasized by Mantz reappear in Sattler and at Schleitheim, now articulated ecclesiologically within a political context of unrelenting persecution. It is therefore possible to see some signs of an early separatist stream of Anabaptist ecclesiology—or perhaps "rivulet" would be more accurate—running submerged during 1525 and 1526. Although these isolated separatist themes (or "analogies" as Strübind would say) were not put into ecclesial practice in those years, perhaps they somehow informed Michael Sattler, in ways not documented historically, and perhaps Sattler then elaborated on them in the post-Peasants' War period. In the absence of evidence, however, it remains just as possible that the radically separatist Anabaptist ecclesiology of

338. These emphases become visible in the Schleitheim Articles 6 and 7. See Yoder, *Legacy*, 34-43; critical edition of the articles in QGTS, II, 26-35.

339. Sattler to the Strasbourg reformers, in Yoder, *Legacy*, 22-23.

340. As affirmed by Andrea Strübind, *Eifriger*, 555; 558.

Schleitheim was as much Sattler's own creative contribution to Anabaptist ecclesiology. There simply are no documented connections.³⁴¹

The powerful and coherent ecclesiology synthesized at Schleitheim—the church as the baptized, separated and persecuted body of Christ, living as Christ lived and according to the commands of Christ—gained slow but steady acceptance among Swiss Anabaptists and increasingly came to define the group others called the "Swiss Brethren." Many local Swiss Anabaptists were persuaded by the new separatist ecclesiological vision, in varying degrees, and the growing number of Anabaptist refugees fleeing into the empire and east to Moravia took with them this new vision of the baptized, separated church. In Nikolsburg, Sattler's separatist ecclesiology would come into conflict with Hubmaier's more inclusive vision of the Anabaptist church of the majority, which in the relative political freedom of Moravia counted magistrates, soldiers and territorial lords among its baptized members. In Sattler's own case, it appears that he was preparing to pastor Anabaptist communities in the Neckar Valley, hostile territory governed by the Austrian regime, when he was arrested in the town of Horb on or before March 18, 1527, along with his wife, Margaretha, two other Anabaptist missionaries and several local people. A total of twenty-one prisoners from two separate arrests are listed in the official trial records. Wilhelm Reublin, who escaped arrest and wrote an account of the subsequent trial and martyrdom of Michael Sattler, appears to have been the founder and leader of the Neckar Valley congregations.³⁴²

Very little is known about this group of "Swiss" Anabaptists, founded by one of the original Zurich radicals, outside of the dramatic events of the trial and execution of Michael Sattler. Sattler was horribly tortured and burned at the stake; Margaretha was drowned; and Matthias Hiller and three other brethren were beheaded. The remaining local Anabaptists in prison—by July there were twenty-four of them—all recanted.³⁴³ This was a devastating blow to Anabaptism in Württemberg and the Neckar Valley, which, nevertheless, continued to survive in underground fashion. "Swiss" Anabaptism continued to extend into the empire in clandestine fashion, down the Rhine into the Palatinate, Worms and Hesse.

341. Only in a limited way—as a suggestive reappearance of ideas—can one agree with Strübind that "analogies" from the Müntzer letter can also be seen at Schleitheim.

342. Evidence collected in Snyder, *Life and Thought*, 100-103. See Stayer "Reublin," in Goertz, *Profiles*, 107-117.

343. The trial took place in Rottenburg on the Neckar, May 17 and 18, 1527.—Snyder, *Life and Thought*, 103-104.

Also significant in its long-range impact was the almost immediate publication and distribution of a booklet containing the Schleitheim Articles along with an account of the savage torture and execution of Michael Sattler—the first widely-published account in what would become a significant martyrological literature among Anabaptists and their descendants.³⁴⁴ The polarity between Christ and Belial that underlay the articles seemed to be incarnated in the brutal torture and execution of the “noble” Sattler by the militantly Catholic Habsburg regime in Württemberg. In the face of such evil, the message seemed to be, true believers had no option but to separate from a world ruled by the Antichrist, to seek refuge where God would allow them space. In any case, the second coming of Christ was expected very soon.³⁴⁵

In rural pockets surrounding the city of Zurich, nominally under its jurisdiction and control, Anabaptism after 1525 became an underground, counter-reform movement, flourishing especially in districts where Reformed pastoral care was deficient and where the arm of the law had difficulty reaching. The heavily-wooded area northwest of Zurich, around the town of Bülach, was one such location that is illustrative of many others. It was within a rough triangle bounded by Zurich to the south, and Schaffhausen and Waldshut to the north, that the illiterate (or semi-literate) Anabaptist pastor Konrad Winkler worked from 1526 until his arrest and execution by drowning in Zurich in 1530; this had been the scene of considerable peasant unrest in 1525 and of Michael Sattler’s activity in the summer of 1526. Winkler’s “parishioners” came from the villages of Bülach, Kinenhoff, Seeb, Dällikon, Watt, Regensdorf, Regensberg, Nerach, Windlach and Wattwil, but Bülach seems to have been a particularly strong center of activity.

Winkler is typical of the second wave of Anabaptist leaders in the Zurich area, namely a man of the people with at best a rudimentary literacy and no formal education. His Anabaptist communities were underground conventicles that undermined Zurich’s efforts to enforce religious conformity and establish Reformed observance throughout the canton. In four years of activity Winkler said he had baptized so many that he no longer knew the number.³⁴⁶ In what was now typical

344. For the historical development of the martyrologies, and their importance in establishing Anabaptist identity, see Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999).

345. Arnold Snyder, “The Influence of the Schleitheim Articles on the Anabaptist Movement: An Historical Evaluation,” *MQR* 63 (Oct. 1989), 323-344. The apocalyptic undertones of Sattler’s polar world view are explicit in his farewell letter to the congregation at Horb.—Snyder, *Life and Thought*, 125-126; text of the letter in Yoder, *Legacy*, 55-65.

346. QGTS, I, #305; QGTS, III, #856-858.

Anabaptist fashion, Winckler held secret meetings "in woods, fields, houses, barns, in homes and other special places"; in Dällikon Anabaptist "readings" took place in private homes, while at Regensdorf there was one instance of an Anabaptist reading taking place in the home of a minor government official, with many more instances of readings in private homes.³⁴⁷ According to the court scribe, Winckler described his preaching and approach as follows:

When they had gathered together, he would read to them out of the [New] Testament, and whoever would let the old person fall away, abandon sins and vices, and put on the new person, such a one he baptized, and accepted as a brother and confederate.³⁴⁸

Those whom he taught confirmed that Winckler expected baptized converts to care for the needy and hungry, particularly those with material needs within the community of believers.

Winkler particularly reproached the Reformed preachers, saying "that our preachers mislead the common people and are sinners, and can bring forth no good fruit with their teaching, and are not able to preach the truth, because they have benefices."³⁴⁹ Winkler's opposition to those who collected tithes and the clergy supported by tithes clearly appealed to many of his unlettered listeners, and built on a long history of resentment against local clergy and the tithes that kept them there. Very early in the controversy over tithes and interest income, the Anabaptists conceded that it was appropriate for Christians to *pay* taxes and tithes imposed by the authorities, but Swiss Anabaptists continued to insist strongly that it was not appropriate for Christians to *collect* such monies. For this reason the issue did not simply go away, for the Anabaptist position led to the conclusion that those who did collect (and live from) such ill-gotten gain were not true Christians—and so pastors supported by such incomes were illegitimate. In the case of Bülach, a generalized anticlericalism was illustrated by the particular case of the ill-tempered and bombastic local priest-turned-pastor, Ulrich Rollenbutz, whose living was provided by a benefice financed with local tithe revenue collected by Zurich.³⁵⁰

The story of the Anabaptists from the Zurich Unterland does not have a happy ending. After Winckler's execution the communities to which he had ministered were steadily broken by imprisonment and torture.

347. QGTS, I, #246; #247; #249; #281; #287; #295; #291.

348. QGTS, I, #295, 313.

349. QGTS, I, #281, 297.

350. See Snyder, "Konrad Winkler," for details.

There were stories of heroic courage and steadfastness, the majority of which involved Anabaptist women. Appollonia Schneider of Bülach, baptized by Winkler, was obviously responding to torture with thumbscrews when she told her jailers that they could "pressure her finger as long and as hard as they wished, but she would not say who had baptized her; for she would not be guilty of his blood."³⁵¹ Eva of Wattwil, the mother of several Anabaptists all baptized by Winckler, finally recanted privately and agreed to recant publicly as well, in the church in her community. When the day came, however, she and her son Steffan publicly recanted their recantations.³⁵² In the end they too were brought into line. One Unterland Anabaptist who persisted to the end was Hans Herzog of Windlach. Although he recanted in 1529, he was soon active again as an Anabaptist. When he was arrested again in 1532 he persevered to the death. He was drowned on March 23, 1532, in Zurich, along with Heini Karpfis of Grüningen.³⁵³

It is worth noting the parallel progress of Anabaptism in the Grüningen area. After the disappearance of the first wave of leaders, namely Grebel, Mantz and Blaurock, two local farmers from Gossau, Jacob Falk and Heini Reimann, stepped forward and continued to provide leadership to the group of Anabaptists that remained. They were arrested in May of 1526 by the local bailiff; following eighteen months of legal wrangling, they were finally moved to Zurich for trial and sentencing.³⁵⁴ While they were in prison in Grüningen, they were visited by former Anabaptists from Zollikon. Uli Hottinger confessed that his hope was that Falk and Reimann "would hold to the word of God" and not recant—even though he and his compatriots had recanted.³⁵⁵ Falk and Reimann composed a petition (*Eingabe*) on the question of baptism, in which they put forward a reasoned biblical apology for adult baptism, in spite of the fact that their New Testaments had been taken from them.³⁵⁶ The committing to memory of central Bible passages displayed by the uneducated commoners Falk and Reimann was actually the norm in early Swiss Anabaptism, and points to the oral methods of catechism used by the baptizers. The petition did not convince the magistrates, but Falk and Reimann refused to recant. They

351. QGTS, I, #294, 311. Eventually Appollonia did recant, at an unknown date, after Winckler's death; she then named him as the one who had baptized her.

352. QGTS, I, 321, 324, 325, 326.

353. On Hans Herzog, see QGTS, I, 305, 306, 361, 361, 363-364.

354. Recounted in Yoder, *Anabaptism and Reformation*, 72-76; see 73 for details on the legal questions.

355. QGTS, I, #219, 247-248; Uli's comment on 248.

356. Yoder, *Anabaptism and Reformation*, 73; text in QGTS, I, #212 (before June 4, 1527), 234-238; translation in Harder, *Sources*, 512-518.

were condemned to death by the Zurich council for "offense, revolt, and rebellion against Christian authority" and drowned in the Limmat on September 5, 1528.³⁵⁷ Recantations by Anabaptist prisoners followed immediately.³⁵⁸

Some second-wave Anabaptist leaders, such as Konrad Winkler, Jacob Falk and Heini Reimann, lived and worked within a circumscribed area; others traveled widely. The case of George Blaurock illustrates how Swiss Anabaptism spread outward and influenced Anabaptism elsewhere. After his final expulsion from Zurich in 1526, Blaurock made a trip to southern Tyrol in 1527, and then appeared briefly in the records of Bern, Basel and Appenzell in 1528 and 1529, after which he returned to the Tyrol in the spring of 1529. No doubt he was involved in continuous itinerant pastoral activity during this period; we know of his movements only when he happened to be arrested. By May 1529, Blaurock was active again in the Tyrol, primarily in Clausen, Guffidaun, Ritten and towns near Bozen, later the sites of a deeply-rooted and extensive Anabaptist movement.³⁵⁹ In August of 1529, Blaurock was captured in Guffidaun along with Hans Langegger, subjected to extensive torture, and then burned at the stake along with his companion in Clausen, in September 6, 1529. It was through Blaurock's activity, and that of others like him, that Swiss Anabaptism entered the Tyrol from the west and took root, providing one of the links between Swiss and South German Anabaptism when Hans Hut's disciples entered the Tyrol from the east.

St. Gallen

Parallel to the official suppression of Anabaptism in the city of St. Gallen came decisive steps in the direction of evangelical reform of the church: the first evangelical Supper was celebrated on April 10, 1527.³⁶⁰ Anabaptist activity moved outside the city, into an underground existence in the rural villages and in Appenzell, where it put down some stubborn roots. According to the chatty but hostile chronicler of St. Gallen, Johannes Kessler, following its suppression in 1525, Anabaptism was carried forward primarily by the activity of charismatic women, foremost among them Margret Hottinger of Zollikon.³⁶¹

357. QGTS, I, #273, 290-291; translation in Harder, *Sources*, 518-519.

358. QGTS, I, #274, 291-292.

359. Packull, *Hutterite Beginnings*, 181-186; *ME*, 1:358.

360. Egli, *St. Galler Täufer*, 49-50.

361. The following is taken from C. Arnold Snyder and Linda Hubert Hecht, eds.

As noted, Margret Hottinger was sentenced to prison as a recalcitrant Anabaptist in November 1525, along with some notable Anabaptist leaders.³⁶² Hottinger was still in prison on March 5 of the next year; when questioned and urged to recant, she stated outright that one who opposed adult baptism was "a child of the devil."³⁶³ The following day the court pronounced sentence on a large group of recalcitrant Anabaptists. The women sentenced were Margret Hottinger, Elsbeth Hottinger of the neighboring village of Hirslanden (probably a relative of Margret's) and Winbrat Fanwiler of St. Gallen. The collective sentence against both male and female prisoners now specified a harsh imprisonment in the tower, on a diet of bread and water leading to death if there were no recantation.³⁶⁴ After six months of this treatment, Margret and a group of other Anabaptists agreed to a recantation written by a court official that rejected adult baptism and pledged obedience to the authorities.³⁶⁵ Nevertheless, Hottinger was not yet done with "rebaptism" nor did she display "obedience" to the authorities in her subsequent activity.

Sometime later in 1526 she travelled to St. Gallen in the company of her brother Jacob Hottinger (the younger). Johannes Kessler described Margret Hottinger in a remarkable, if hostile, vignette in his chronicle, the *Sabbata*.

There arose wild and arrogant error through the women of the Anabaptists, particularly one young woman from Zollikon in the canton of Zurich named Margret Hottinger . . . who lived a disciplined way of life, so that she was deeply loved and respected by the Anabaptists. . . . Moreover, this Margret forgave and absolved the sins of those praying and would say nothing about it nor give further judgment, but abide by the words. . . . She lived an austere life and overcame many obstacles, so that many of her followers declared that whoever speaks the most or can do the unusual which nobody can comprehend or evaluate, those were held to be the most devout and most immersed in God.³⁶⁶

One must allow for hostility and exaggeration on Kessler's part (he said that Margret claimed to be God, for example), but the picture

Profiles of Anabaptist Women. Sixteenth-Century Reformating Pioneers (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1996), 43-53.

362. Sentenced on November 18 were Conrad Grebel, Felix Mantz, George Blaurock, Michael Sattler, Ulrich Teck, Martin Linck and Margret Hottinger.—QGTS, I, #133, 136.

363. QGTS, I, #170, 177.

364. QGTS, I, #170a, 178.

365. QGTS, I, #173, 183.

366. See the selection of Kessler's *Sabbata* in QGTS, II, 618; translation from Harder, *Sources*, 548, with minor changes.

emerges of a charismatic and prophetic young woman who exercised considerable influence among the early Swiss Anabaptists.

Kessler reported further on other prophetic activities and pneumatic manifestations on the part of Anabaptist women in St. Gallen in 1526, which he linked to Margret Hottinger. Unfortunately our primary source for these stories is Kessler, so we cannot be entirely certain of the details,³⁶⁷ but even allowing for exaggeration, Kessler sketches some remarkable prophetic activity on the part of these Swiss Anabaptist women. Magdalena Müller of St. Gallen, Kessler claimed, said that she was Christ, and she drew in two other women, namely Barbara Mürglen and Frena Buman (also identified as Frena Guldin). Buman, said Kessler, claimed to have heard a heavenly voice that penetrated her heart. She was convicted of sin, and called on the others to repent and leave aside useless things "so that we not grieve the Holy Spirit."³⁶⁸ At this point Wibrat Fanwiler of St. Gallen (who had shared a prison cell with Margret Hottinger in Zurich in 1525) changed her name to "Martha" and joined the other women. They preached publicly that those who wished to follow the Lord should come, and Kessler reports that a weaver named Lienhardt Wirt was convinced by them, left his work, and accompanied them. Lienhardt later married Frena Buman.³⁶⁹ Kessler says that they gathered in a house in the village of Buch.

Those assembled in the house at Buch proceeded to confess their sins to one another, but subsequent events, if we may judge from Kessler and official records of arrest and exile, degenerated quickly from charismatic calls to repentance to bizarre forms of behavior. Buman, who seems to have emerged as the prophetic leader, may well have lost touch with reality. Kessler claims that she said things such as "I must give birth to the Antichrist," and he also reports that she did some prophesying in the nude. Charges of sexual impropriety reported by Kessler cannot be discounted entirely, for they are substantiated in the official records of the city.³⁷⁰ It appears that Buman's prophetic activity took her and the

367. See QGTS, II, 618-622. Kessler's hostility is clear, but he cannot on that account be discredited completely as a historical source, as John Horsch attempted to do. See "An Inquiry into the Truth of Accusations of Fanaticism and Crime Against the Early Swiss Brethren," MQR 8 (Jan. 1934), 18-31.

368. See QGTS, II, 618-619.

369. QGTS, II, 619, n. 135.

370. Bartlomee Schömpferlin was exiled from St. Gallen for a year and a day for "unseemly and unchristian actions" he took with Frena Guldin on Apr. 10, 1526.—QGTS, II, #499, 419. See *ibid.*, #492, #493, #498, #500 for more documentation from the city records. Heinold Fast agrees that, in spite of Kessler's obvious polemic intent, the evidence is convincing that St. Gallen Anabaptism did "go off the rails."—Fast, "Sonderstellung," 235.

group around her well beyond repentance for sin, adult baptism and a "new life." Under the influence of her ecstatic utterance it appears that normal rules of conduct were suspended.

The story of the charismatic women prophets of St. Gallen makes it clear that in the first two years of the Anabaptist movement in Switzerland, appeals to the Holy Spirit as the basis for teaching authority, as well as pneumatic manifestations among Anabaptist men and women, were not at all uncommon. Agnes Linck of Biel testified in Solothurn in 1528 that she had been baptized in the Spirit; she denied having been instructed by any Anabaptist; rather, she had been instructed "by Christ her Lord." She was literate and confessed to having "instructed" two younger people.³⁷¹ Such "spirit-anointed" Swiss Anabaptist women as Margret Hottinger, Winbrat Fanwiler, Magdalena Müller, Barbara Mürglen and Frena Buman did not wait to be appointed prophets by a church community or a male authority: they had been called directly by God, and they acted with freedom as a result; many early Swiss Anabaptist men reacted in the same way, and testified to the direct working of the Spirit in their lives.³⁷²

The Schleitheim Articles of 1527 mark a turning point in Swiss Anabaptism not only in their separatism and ethical Christocentrism, but also in the establishment of an ecclesial polity that marginalized spiritualist manifestations. The preface to the articles noted that "A very great offence has been introduced by some false brothers among us, whereby several have turned away from the faith, thinking to practice and observe the freedom of the Spirit and of Christ."³⁷³ In light of events in St. Gallen in 1526, these words appear to have been directed against manifestations of the kind Kessler described. Among other things, the Schleitheim Articles now prescribed how leadership among the Swiss congregations was to be structured: the "shepherd" of the church, chosen by the congregation, must be a morally upright person (1 Timothy 3:7); the shepherd will preside in the congregation in reading, exhortation, teaching, warning, admonishing; in prayer and the Lord's Supper. There was no thought of electing a woman to such a position; neither is there any mention of prophecy or a place given to pneumatic expression.

A further influence of the Schleitheim Articles, then, was a widening of the distance between the spiritualist underpinnings of Anabaptism on

371. See QGTS, III, #844, #845, #846; #350.

372. For examples, see "Mysticism and the Shape of Anabaptist Spirituality," in C. Arnold Snyder, ed., *Commoners and Community: Essays in Honour of Werner O. Packull* (Kitchener, Ont.: Pandora Press, 2002).

373. Yoder, *Legacy*, 35.

the one hand, and its ecclesiological manifestation in concrete structures and "ceremonies" (presided over by duly elected pastors) on the other. The diminished leadership role of women in Swiss Anabaptist congregations was roughly proportional to the victory of letter over spirit in Anabaptism.

Following Margret Hottinger to the end of her life provides a microcosm of what other convinced Swiss Anabaptists faced. There is no documentation recording Margret Hottinger's activities from 1527 to 1530, which is to say, she managed to avoid arrest. The Anabaptists in Zollikon and St. Gallen who retained their Anabaptist convictions did so secretly: they stayed out of jail and consequently we know nothing about their activities. That several did manage to persist in their Anabaptist beliefs we know from later events; Margret Hottinger, her father, Jacob, and her brother, Felix, were three who did so. In the year 1530, Jakob Hottinger the elder, Margret, Felix and a group of other Anabaptists attempted to flee to Moravia. Unfortunately they were arrested on the way. Jacob and Margaret Hottinger paid with their lives for their convictions: she was drowned, and her father was beheaded; Felix was released because of his young age.³⁷⁴

Anabaptism in and around St. Gallen, however, was far from disappearing. The Appenzell region remained a place where Anabaptism could still survive relatively undisturbed for a time, as will be seen below, and remained home to a small but stubborn group of Anabaptists for many more years.

Swiss Anabaptism in Neighboring Swiss Territories, 1525-1530

The story of Swiss Anabaptism is often told in a way that suggests that the Schleitheim Articles resolved outstanding issues and "crystallized" the movement, giving a permanent shape and character to Swiss Anabaptism. A careful study of the development of Anabaptist communities confirms, but also modifies, the common understanding of Schleitheim's influence on Swiss Anabaptism.

374. In QGTS, II, 578-580, Johannes Rütiner reports on a conversation (in 1537) with Felix Hottinger, in which Felix describes the death of his father (Jacob) and sister (Margret). In QGTS, II, 586-587, Fridolin Sicher recounts the executions at Waldsee in 1530. According to one account, Margret "was graciously pulled out of the water and asked again to recant, but in no way did she wish to do that. Rather she said: 'Why did you pull me out? The flesh was almost defeated.' With that the judgment was carried out [i.e., she was drowned]."—QGTS, II, 587.

Basel

By early August 1525, Oecolampadius, the reformer of Basel, had discovered Anabaptists there, and engaged a small group of them in a debate. Anabaptism appears to have been brought to the city shortly before by Lorenz Hochrütiner, a friend of Conrad Grebel, member of Castelberger's circle, radical iconoclast and promoter of Anabaptism in St. Gallen.³⁷⁵ Jacob Hochrütiner, Lorenz's son, would later show up in Bern, promoting Anabaptism there in 1527.³⁷⁶ In 1526 and again in 1527, the Anabaptist leader from the Aargau, Hans Pfistermeyer, whom we will revisit below, was arrested in Basel and expelled. In June 1527, a "brother Karlin" was arrested in Basel and submitted a written testimony to which Oecolampadius replied.³⁷⁷ This "Karlin" was, historians are agreed, Karli Brennwald, who converted to Anabaptism in Zollikon and was baptized by Anthony Roggenacher. Brennwald was one of the early Anabaptist stalwarts, incarcerated with Grebel, Mantz and others; he also escaped the tower with them. He worked north of Zurich with Michael Sattler before moving on to Basel.³⁷⁸ One would suspect, given his closeness to Sattler, that he would have been present at the Schleitheim gathering. His testimony in Basel, given just a few months after the drafting of the Schleitheim Articles, is particularly interesting for this reason.

Karlin clearly did not use Schleitheim's seven articles as a template, when he sat down to prepare the four theses he was ready to debate. Nevertheless, one has to agree with John H. Yoder's conclusion that the first three theses demonstrate the "strong influence" of Schleitheim; one could go even further and say that the fourth thesis does as well.³⁷⁹ The argument on baptism makes the same points as does the first Schleitheim article, and is actually more extensive. Karlin emphasizes the necessity of rebirth on the part of those who transgress, neither of which applies to

375. Three other disputants are known: a tailor, a printer, and a proofreader. See Yoder, *Anabaptism and Reformation*, 43-48; see Hanspeter Jecker, *Ketzer-Rebellen-Heilige. Das Basler Täuferamt von 1580-1700* (Liestal: Verlag des Kantons Basel-Landschaft, 1998), 40-44 for an overview of Basel's anti-Anabaptist measures to 1530, and for the existence of a small, stubborn underground Anabaptist church in Basel territory into the eighteenth century.

376. In letters from Berchtold Haller, preacher in Bern, to Zwingli, Apr. and May, 1527.—Ernst Müller, *Geschichte der Bernischen Täufer* (Frauenfeld, 1895; reprint Nieuwkoop: B. de Graaf, 1972), 24-25.

377. *Aktensammlung zur Geschichte der Basler Reformation in den Jahren 1519- Anfang 1534*, ed., E. Dürr und P. Roth. 6 vols. (Basel, 1921 ff.: Basler Reformationsakten), II, #677, #678 [Hereafter BRA]. Karlin's brief articles and summary defense are found in #676, 545-547; Oecolampadius' answer in #677, 547-579; the answer of the Catholic A. Marius in #678, 579-611.

378. See the useful, brief biography in Harder, *Sources*, 531-532.

379. Yoder, *Anabaptism and Reformation*, 80-81.

infants who can neither transgress nor repent. Baptism is a "covenant sign with God by which one's conscience affirms that it will tame the flesh, kill the old Adam and, after having received the sign, arise as with Christ, walk in Christ's footsteps guiltlessly, with true hope and faith."³⁸⁰ The baptism article could show signs of Schleitheim's influence, but not in a conclusive way. Karlin's article on not swearing oaths, however, is a fairly close repetition of Schleitheim's seventh article, appealing to Christ's explicit words in Matthew 5. Nevertheless, the clearest evidence of Schleitheim's influence on Karlin's thought is the article on political authority, which is uniquely argued at Schleitheim and clearly mirrored by Karlin.

Karlin begins with the usual clarification that government is established by God, and enters the common Anabaptist caveat that nevertheless, when governments command what is against "the command and request of Christ," they are not to be obeyed. Karlin clarifies the article by pointing to Christ as the teacher in this matter, just as does Schleitheim, and repeats several scriptural examples used in Schleitheim's sixth article: Christ fled when they wished to make him king; he did not wish to judge the woman caught in adultery; he did not wish to settle disputes in worldly matters, for his kingdom is not of this world. Christians are to proceed only with the ban, and not with physical force. Karlin appears to be repeating the texts and the arguments here from memory, for they are the same texts and points as one reads in Schleitheim's sixth article, but independently ordered. Karlin concludes by saying, "so the example of Christ does not allow the Christian to be a magistrate (*obern*)," but then immediately he attempts to soften the blow of this judgment by adding, "but of course, political authority is not eliminated by this."³⁸¹ The repetition of the same texts and arguments as Schleitheim leads to the conclusion that Karlin's view of political authority was formed by the specific points and arguments of Schleitheim.

Karlin's final point is not argued in a parallel way in the Schleitheim Articles, but nevertheless is in close harmony with the christological point made strongly by Sattler and Schleitheim, leading to a separatist conclusion: whoever does not obey the teaching of Christ, and follow his commandments, has no God. Whoever does not confess Christ in the flesh, with deeds, will be rejected, and whoever claims to have confessed Christ but does not keep his commandments is a liar. "In conclusion,"

380. BRA, #676, 545.

381. BRA, #676, 546.

writes Karlin, "one should have no association (*kein gemeinschafft han*) with those who do not carry out the teaching of Christ (*denen, die die leer Christi nit bringen*)."³⁸² The fundamental biblical and christological underpinnings of the separatist ecclesiology of Sattler and Schleitheim had been assimilated by Karli Brennwald, even if the actual text of the articles clearly was not at his elbow as he wrote. Nevertheless, not all Anabaptist missionaries in Basel were promoting the same separatist view, as we will see below. Schleitheim's separatism and list of distinctive teachings was still one Swiss Anabaptist interpretation among others, not the only Swiss Anabaptist interpretation of how the church should relate to the political authority.

Initially, Basel's magistrates treated the small local Anabaptist movement with leniency, and the movement gained strength particularly in the surrounding countryside. This came to an end in 1529, with the official proclamation of the reformation of the city. The reforming mandate included a condemnation of Anabaptism, including the threat of execution by the sword for recanted Anabaptists who fell back into the practice.³⁸³ In fact, Basel preferred to expel Anabaptists rather than to kill them, although it also did execute some recalcitrant Anabaptists after 1529.³⁸⁴ Anabaptism in the Basel region remained stubbornly rooted in the villages and the countryside, but it never became or threatened to become a mass movement.³⁸⁵

The Aargau

The political territory of Aargau, west of Zurich and north of Bern, was called *die Freien Ämter* ("Free Districts") in the sixteenth century. It was primarily under Bern's political jurisdiction, and the story of Anabaptism in the Aargau must be read in continuity with the story of Anabaptism in Bern, but the Aargau was governed by a complicated formula in which overseers were appointed for a two-year term by each

382. BRA, #676, 546.

383. Jecker, *Ketzer*, 40-41; see the text of the *Täufermandat* of 1530 in *ibid.*, 41-43.

384. The peasant Hans Ludi of Bubendorf was beheaded January 12, 1530 for lapsing back into Anabaptism; two more executions took place in 1531.—Jecker, *Ketzer*, 41 and 40, n. 4. For numerous notices of Aargau residents banned from Basel from 1526 on, see QGTS, III [As-yet unpublished manuscript collection, used by permission of Dr. Martin Haas, ed., *Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer in der Schweiz*, vol. 3 (Aarau, Bern, Solothurn)], documents #36ff. [hereafter QGTS, III].

385. Basel Anabaptists remained a concern. The Bernese authorities sent out a warning on January 10, 1530 that the Basel Anabaptists had held a meeting and decided to send people into Bernese territory, as well as to Solothurn. Local officials were warned to be on the lookout especially for "the pious," whom they should question about their beliefs and way of life. QGTS, III, #324. Haas notes that Anabaptism increased enormously in Solothurn in 1530, *ibid.*, n. 16, and the documentation in *ibid.*, #860-#893 for 1530.

of the cantons, on a rotating basis. The Anabaptists were quick to take advantage of the political space afforded by competing claims and jurisdictions. The four small urban centers, Aarau, Brugg, Lenzburg and Zofingen, soon harbored local Anabaptists and hosted an itinerant Anabaptist evangelist or two. The leading local Anabaptist in the region was Hans Meyer, or Pfistermeyer as he was called, who was also active in and around Bern and Solothurn. He was described by a contemporary as an “upright, God-fearing man” and was highly respected by the Anabaptists.³⁸⁶

The regional spread of the baptizing movement is evident in Pfistermeyer’s case: he was an early convert, accepting adult baptism sometime after August 1525 in Zollikon at the hands of Nicholas Guldin of St. Gallen, who also baptized another resident of Aarau on that occasion.³⁸⁷ Guldin’s letter to Pfistermeyer, written after the November disputation in Zurich, names a substantial group of Anabaptists and apparent sympathizers in the Aargau, including four Augustinian sisters from the convent in Aarau. Several Anabaptists from the Aargau were reported present at Hinwil when Grebel and Mantz were arrested,³⁸⁸ and Pfistermeyer attended the November disputation in Zurich. Bern kept a close watch on events, and the magistrates in Aarau soon began expelling, and threatening to expel, citizens for Anabaptism. A pressing concern for the Bernese magistrates early in 1526 was the arrival of Anabaptist refugees from fallen Waldshut, who came to the Aargau in some numbers; there was the suggestion of their trying to found a community there.³⁸⁹ Bern decreed in January 1526 that the presence of Waldshut Anabaptists was not to be tolerated, and the magistrates were encouraged to seek sworn depositions from those arrested that they would desist from Anabaptism.³⁹⁰

Anabaptist lay evangelists also worked in the region, moving among the people in practically undetectable ways. A few cases have survived in the record to give us an impression of how the movement was spread invisibly at the grassroots by lay evangelists (mostly craftspeople), in the

386. J. Heiz, “Täufer im Aargau,” *Taschenbuch der historischen Gesellschaft des Kantons Aargau für das Jahr 1902* (Aarau: Sauerländer, 1902), 111.

387. See Guldin’s letter to Pfistermeyer in QGTS, I, #119, 117-20, esp. 118; also QGTS, I, #104, 106. Also baptized was a “hatmaker,” who could have been either Heini Seiler or Heini Steffan, both of whom were Anabaptists from Aarau. See QGTS, III, documents #9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 16. See also the article “Aargau,” ME, 1:4-6.

388. QGTS, I, #126, 129.

389. The evidence is summarized by Martin Haas in QGTS, IV, xiii, nn. 9, 10.

390. QGTS, III, #19a, 19b, 20.

face of growing repression. An interesting example is Jakob Meyer, a tailor's assistant (*Schneider knecht*). Meyer said that he had been an Anabaptist for two years (in testimony dated December 23, 1530). He had baptized "so many people he didn't know the number" in the canton of Zurich (where he does not appear in the judicial records) and in other places. He testified to activity in Luzern, and also confessed to having been active in the Aargau.³⁹¹ As an itinerant tailor, his movements would have been virtually undetectable to the authorities, especially if his secret identity were protected by a circle of interested people.

The peripatetic Jakob Groß provides a good example of how Swiss Anabaptism spread not only in Switzerland, but also into the Empire. Groß promoted Anabaptism in the Aargau for some months after being expelled from Grüningen in late September. He was active especially in and around Aarau, leading Bible studies under the guise of craft work—he was a furrier who was arrested for holding a religious meeting in a large room where people were spinning and weaving. He was arrested in Brugg in late February of 1526 and expelled for baptizing Agnes Zender of Aarau.³⁹² He worked next in the city of Lahr, was arrested and expelled, and then suffered the same fate in neighboring Strasbourg, where he went on trial at the end of 1526.³⁹³ Michael Sattler subsequently came to Strasbourg and pleaded with Bucer and Capito for the imprisoned Groß and three more compatriots; it is very likely (although not certain) that Groß was present at the Schleitheim gathering in February 1527.³⁹⁴ Groß soon emerged as a leading Swiss Anabaptist leader in Augsburg, working alongside Hans Hut and his followers. Groß began baptizing in Augsburg soon after Easter in 1527;³⁹⁵ he is known to have baptized twenty-two persons there.³⁹⁶ Shortly after the Martyrs' Synod in Augsburg (at the end of August that year), Jakob Groß was arrested at a large gathering in the city. After suffering in prison for four years, he finally recanted his Anabaptist views on June 22, 1531.³⁹⁷

391. QGTS, III, #117. Meyer was executed by drowning in Luzern. His story is told briefly in Joseph Schacher, "Geschichte der luzernischen Täufer," *Der Geschichtsfreund* 118 (1965), 192.

392. QGTS, III, #26, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34. Details of Groß's activity in Aarau and a profile of Agnes Zender are found in Snyder and Hecht, *Profiles of Anabaptist Women*, 25-31.

393. His Lahr activity is only known on the basis of his later prison confession.—*Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer, Elsaß, I. Teil*, ed. Manfred Krebs and Hans Georg Rott (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1959) [hereafter QGT, Elsaß 1], #104, 129. His testimony of late December, 1526 in Strasbourg is found in *ibid.*, #67, 63-64.

394. See the discussion in Snyder, *Life and Thought*, 89-97.

395. According to the testimony of Hans (Krafft) Messerschmied.—QGT, Elsaß 1, 180, n. 2.

396. Hans Guderian, *Die Täufer in Augsburg* (Pfaffenholz: Ludwig Verlag, 1984), 34.

397. ME, 2:599.

His odyssey had been remarkable, but not really atypical for an early Swiss Anabaptist leader: converted by Grebel, baptized by Hubmaier in Waldshut at the height of the Peasants' War, expelled for refusing to kill, then found baptizing numerous converts in Grüningen, Aargau, Alsace and Augsburg.

Throughout 1526 there are records of local Aargau magistrates arresting Anabaptists and insisting upon sworn recantations followed by expulsion from the territory and, on occasion, confiscating property from convicted Anabaptists.³⁹⁸ Pfistermeyer, who was banned from Bernese territory on January 26, 1526, migrated to the Basel region where his preaching activity in the village of Therwil came to the attention of the Basel authorities (May 1526).³⁹⁹ The Basel magistrates also reported the arrest and banishment from Basel of Lorenz Hochrütiner and Michel Schurer, along with their wives and children (July 1526), as well as the banishment of Gabriel Schumacher of Aarau (September 1526).⁴⁰⁰ Sometime before May 20, 1527, Pfistermeyer was again arrested by the Basel authorities. His lengthy testimony gives an overview of the teachings of a Swiss Anabaptist leader at this time.

Pfistermeyer admitted that he "listened to no preaching" (i.e., he did not attend services in the state church), but instead read the Word of God, in which everything was clear enough. The Catholic Mass was a human invention, and not of God; those who partook of the true Supper of the Lord (who ate of the bread of heaven: *von dem obenbrot essen*), however, did a good work. He admitted that if someone who was "strong in the faith" were to come to him and request baptism, he would do it, but he clarified that he baptized "only in water and not in the Spirit"—a not-unusual distinction between Spirit-baptism and water-baptism for early Swiss Anabaptists. Baptismal practice, he explained, had been altered by the popes and contravened Christ's institution and the apostles' practice. If an infant died without baptism the child came into God's hands. He expressed surprise (*es neme inn wunder*) that the authorities would say that his teaching was opposed to the payment of tithes and taxes, when in fact he taught that these should be paid.⁴⁰¹ As

398. QGTS, III, #21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 33, 34, 35, 37, 38, 39, 42, 43. Document #35 reports the arrest (Apr. 11, 1526) of Michel Amman of Zofingen (baptized by Caspar Kürsner of Zofingen), Heinrich Steffan of Aarau and Hans Künzi of Klingnau (baptized by Ulrich Teck of Waldshut). They were all freed on recantation and oath.

399. QGTS, IV, xiii, n. 2.

400. QGTS, III, #36, 42, 44, 45

401. Heiz, "Täufer," 112 notes, however, that Pfistermeyer contested the charging of interest being allowed by the preachers as being based on "the word of Bern" rather than the "word of God." He clarified this point at the Bern disputation of 1528, when he made it

far as the political authorities were concerned, "the sword was given to the magistrates so that they punish evil; but if the magistrates do not punish what is bad and evil, the sword will stab them."⁴⁰²

One would like to know more on several of these points, but unfortunately, the record does not contain clarifications. Whether Pfistermeyer was nonresistant in a Schleitheim manner at this point in his Anabaptist career cannot be determined from the evidence. His statement in Basel concerning the sword only makes the ambiguously threatening point that authorities who do not punish evil (but punish the good instead?) will come to a violent end.⁴⁰³ Pfistermeyer was released from prison in Basel, although the details of his release are not known; he next appears in a report from Solothurn (May 20, 1527), where the authorities requested that he be arrested and made to swear an oath to leave the territory—a request that apparently was not fulfilled.⁴⁰⁴ He remained active, but undercover, until January 22, 1528, when he attempted to take part in the significant reforming disputation in Bern, after which he was released under safe conduct; in June 1529 he was again under arrest in Bern and released.⁴⁰⁵ Pfistermeyer continued his activity in the Aargau throughout the summer and fall of 1530. The local magistrates were slow to take final action against him; there are repeated notices from Bern notifying local magistrates of Pfistermeyer's activity, admonishing them to be on the lookout for him, and urging them to arrest him on sight.⁴⁰⁶

At a Confederates meeting in Baden in September 1530, there was a complaint that large meetings of people were gathering to listen to Anabaptist preaching in the Aargau; Anabaptists attending these gatherings appealed to their right of religious freedom under the articles of the Land Peace of 1529—which in fact only applied to warring Protestants and Catholics.⁴⁰⁷ Pfistermeyer and others were taking advantage of ambiguities in the governance of the *Freien Ämter*;⁴⁰⁸

clear that he did not oppose paying interest and tithes, but only charging of the same by those who called themselves Christians. See also Yoder, *Anabaptism and Reformation*, 84.

402. QGTS, III, #53.

403. Martin Haas notes that, given the number of refugees from Waldshut in the Aargau, it is not surprising that there was some uncertainty among Anabaptists of the Bernese region on questions of the sword. The Schleitheim Articles eventually resolved the question in the direction of nonresistance.—QGTS, IV, xiii.

404. QGTS, III, #838.

405. QGTS, IV, xiv. See Yoder, *Anabaptism and Reformation*, 82-85 and ME, 1:287, for a brief summary of the 1528 disputation.

406. QGTS, III, #98, 99, 106. Bern urged Zurich to help them restrain the Anabaptists in the Aargau.—Ibid., #100.

407. QGTS, III, #105.

408. In October 1530, Bern was aware that Pfistermeyer was active in the Aargau,

Anabaptist meetings routinely took place on the borders between jurisdictions, in order to facilitate escape.⁴⁰⁹ In November 1530, the Confederate Diet meeting at Baden decreed that Anabaptist preachers were to be punished by death and those who harbored them were to be imprisoned "no matter in what place they are found in the Confederacy or in which jurisdiction."⁴¹⁰ Pfistermeyer's activity had reached impressive proportions. One report claimed that between 200 to 300 people gathered to hear him preach.⁴¹¹

On March 23, 1531, Bern finally managed to arrest Pfistermeyer.⁴¹² From the 19th to the 21st of April, a public disputation was carefully planned and held in Bern, with interested people invited, especially from the Aargau. The reformed side was represented by the Bern preachers Berchtold Haller, Caspar Megander and Franciscus Kolb, along with Sebastian Hofmeister. The disputation did not go well for the Anabaptists, for following three days of debate Pfistermeyer was persuaded to recant his beliefs entirely.⁴¹³ Gabriel Meyer of Aarau, who travelled to Bern to witness the disputation, reported that Pfistermeyer had been "freely defeated by the preachers and doctor Sebastian [Hofmeister] in all his articles, namely concerning political authorities, that Christians may be [magistrates]; concerning rebaptism, that infants are to be baptized; that one may participate in war and kill, etc."

The minutes of the disputation make Pfistermeyer's original positions clear, and on a number of key ecclesiological questions his views had sharpened since his earlier testimony in Bern. In a few cases the separatist ecclesiological positions outlined in the Schleitheim Articles are now visible. The argument against swearing oaths, for example, echoes Schleitheim's article 7 quite exactly. Nevertheless, Pfistermeyer's view on government and the sword still shows no traces of the definitive separation apparent in Schleitheim's article 6.⁴¹⁴ In this, Karlin's

demanded his arrest again by local magistrates and requested the help of the other cantons.—QGTS, III, #110, 111, 112, 113.

409. The border regions between Solothurn and Bern, high in the Jura mountains were especially attractive meeting sites. QGTS, IV, xiv.

410. QGTS, II, #3, 8.

411. QGTS, IV, xiv.

412. See QGTS, III, #126a, b, c, 127 for some of the jurisdictional wrangling that this involved; Bern was overstepping its authority in some significant ways. Summarized by Haas in QGTS, IV, xiv.

413. The published transcript of the debate is found in QGTS, IV, 3-65. For an overview and interpretation, see Yoder, *Anabaptism and Reformation*, 97-100; 179-82. As Yoder notes, once Pfistermeyer granted that all Scripture was to be ruled by "the law of faith and love," rather than being read Christocentrically, the debate was essentially lost.

414. After the preachers established the hermeneutical principle of "faith and love" they

testimony in Basel and Pfistermeyer's in Bern point in two different directions. Going to the heart of the separatist position, the preachers asked Pfistermeyer: "may a Christian be a magistrate?" Schleitheim (and Karlin) had a ready answer—no, a Christian may not be a magistrate, and no magistrate is truly a Christian. Pfistermeyer successfully evaded answering this question twice, making general statements about the need for political authority in the world, and that among Christians, those who wish to be the greatest should be the servants of all, as Jesus had said. The preachers persisted and Pfistermeyer, finally cornered, confessed that there could be a Christian who was also a magistrate, but "he would not be able to remain in his office for long."⁴¹⁵ There was a theoretical and theological openness here to the possibility of a Christian magistracy that is absent from Schleitheim's strict separation of church and world, Christ and Satan. Even Pfistermeyer's point that among Christians order is kept by the ban, not the sword, lacks the separatist finality of Schleitheim's understanding of the ban as the means to community purity and separation from the world.

Pfistermeyer eventually gave in on the question of Christian magistrates and the sword, accepting the preachers' distinction between inner obedience to the calls of perfection, and the need for outer "fleshly" callings to maintain order in the world—both of which were God-ordained.⁴¹⁶ In essence he accepted Hubmaier's view of the sword.⁴¹⁷ Pfistermeyer had the most trouble recanting his original belief that Scripture made it clear that only adults should be baptized on confession of faith, and especially his heartfelt conviction that charging interest was forbidden to Christians—in particular interest income that provided support for pastors—but after a night's reflection he conceded both of these points as well.⁴¹⁸

Bern immediately brought a protocol of the disputation into print, a public relations technique that would be copied many times over in the coming years by hostile governments. Pfistermeyer was subsequently put to use persuading Anabaptists to recant.⁴¹⁹ A sample of his approach was included in the printed protocol, which contained as an appendix

debated, in order, the swearing of oaths, charging of interest, the magistracy, obedience to the magistracy, manner of support for pastors, and baptism.

415. QGTS, IV, 33-34.

416. QGTS, IV, 38-40.

417. See Hubmaier's *On the Sword* in Pipkin and Yoder, *Hubmaier*, 492-523, and the discussion below.

418. Pfistermeyer never really was convinced that the charging of interest had a biblical basis. The issue was abandoned rather than solved.—QGTS, IV, 56-58.

419. Pfistermeyer recanted on oath and was released on Apr. 22, 1531.—QGTS, III, #133.

Pfistermeyer's "dialogue" with a fellow Anabaptist prisoner, "brother Heini," who in the end was persuaded to recant as well.⁴²⁰

It must be noted that Pfistermeyer, the leading Anabaptist figure in the Aargau, really was not promoting Schleitheim separatism at the time of his final trial and recantation in 1531, perhaps because he was leading a local, underground Anabaptist church. There was at least a theoretical openness to the legitimacy of a Christian magistracy that corresponds to the hope of continued existence in the home territory, rather than acceptance of an endless pilgrim existence in a permanently hostile world. In fact, a certain "accommodation with the world" in the acceptance of non-Anabaptist neighbors and friends would mark the Anabaptist groups that managed to survive in small pockets of resistance in Swiss territories and the empire; some that did survive were in the Bernese territories of the Emmental and the upper Aargau.

It probably is not accidental that the literature circulating in the small Swiss Anabaptist communities around Zurich and Bern toward the end of the sixteenth century was less decidedly separatist than was Schleitheim, and more ready to allow that membership in the universal Christian church might be wider than membership in "the perfection of Christ."⁴²¹ For those who wished to remain in increasingly hostile territories, some accommodation with ruling powers would be necessary—if only to urge tolerance on the part of the authorities. Pfistermeyer appears to have been working in that direction, rather than moving toward the uncompromising separatism of Schleitheim. In this connection, John H. Yoder suggests that Pfistermeyer was not a true representative of the Swiss Anabaptist movement. Yoder notes that Pfistermeyer was a rather unsuccessful evangelist (unlike the more vigorous Zurich radicals) and uncharacteristically concerned with questions of "interest" income, and that he was really more interested in individual conversion than with "the formation of a community"—in a word, more of a "pietist" than an Anabaptist.⁴²² Judging from other local cases, however, many Swiss Anabaptists at this time shared Pfistermeyer's concerns and views, including his convictions about the unbiblical nature of interest and tithe income and the un-Christian

420. Pfistermeyer's dialogue with brother Heini is found in QGTS, IV, 60-65; the recantation of brother Heini is found in QGTS, III, #133.

421. See Arnold Snyder, "The (not-so) 'Simple Confession' of the later Swiss Brethren. Part I: Manuscripts and Marpeckites in an Age of Print," *MQR* 73 (Oct. 1999), 677-722; "The (not-so) 'Simple Confession' of the later Swiss Brethren. Part II: The Evolution of Separatist Anabaptism," *MQR* 74 (Jan. 2000), 87-122.

422. Yoder, *Anabaptism and Reformation*, 99-100.

nature of those who accepted such income. Holding such views did not necessarily lead to recantation or suggest a less-than-committed Anabaptism, as demonstrated by the martyrdom of Hans Seckler, Hans Treyer and Heinrich Seiler in 1529 in Bern, to be noted below, and that of Konrad Winkler in 1530, noted above. To the contrary, criticism of the tithe and income from interest remains an important and recurring theme in Swiss Anabaptist testimonies.

With Pfistermeyer's recantation, Anabaptism in the Aargau moved to an underground existence—still present, but no longer numerically threatening. The developments in the Aargau mirrored the reality experienced by Anabaptists in other Swiss locations: in the face of determined political opposition the movement became a marginal religious phenomenon, mostly hidden from public view, surviving primarily in rural enclaves where networks of family and friends could successfully impede the functioning of officialdom. In the coming decades, unknown numbers of Swiss Anabaptists would also choose migration over the uncertainties of marginal existence in Swiss territories, often electing to make the trek eastward to Moravia.

Bern

Unrest first appears in the Bernese records in 1523 and 1524, with reports of clandestine Bible reading, breaking of fasts, the marriage of clergy and isolated acts of iconoclasm signaling the emergence of reform.⁴²³ The leading agent of change in the city was Berchtold Haller, a theologian whom historians have deemed of "little significance," but who nevertheless was a deliberate and successful evangelical reformer. Haller worked very much under Huldrych Zwingli's influence, corresponding with him already in 1521; Zwingli was his intellectual mentor and guide, but Haller was of a milder temperament, unable to support the death penalty for either Catholic or Anabaptist dissidents in the city—a view not followed by the Bernese authorities, who eventually did proceed to executions as in Zurich and Basel.⁴²⁴ The official decision to make Bern a Protestant city did not take place until February 7, 1528; in the meantime, Haller and the pro-evangelical group in the city were doing battle with Catholics on the one side and Anabaptists on the other.

423. QGTS, III, #260-#266. The general study of early Anabaptism in Bern by Richard Feller, "Die Anfänge des Täufertums in Bern," *Festgabe für Bundesarchivar Heinrich Türler* (Bern, 1931), 105-121, is a useful overview, but lacks detail.

424. J. Höfer and K. Rahner, eds., *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* (Freiburg: Herder, 1960), 4:1334: "Als theologe wenig bedeutend..."; "Haller, Berchtold," *ME*, 2:636. Haller wrote to Zwingli in defense of a mild reaction to Anabaptists.—Cited verbatim in Müller, *Geschichte*, 24.

The beginnings of Anabaptism in Bern are not well documented. The earliest reference comes in a letter that Johannes Brötl wrote from Hallau to his former parishioners in Zollikon (sometime after February 5, 1525), in which Brötl mentions visiting with "a pious brother from Bern, named Christian."⁴²⁵ Late in 1525, Heinrich Bullinger wrote to Heinrich Simler in Bern, mentioning the growing Anabaptist movement there and expressing the hope that Simler would not join it; and in a letter of November 29, 1525, Berchtold Haller wrote to Zwingli of growing Anabaptism in Bern.⁴²⁶ Only two records appear in 1526: in January the city council dealt with a woman who had been baptized in Zofingen, and in March of that year, Jacob Groß was arrested in Brugg, in Bernese territory.⁴²⁷ Judging from the record, there was much more activity in the rural territories surrounding the city (as in the Aargau) than there was in the city itself, but in the absence of data it is hard to interpret the standing of Anabaptism in Bern.

As noted, the Schleitheim Articles were composed on February 24, 1527; by late April they were discovered in Bern, having been brought there from Basel, some historians have concluded, by Jacob Hochrütiner and Hans Seckler.⁴²⁸ On April 25, Berchtold Haller sent a copy of the articles to Zwingli, who translated them into Latin and wrote a refutation.⁴²⁹ There are extant interrogation records for seven of eight Anabaptists imprisoned at that time. Five of the eight had recanted as of May 21, 1527;⁴³⁰ Hans Treyer and Hans Seckler were interrogated later, and subsequently banned.⁴³¹ Hochrütiner also was banned, even though he was subject to the death penalty for having returned in spite of his previous oath. He was expelled, having been spared execution only because of his wife's appeals.⁴³² Some details of Seckler's and Treyer's

425. QGTS, I, #36, 45.

426. QGTS, III, #270; "Bern," *ME*, 1:287.

427. "Bern," *ME*, 1:287.

428. Feller, "Anfänge," 116. See Packull, *Hutterite Beginnings*, 38-43 for a discussion of the connections and disconnections between Seckler, the Schleitheim Articles, and the *Swiss Order*.

429. Critical comments by Heinold Fast in QGTS, II, 26, n. 3; Zwingli's Latin version (in his *Elenchus*) is translated into English in Jackson, *Selected Works of Zwingli*, 123-258; see also Müller, *Geschichte*, 24-25; text of the Bernese copy of the Articles is in *ibid.*, 38-42.

430. The five were one unnamed Anabaptist, Peter Breytt, Matheus Han, Bastian Hamer, and Stephan Haffner.—QGTS, III, #280.

431. QGTS, III, #281 (July, August 1527); text of the interrogation in Müller, *Geschichte*, 42-43.

432. QGTS, III, #287 (October 14, 1527).

testimonies are interesting, given their evident connection with the newly-circulating Schleitheim Articles.

The Bernese authorities were concerned about issues of separatism, and asked especially about government, the oath, community of goods, and tithes and interest.⁴³³ Concerning oaths, both men echoed Schleitheim and said oaths should not be sworn, as per Jesus' word; but concerning government, Seckler answered in non-Schleitheimian fashion that "a Christian may be a magistrate (*ein Oberer sein*)"; Treyer agreed that a Christian might be a magistrate, "but not remain one for long." Both men denied holding to an enforced community of goods, but affirmed that true Christians share their goods with the needy; both denied sharing wives. As far as tithes and interest were concerned, both affirmed the Christian's duty to *pay* what was owed, but insisted that no true Christian would *accept* income from interest. Treyer clarified: the Lord said, do not take more than what is necessary, and so one should do. As far as "separation" from the churches was concerned, Seckler said there were idols in the churches, and Treyer said he wanted to separate himself from those who do not truly confess Christ, although he also granted that there were those in the churches who had been called by God.⁴³⁴ It appears from these testimonies, coming two months after the release of the Schleitheim Articles, that the thoroughgoing separatism of Schleitheim had not yet impressed itself on these Swiss Anabaptists.⁴³⁵

Two years later (May 24, 1529) Hans Seckler, Hans Treyer and Heinrich Seiler of Aarau came into prison in Bern, along with other Anabaptists.⁴³⁶ Heinrich Seiler was asked essentially the same series of questions as had been directed to Seckler and Treyer two years earlier. His answers demonstrate movement toward a separatist position, but Schleitheim's polarity still does not come through his testimony. Concerning "Christian magistrates," he said he knew of none in the entire world, for where were any to be found who would reject usury,⁴³⁷

433. The charges appear to stem from minutes of a Confederate Diet (1527?), some to the point, some simply rumor. The charges highlighted community of goods and accused them of wife-sharing. In addition, the Anabaptists refused to attend church services and said no Christian could be a magistrate; refusal of oaths and opposition to paying and receiving interest income and tithes also were emphasized.—Feller, "Anfänge," 112.

434. Müller, *Geschichte*, 42-43, *passim*.

435. In his summary of this evidence, Yoder omits mention of the points of difference with Schleitheim and the centrality of "tithes and interest" in the testimonies of Seckler and Treyer.—Yoder, *Anabaptism and Reformation*, 83. Yoder is mistaken when he claims that when "the question of interest" came up in 1528 in Bern, it was a "new item," and mistaken in saying that it was only Pfistermeyer who was concerned with the issue; Yoder is correct when he notes that the question of interest was not mentioned at Schleitheim.—Ibid., 84.

436. QGTS, III, #305-#309.

437. Müller, *Geschichte*, 44, lists the words "wurgen, Hury, Suffenn. . ." whereas my notes from Haas's manuscript read "wucher, hury, sufen. . ."—QGTS, III, #306. Depending

whoring, drunkenness and the like? There may theoretically be Christian magistrates, he then granted, if they rule and act according to God's word, but if there were some, they would not last long. Furthermore, a Christian magistrate could not accept interest or tithe income, for any who accept such ill-gotten gain do not enter the kingdom of God. He agreed that the sword could be used to punish evil, as long as one saw that it was not directed against God.⁴³⁸ He denied teaching community of goods, but where there is need one must share, for Christians are only caretakers of earthly possessions; furthermore, the authorities cannot legitimately ban and expel people, since "the earth is the Lord's" and God has final say over it.⁴³⁹ In a mandate dated July 8, 1529, the Bernese authorities condemned Seckler, Treyer and Seiler to death by drowning.⁴⁴⁰

In these Bernese testimonies of 1527 and 1529, as well as in Pfistermeyer's testimony of 1531, we hear concerns that are not given overt expression in the Schleitheim Articles, but that carry over directly from earlier social and economic themes of Swiss Anabaptists. In particular, an emphasis on sharing goods, not noted in the Schleitheim Articles, was a strong Swiss Anabaptist theme throughout 1525 and continued to be a priority in these and other Swiss testimonies; the establishment of community of goods in Moravia is thus a logical continuation of these early emphases on voluntary mutual aid, and not a radical break from them—although the marked emphasis on spiritual yieldedness and regeneration of Denck and Hut provided a stronger theological impulse toward community of goods than existed for Swiss Anabaptists generally.

on the reading, Seiler was either criticizing the "strangling" done by magistrates, or their "usury." The latter seems the more probable reading.

438. Müller, *Geschichte*, 44-45; QGTS, III, #306. Haas notes (#306, n. 5) that this position on the sword is not the same as Schleitheim's.

439. These themes were addressed by four other prisoners in essentially the same way. Vyt Ötli, Baribli with the wooden leg, Verena Meyers (Vyt's wife), Margaret von Sigrisswil (Heinrich Seiler's wife) and Hanss Myndel were the other prisoners.—QGTS, III, #306. John Oyer notes the common "earth is the Lord's" argument among Anabaptists as the basis of their refusal to accept banishment orders as final.—John S. Oyer, "Anabaptists in Esslingen: A Viable Congregation under Periodic Siege," in John S. Oyer, *"They Harry the Good People out of the Land. Essays on the Persecution, Survival and Flourishing of Anabaptists and Mennonites*, ed. John D. Roth (Goshen, Ind.: Mennonite Historical Society, 2000), 231-232.

440. QGTS, III, #309. Haas notes that it is not certain that this sentence was carried out. QGTS, III, #309, n. 5. Feller states that the three were drowned, citing a contemporary chronicle: Feller, "Anfänge," 119. On July 15, 1529, the other prisoners, Vyt Ötli, Baribli with the wooden leg, Verena Meyers (Vyt's wife), Margaret von Sigrisswil (Heinrich Seiler's wife), and Hanss Myndel were banished from Bernese territory.—QGTS, III, #310.

The conviction that income is illegitimate when derived from interest and tithes, and so unacceptable to any Christian (which had clear application to the legitimacy of state-supported clergy), continued to divide the Swiss Anabaptists and the magistrates, apparent not only in private testimonies but also in public disputations;⁴⁴¹ the Schleitheim Articles do not speak to this issue at all. The appeal to the highest authority of God as creator and Lord of the earth in opposing the authority of magistrates to exile people from the land hearkened back to themes voiced by the peasants in their uprising against the lords. Schleitheim says nothing of this, but the sources demonstrate that Swiss Anabaptists in certain locations had not forgotten to make the connection, often when violating their oaths never to return to a territory, a directive that was the Lord's to make in any case. Finally, these Bernese Anabaptists continued to leave the door open, however slightly, to the possibility of a Christian magistracy—more in the manner of Hans Denck or Pilgram Marpeck—rather than assume an unbridgeable gulf between a “perfection of Christ” and “the world” in the manner of Michael Sattler and the Schleitheim Articles.

While it is convenient historical shorthand to depict Swiss Anabaptism after 1527 by referring to the seven points of the Schleitheim Articles, it is important to note that wider, and somewhat divergent, points of emphasis continue to be seen in Swiss Anabaptist testimonies, well after the articles began circulating in Switzerland and elsewhere. Even the earlier spiritualism of Swiss Anabaptism occasionally makes an appearance, as in Seiler's passing comment in 1529 that he did not attend Reformed preaching “because one must be taught by God alone. The word is dead; the Spirit of God brings life.”⁴⁴²

The disputation with Pfistermeyer had worked out so well for the Bernese authorities that they quickly held a second at Zofingen, from July 1 to 9, 1532. These disputation results also were published, although

441. The case of Cuny (Conrad) Eichacher of Steffisburg can be cited here, although the documentation concerning his teaching is rather sparse. He was a local Anabaptist leader and preacher, apparently literate since “his books” were to be taken away from him at the time of his first arrest (August 1, 1529 in Bern).—QGTS, III, #311. It appears that he was set free in October, 1529, at the request of relatives in Steffisburg (QGTS, III, #318), but was back in trouble again in January 1530.—QGTS, III, #323, #325. According to the Bernese record, Eichacher particularly opposed the clergy because of their being supported by income from interest and tithes.—QGTS, III, #329. He had taught in “corners and inns” in Thun and Steffisburg (QGTS, III, #330) and furthermore, refused to recant.—QGTS, III, #332. When Eichacher refused to recant publicly in his home town (QGTS, III, #334), he was drowned on February 21, 1530 in Bern (QGTS, III, #335). Reaction to his execution is found in QGTS, III, #337, #354, #431.

442. Müller, *Geschichte*, 45; QGTS, III, #306. Pfistermeyer argued that the basic difference between the Old Testament and the New is that the “new covenant” is a spiritual covenant, written in the hearts of believers (Jer. 31:31-33).—QGTS, IV, 10.

the "victory" for the official party was less clear-cut.⁴⁴³ The Bernese clergy prepared the topics for discussion with care and with some expert coaching from Heinrich Bullinger, who sent a letter advising the Bernese on "how to deal with and negotiate with Anabaptists." Essential steps, said Bullinger, were to establish the equal worth of both testaments and to use the "rule of faith and love" as the hermeneutical trump card.⁴⁴⁴ The Anabaptist spokesmen also had prepared. At the very opening of the debate the Reformed preachers attempted to establish the overriding hermeneutical principle of "faith and love," with which they had overcome Pfistermeyer. The Anabaptists didn't take the bait, but rather replied, "We recognize that we are to love God and our neighbor, but in itself, a proper (*recht*) love is keeping God's commandments (John 14:15)." By equating "love" with "obedience to God's commands," the Anabaptist disputants were able to hold their own.⁴⁴⁵

Although the published disputation protocol says that many Anabaptists were present, it named only five leaders and spokesmen. Very little is known about three of them: Simon Lantz, Michel Vtt and Christian Brugger; the leading Anabaptist spokesmen were Hans Hotz⁴⁴⁶ and Martin Weninger, both working together at this time in Solothurn.⁴⁴⁷ Martin Weninger (called Lingg or Linki) was from the Schaffhausen region, possibly from Schleitheim.⁴⁴⁸ On November 18, 1525, he and

443. Modern critical edition in QGTS, IV, 69-256; summary in Yoder, *Anabaptism and Reformation*, 102-106.

444. Translated and published in MQR 32 (Apr. 1959), 83-95.

445. QGTS, IV, 75; Yoder, *Anabaptism and Reformation*, 184.

446. Hans Hotz was a carpenter from Grüningen, one of the second wave of Anabaptist leaders to become active there. He first appears in a court record dated March 1526 in which it becomes clear that he was introduced to Anabaptism by Grebel's preaching in and around Hinwil in the fall of 1525.—See QGTS, I, #174, 186; a useful biographical sketch is found in Harder, *Sources*, 549-50. Hotz was imprisoned with Blaurock and Mantz in Zurich beginning in December 1526, and remained in prison after Mantz was executed and Blaurock banished (January 5, 1527). Still in prison a year and half later (August-September 1528), he was interrogated and confessed that Blaurock had instructed him and that Mantz had strengthened him when they were in prison; he refused to recant his views on baptism, and added that he would not attend reformed preaching either.—QGTS, I, #261, 281; #266, 284; #269, 288. Shortly thereafter, his Grüningen companions, Jacob Falk and Hein Reimann, were executed by drowning in Zurich. There is no notice of Hotz's release from prison, but he became a public spokesman for Anabaptism at the Zofingen disputation of 1532 and the Bern disputation of 1538. There is documentation of his working along with Martin Weninger north of Zurich in 1532 and 1533.—QGTS, I, #351, 365-66. After being banished at the end of the Bern disputation, Hotz disappears from the historical record altogether.

447. QGTS, IV, 71, n. 18.

448. See the short biography in Harder, *Sources*, 557; Haas, QGTS, IV, 71, n. 18; QGTS, II, #33, 40-41 and #187, 140 document two recantations of a Weninger from Schleitheim; the second record identifies him as Heinrich. It is not certain that Martin was also from

Michael Sattler swore oaths to desist from Anabaptism, paid the costs of their imprisonment, and were banished from Zurich territory.⁴⁴⁹ Weninger later became active in and around Basel,⁴⁵⁰ Solothurn⁴⁵¹ and Bern, and after speaking for the Anabaptists at Zofingen in 1532 he worked with Hans Hotz north of Zurich. He wrote a persuasive "Vindication" of Anabaptist separation in 1535.⁴⁵²

Martin Weninger would have been a good candidate to have been present at the Schleitheim conference, given his connection with Sattler and his place of birth, but even if he was not at the meeting, the ecclesiology of the Schleitheim Articles certainly shaped his view of the church, insofar as the Anabaptist position argued at Zofingen represents his views accurately. Of course, the most basic ecclesiology presented at Zofingen follows in all its essentials the outline first published by Balthasar Hubmaier in July 1525, as the following excerpt demonstrates:

The ground and beginning of the Christian church, a gathering of the Christian community, is that from the beginning they have given themselves over, through faith, into the obedience of the gospel, in a penitent life, experiencing regret and sorrow, believing that their sins are forgiven. And so they are inscribed (*yngeschriben*), buried with Christ, dead to sin, they have laid aside the old being and through the meaning of baptism resurrected into a new life, now ingrafted into Christ, no longer living according to their own will but rather the will of God, Hebrews 5[:9] . . . they are given a rule, an order and administration. That is the ban, through which they purify themselves in the obedience of the truth.⁴⁵³

The emphasis on penitence, faith, baptism, new life and discipline were all fundamental Anabaptist teachings. Nevertheless, specific positions and the distinctive separatist marks of the Schleitheim Articles

Schleitheim.

449. QGTS, I, #133, 136.

450. QGTS, II, 575, n. 16 places Weninger in Basel in 1529 and 1530.

451. At the time of Weninger's arrest in Schaffhausen, November 1535, the Solothurn authorities reported by letter that he had been in their territory "for a long time."—QGTS, II, #152, 120. For his activity in Solothurn, including an arrest in December 1530, and banishment in January 1531, see QGTS, III, #871, #892, #895, #908.

452. Text of the "Vindication" (*Rechenschaft*) in QGTS, II, #141, 108-113; trans. J. C. Wenger, "Martin Weninger's Vindication of Anabaptism, 1535," *MQR* 22 (July 1948), 180-187. By early November 1535, Weninger was arrested with other Anabaptists in Schaffhausen, and was brought to recantation. He was to recant publicly in both Schaffhausen churches, as well as in the church at Schleitheim; recantations of his fellow imprisoned Anabaptists followed quickly. On Weninger's arrest, testimony and trial, see QGTS, II, 114-120; 123-125, *passim*. His recantation on December 5, 1535 is reported in QGTS, II, #159 and #160, 124-25. See subsequent numbers for recantation reports.

453. QGTS, IV, 97-98.

are plainly visible in the Anabaptist position argued at Zofingen: congregations are to elect pastors who demonstrate their worthiness;⁴⁵⁴ Christians swear no oaths;⁴⁵⁵ government is ordained of God (Romans 13), but no Christians may serve in government;⁴⁵⁶ Christians discipline only with fraternal admonition, and not the sword;⁴⁵⁷ the weapons of Christians are exclusively spiritual, not physical, following the example of Jesus;⁴⁵⁸ rulers exercise power, but Christians suffer persecution, as did Christ, who refused to be chosen king.⁴⁵⁹ The Christocentric standpoint so characteristic of Sattler and Schleitheim can be summed up with a Zofingen statement: "Since he has left us an example, as it is written in 1 Peter 2:[21-23], we should follow in his footsteps, under the cross. He did not rule over the people."⁴⁶⁰ The Anabaptist spokesmen returned repeatedly to the words of Jesus in Matthew 20:25-26: the mighty of this world rule with power, but among you (in the church) it will be otherwise.⁴⁶¹

In the debated articles "who has the true church" and "the ban" the separatist position of Schleitheim is unmistakable. There is no equivocation or vacillation on this point: if a church is separated from the world, it is the true church; if it is "in" the world, "we cannot confess it to be the church."⁴⁶² The Anabaptist spokesmen got more specific: the church in Bern, they said, is not the true church because "the worldly administration (*regiment*) and the Christian church are mixed together."⁴⁶³ Echoing Schleitheim again, the Anabaptists made it clear that there are two kingdoms, ruled by Christ and Satan, respectively: "God and the Holy Spirit rule in believers who have submitted themselves to God's Spirit; this is not so in the world, where rather the Devil rules."⁴⁶⁴ And, as at Schleitheim, it is the ban that maintains the separateness and the purity of the church.⁴⁶⁵

454. QGTS, IV, 81; 94.

455. QGTS, IV, 200-207.

456. QGTS, IV, 182-183.

457. QGTS, IV, 165-199, *passim*.

458. QGTS, IV, 166-167.

459. QGTS, IV, 172.

460. QGTS, IV, 172.

461. QGTS, IV, 172, 176 and *passim*.

462. QGTS, IV, 95.

463. QGTS, IV, 95.

464. QGTS, IV, 96.

465. QGTS, IV, 100; 102; 105; 110 and the article on the ban, 115-165.

The published record of the Zofingen disputation gives evidence of the Anabaptist teaching being carried out by Weninger, Hotz and others from 1529 to 1532 in Basel, Solothurn and the Zurich Unterland. Insofar as heed was given to these Anabaptist leaders, it would appear from this record that the separatism of Schleitheim was providing ecclesial direction for the Anabaptist communities in those places.

The Bern Disputation of 1538, the last of the Swiss disputation, took place because Anabaptists in the Emmental requested it and signaled a willingness to "be taught by Scripture."⁴⁶⁶ By this time Anabaptism was firmly rooted in the Emmental, where it would survive for centuries. The debate, which lasted seven days in March 1538, did not advance understanding between the Reformed preachers of Bern and the Anabaptists; it only led to the banishment of local Anabaptists and the hardening of positions. The Bern Disputation revealed that the Anabaptist debaters held to the same separatist ecclesiology as had been visible at Zofingen, expressed with less forcefulness than in 1532, but with no less clarity. On the central issues defining the separatist position, concerning the election and "sending" of pastors, the oath, the sword of government and the ban, the Anabaptist speakers held to the separatist line first articulated at Schleitheim, arguing for obedience to the example and command of Christ.⁴⁶⁷ We can assume that this teaching was being communicated in the late 1530s in the communities where the primary speakers exercised their leadership: in the Zurich area, in and around Solothurn, in the Aargau and the Emmental.⁴⁶⁸ In an interesting aside, when one of the Reformed preachers attempted to link Melchior Hoffman and his incarnational teaching to the Swiss Anabaptist disputants, they answered that they considered him no brother of theirs, and stated that "we hold his view, as we have heard it from him and others like him, to be an error."⁴⁶⁹ These Swiss Anabaptists of the late 1530s had been in conversation with Melchiorite Anabaptists, and considered themselves not to be "brothers," even though, as the Reformed pastors pointed out, the Melchiorites also were "Anabaptists."

466. Yoder, *Anabaptism and Reformation*, 106-110; transcript of the disputation in QGTS, IV, 259-467.

467. QGTS, IV, 431.

468. Hans Hotz was from Grüningen, but worked also north of Zurich and in Solothurn; Mathiss Wiser was from the Aargau; the Emmental Anabaptists invited the "foreigners" to speak at the disputation, and so must have been in agreement with their teaching.—QGTS, IV, 265-266.

469. QGTS, IV, 297.

Appenzell

Anabaptism in Appenzell continued following the suppression of Anabaptism in St. Gallen and the arrest and execution of Johannes Krüsi. The village of Teufen, where Krüsi had been active, continued to be a center of activity, with some 2,200 Anabaptists reported to have been meeting there in 1526—although the number was probably exaggerated. Local authorities had decided not to move against Anabaptism in Appenzell, with the result that it became the destination of choice for Anabaptist meetings and refugees.⁴⁷⁰ This situation changed, at least overtly, after October 10, 1529, and the public disputation held in Teufen between local Reformed pastors and local Anabaptists. The records for this disputation no longer exist, but apparently the Anabaptists were not defeated soundly enough, for a subsequent synod was called to meet in Frauenfeld in December 13, 1529, with Zwingli presiding. The conclusion drawn by this synod was that the pastors were in the right, and the Anabaptists in the wrong.⁴⁷¹ The articles debated by the Teufen disputants and at the later synod were:

1. Whether the authorities are established by God, and whether obedience is owed to them in all that is not against God.
2. Whether a Christian may be a magistrate.
3. Whether oaths may be sworn.
4. Infant baptism.
5. Whether those who are cleansed by Christ's blood are without sin, holy and blameless.
6. Attendance at churches and listening to preachers.⁴⁷²

In and of themselves, the topics for discussion are not exceptional and mirror disputation topics elsewhere. Even the fifth topic, raising the question of "sinlessness," was on Zwingli's agenda already in 1525, specifically in reference to comments made by Felix Mantz. Unfortunately the documentation from Appenzell is too sparse, and no conclusion can be reached on whether or not the Schleitheim Articles formed the backdrop to either the questions posed or the answers given by the disputants at the Teufen and Frauenfeld discussions in 1529.⁴⁷³

470. Yoder, *Anabaptism and Reformation*, 85-87; Packull, *Hutterite Beginnings*, 45-46.

471. The short extant document contains only the "proper" conclusions to the disputed questions, with no Anabaptist arguments presented.—QGTS, II, #664, 546-47.

472. QGTS, II, #664, 546-47.

473. John H. Yoder notes that of the six points debated at Teufen and examined at Frauenfeld, five "come directly from the seven articles of Schleitheim," but no direct

A contemporary chronicler states that after this synod, the majority of the people joined the Reformed church.⁴⁷⁴ Nevertheless, Heinold Fast has drawn a different conclusion from the evidence. Although outward obedience to council mandates outlawing Anabaptism apparently was quick and thorough in the city of St. Gallen, former Anabaptists and Anabaptist sympathizers were numerous, and subsequently colored the reformation there.⁴⁷⁵ This would explain the attitude of benign neglect by officialdom in and around St. Gallen with regard to the Anabaptism that continued in their midst. The Anabaptist presence was even more stubborn and widespread in the rural territory around St. Gallen, and especially in Appenzell, with some early members of the movement still active as late as the 1560s. Gallus Berlin, for example, a member of the St. Gallen council who abjured Anabaptism, was exiled in 1539 for refusing to swear an oath. He returned in 1543 promising no longer to attend Anabaptist meetings in Teufen in Appenzell. As late as 1560, George Blaurock's widow is listed as residing in the village of Urnäsch in Appenzell.⁴⁷⁶

As Heinold Fast notes, St. Gallen and the area around it was unique in sixteenth-century Switzerland in its policy of "looking the other way" in the presence of Anabaptism. This did not mean that Anabaptists experienced absolute religious toleration and freedom there, but at least they were permitted to live relatively undisturbed. Under these conditions Anabaptist communities survived, but certainly did not flourish to the extent of becoming a serious threat to the official Reformation. Local authorities restricted Anabaptist meetings to ten people or fewer, for example, and local Anabaptists did what they could to abide by the rules. The Swiss Anabaptist communities in this area also were open to interaction with other Anabaptist currents, particularly from the South German Marpeckite stream, as the pastoral presence of Jörg Maler in the 1540s demonstrates.⁴⁷⁷

connection to Schleitheim is demonstrated by the evidence.—Yoder, *Anabaptism and Reformation*, 86.

474. Cited in *Ibid.*

475. Fast, "Sonderstellung," 232.

476. Fast notes that the Falk family had Anabaptist members for fifty years, from 1526 to 1574. Two St. Gallen houses in particular, just outside the city walls, were well-known meeting places for Anabaptists up to the 1580s.—Fast, "Sonderstellung," 236. The records would have been richer, but for a disastrous fire in 1560 that destroyed the archival records for Appenzell.

477. From 1535 to 1548 Jörg Maler (Jörg Probst Rotenfelder), a follower of Pilgram Marpeck and a compiler of the *Kunstbuch*, lived in St. Gallen and Appenzell and provided pastoral leadership to the Swiss Anabaptists in Appenzell—even though he disagreed with their strictness and legalism. See Heinold Fast, "Vom Amt des 'Lesers.' Zum Kompilator des sogenannten *Kunstbuches*. Auf den Spuren Jörg Malers," in *Aussenseiter zeischen Mittelalter und Neuzeit. Festschrift für Hans-Jürgen Goertz zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Norbert

Swiss Anabaptism in the Empire and Moravia, 1526-1530

As Swiss Anabaptism spread into the territories of the Holy Roman Empire and the imperial cities of southern Germany and Bavaria, it encountered communities that interpreted the baptism of adults in unique ways. This last section of our study necessarily encroaches somewhat on the story of South German Anabaptism. This is unavoidable, for the years 1526-1530 witnessed an intense interaction between baptizers in the empire and especially in Moravian territories. This interaction eventually helped define Swiss Anabaptists as "Swiss Brethren," over against other streams of baptizers, and clarified the identity of those other baptizers as well.

Augsburg

Until the mass arrests in April 1528, Augsburg was an important Anabaptist center in southern Germany. Pre-Reformation Augsburg was a city with a particularly strong tradition of lay piety and interest in mystical Christianity. Its active print shops had published many Bibles and religious works by the turn of the century. By 1524, several local reform pamphlets had been printed there; Hans Hut peddled Thomas Müntzer's writings in the city in that same year.⁴⁷⁸ Around September 1525, Hans Denck came to Augsburg as a teacher of Latin and Greek. It does not appear that Denck was yet baptized, for the issue of baptism did not emerge in Augsburg until 1526, and may have been brought by Balthasar Hubmaier. In any case, by May 20, 1526, Hans Denck had accepted baptism, for on that date he baptized Hans Hut in Augsburg. By late summer, all three leaders had moved on, although Denck and Hut would return: Denck went to Strasbourg for a time, Hut began his missionary journeys and Hubmaier continued on to Nikolsburg.

We know little about the early Anabaptist community in Augsburg, but early in 1527 Hans Hut returned and baptized a large group of important local leaders: the patrician Eitelhans Langenmantel, the former clergymen Jakob Dachser and Sigmund Salminger, the weavers Gall

Fischer and Marion Kobelt-Groch (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 187-217. Hans Gutersohn and Hans Falk of St. Gallen along with their wives are mentioned in Maler's letter to Huldrych Aegermann of Constance, preserved in the *Kunstbuch*.

478. Werner O. Packull, *Mysticism and the Early South German-Austrian Anabaptist Movement, 1525-1531* (Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press 1977), 92; see 92-99 for an overview; more details in Guderian, *Täufer in Augsburg*, 20-26; see also "Augsburg," *ME*, 1:182-185, and John Oyer, "Anabaptist Women Leaders in Augsburg," in Snyder and Hecht, *Profiles*, 82-105.

Fischer and Peter Scheppach, and many others.⁴⁷⁹ At about the same time (ca. February 1527) the Swiss Anabaptist leader and refugee Jakob Groß arrived in the city, and began baptizing as well. Rather than evidence suggesting contrary "Anabaptisms" colliding at this point in Augsburg, the records show that Hut established a rudimentary church organization among the Augsburg Anabaptists that featured a common chest for poor relief, and that integrated Jakob Groß into the leadership structure: Sigmund Salminger was chosen "first minister" by lot, with Jakob Groß and Jakob Dachser as his assistants.⁴⁸⁰

The evidence from Augsburg suggests strongly that Hans Hut was working (in some places at least) for a broader Anabaptist movement without overtly linking Anabaptist baptism to his particular chronology of "end times" events or his related understanding of the sword. The appointment of the Swiss Brethren pacifist Jakob Groß to a leadership position suggests as much. The broad typological distinctions that have been used to distinguish Swiss Brethren and South German movements (biblicist vs. mystical/nonapocalyptic vs. apocalyptic) were more permeable than the labels would suggest. From the start, South German Anabaptism was not united on the apocalyptic question, promoted strongly as it was by Hans Hut, and more or less ignored by Hans Denck, Melchior Rinck and some of those baptized by Hut. In May of 1527, Hubmaier would oppose Hut from a Swiss perspective; in August of that same year, in Augsburg, Hut encountered opposition from within the South German movement itself.

The "Martyrs' Synod" took place in Augsburg from August 20 to 24, 1527, so called because many of its participants would shortly suffer martyrdom.⁴⁸¹ There were at least twenty-two Anabaptist missionaries from outside the city in attendance at three successive meetings; the first and the last meetings had more than sixty people present. Hut and his end times agenda dominated the meetings, and Hut was forced to agree that he would be less forward in presenting his convictions and predictions.⁴⁸² Among those who opposed him was Jakob Dachser of Augsburg, who had been baptized by Hut.⁴⁸³ Once the contentious apocalyptic question had been settled by means of compromise, the

479. Guderian, *Täufer in Augsburg*, 35; Packull, *Mysticism*, 93.

480. Packull, *Mysticism*, 93.

481. *ME*, 3:529-531; Guderian, *Täufer in Augsburg*, 40-44. Packull, *Mysticism*, 118-119, cautions against considering "the goings-on in Augsburg" a synod in the usual sense of that word.

482. A portion of the letter Hut circulated is reproduced in Guderian, *Täufer in Augsburg*, 43.

483. Packull, *Mysticism*, 94. Packull concludes, "Dachser in some respects showed greater similarities to Denck and the Swiss Brethren than to Hut."—*Ibid.*, 99.

assembled brethren also commissioned apostles and missionaries to various areas; they were drawn from both the Swiss and South German streams, although the South German Anabaptists present at these meetings far outnumbered the Swiss.⁴⁸⁴

Shortly afterward a series of arrests, beginning in August 1527, devastated the Augsburg Anabaptist group. The Lutheran clergy, led by Urban Rhegius, collaborated with the city council to rid the city of Anabaptists.⁴⁸⁵ Those who would not recant were banished; the leaders were left in prison indefinitely. On October 11, 1527, a mandate was promulgated outlawing Anabaptist practice, and promising severe punishment for non-compliance, but by 1528 new leaders had baptized more followers, and there was a resurgence of the movement in the city. This came to an end in April 1528, on Easter morning, with the mass arrest of about ninety people who had gathered for worship. Hans Leupold, the leader of this group, was executed on April 15, 1528. Augsburg virtually emptied of Anabaptists at this point, with many refugees fleeing to Strasbourg, Esslingen and Moravia. In the 1540s, Pilgram Marpeck made his home in Augsburg, and may have led a small congregation that managed to stay out of harm's way, but Anabaptism never again gained a significant numerical following in the city.⁴⁸⁶

Esslingen

The Reformation in the imperial city of Esslingen was slow in developing, with a strong reforming preacher not appointed by the city council until 1531. By December of that year Ambrosius Blarer had managed to institute basic Protestant reforms, along Zwinglian lines. In the meantime, local Anabaptism seems to have functioned as an alternative anti-Catholic reforming option. Perhaps this explains the strong rooting of Anabaptism in Esslingen and its territories, which saw the underground but vigorous survival of Anabaptism there throughout the sixteenth century and into the seventeenth, at least until the beginning of the Thirty Years' War.⁴⁸⁷ In the sixteenth century, the

484. Guderian lists only Hans Beck, Jakob Groß, and Gregor Maler as Swiss Brethren representatives. Groß apparently was to remain in Augsburg; Beck was to travel with Denck to the Zurich and Basel areas; Maler was sent to work in the Voralberg region.

485. Rhegius' "Justification" on the prosecution of Anabaptists is translated and printed in C. A. Snyder, ed., *Sources of South German/Austrian Anabaptism* (Kitchener, Ont.: Pandora Press, 2001), 213-227.

486. Hans Hut died in a mysterious prison fire; Jakob Groß, Jakob Dachser and Simon Salzinger were left in prison. The latter three finally recanted in 1531.—ME, 1:184-185.

487. The indispensable study in English is Oyer, "Anabaptists in Esslingen," 191-321; 195-196 for the reformation in Esslingen.

Esslingen authorities vacillated in their policy toward the Anabaptists, with brief periods of harsh repression, interposed between longer periods of benign neglect.⁴⁸⁸

When Michael Sattler was arrested in Horb, Wilhelm Reublin's wife and child were also arrested. Reublin soon surfaced in Esslingen, where his sister lived. He introduced Anabaptism to the city in the spring of 1527 and was active there into 1528; some refugees from his congregations in Rottenburg and Horb also made their way there.⁴⁸⁹ After a failed experiment with community of goods in Moravia, Reublin was back in Swabia in 1531 and met with some 300 Anabaptists near Esslingen, probably in the Esslinger forest, which was a favorite Anabaptist meeting place. John Oyer concludes that "Reublin's influence on the new congregation was undoubtedly more formative than that of any other Anabaptist minister,"⁴⁹⁰ leading one to suspect a strong Swiss Anabaptist orientation. Nevertheless, the Esslingen congregation also was influenced from the start by South German Anabaptist refugees and preachers of Hans Hut's persuasion.

The Anabaptists of Esslingen, at least as much as those of Augsburg, seem to personify a blending of the Swiss and South German currents of Anabaptism.⁴⁹¹ Christoph Freisleben, a convert and follower of Hans Hut, was preaching and baptizing in Esslingen in late 1527, and worked as a colleague with Reublin. There was no evident friction between these Swiss and South German Anabaptist leaders, probably because Freisleben did not champion Hut's apocalyptic calendar; as Oyer notes, Freisleben and his converts "did not play Hut's themes" very strongly.⁴⁹²

488. From 1527 to 1563, a period of forty-three years, there were twenty-nine years in which the Esslingen authorities arrested no one, even though the presence of Anabaptists was well known.—Oyer, "Anabaptists in Esslingen," 257.

489. Ludwig Scheurer of Horb managed to escape the arrest that captured Michael and Margaretha Sattler; he fled to Esslingen where he was housed by local Anabaptists.—Oyer, "Anabaptists in Esslingen," 201-202. In November 1528, four Rottenburg Anabaptist refugees were arrested in Esslingen (p. 210). Anna Metzger fled Rottenburg for Esslingen, but was discovered to be an Anabaptist there and exiled in December, 1528 (p. 233). Hans Fritz was exiled from Rottenburg and found refuge in Esslingen in 1528.

490. Oyer, "Anabaptists in Esslingen," 198; 199; Packull concurs, *Hutterite Beginnings*, 80.

491. An amendment to Packull's conclusion that Augsburg was more of an Anabaptist "melting pot" than Esslingen (Packull, *Hutterite Beginnings*, 79) has been entered by the publication of John Oyer's detailed study of the mixed leadership, belief and practice of Anabaptists in Esslingen.—Oyer, "Anabaptists in Esslingen," *passim*. Oyer notes that it is virtually impossible to label the Esslingen Anabaptists either Swiss Brethren or South German Anabaptists.—*Ibid.*, 193.

492. Oyer, "Anabaptists in Esslingen," 199-200. Freisleben wrote a book on baptism in which he acknowledged Reublin's help and guidance; the understanding of Anabaptist baptism contained in Freisleben's book did not reflect Hut's understanding of baptism as an apocalyptic sign. *Vom wahrhaftigen Tauf Joannis. Christi und der Aposteln. Wann und wie*

Along with Reublin and Freisleben, another South German leader, Hans Leupold, worked as a ministering colleague in Esslingen for five weeks in December 1527 and into 1528, after being exiled from Augsburg. He baptized several persons in Esslingen before returning to Augsburg, where he was rearrested, tried in April 1528 and executed. In his testimony he reported on church assemblies of 100 or more participants in Esslingen.⁴⁹³

John Oyer has noted an impressive unity of belief for the early Esslingen congregation. He attributes this to the absence of a direct influence from either Hut or Denck, and the evident concern of Freisleben and Leupold with a more "Swiss" emphasis on ethics. That is, the Esslingen Anabaptists did not appropriate the apocalypticism and spiritualism of Hut, or the mysticism of Denck. At the same time, while some of Schleitheim's themes were adopted by the Esslingen Anabaptists, separatism was downplayed to fit the local situation, rather than adhered to rigidly. In fact the Esslingen Anabaptists were interested in reaching an accommodation with local officials that would allow them to continue living in their home territory.

Esslingen teaching on baptism, the ban and the Lord's Supper all reflect a basic Swiss Anabaptist orientation, and some Schleitheim themes are visible. The first impulse of these Anabaptists, for example, was to refuse to swear oaths, as they had been taught by their early leaders. Nevertheless many Esslingen Anabaptists did swear oaths when forced to do so—to prevent the chopping off of two fingers from their right hands, for example⁴⁹⁴—but then would renege on what they had sworn to do. There are so many examples of the retraction of recantations that Oyer concludes that the Esslingen Anabaptists had simply adopted a policy of accommodation to the point of Nicodemism. Esslingen Anabaptists "separated from the world," but they did so in secret, often attending public preaching and services after arrest and recantation, while continuing to meet secretly with Anabaptist believers for their "real" worship. Needless to say, this was not the spirit or intent of Schleitheim—but then, Schleitheim was drafted in expectation of

der Kindertauf angefangen und eingerissen hat. (n.p. [Strasbourg], 1528). See Oyer, "Anabaptists in Esslingen," 260 and n. 264; 267-70.

493. Oyer, "Anabaptists in Esslingen," 200-201; more details on Leupold in Packull, *Mysticism*, 122-126. Leupold was executed Apr. 25, 1528. Some early Anabaptist leaders in Esslingen profiled by Oyer are Ludwig Scheurer, Hans Kieffer, Hans Graci, Leonhard Wenig and Jörg Werner, the latter of whom "held the congregation together" until his death in 1559.—Oyer, "Anabaptists in Esslingen," 201-206.

494. As in the cases of Christa Friess, Simon Fry and Hans Stütz, who decided to keep their fingers and swear the oath to remain in exile.—Oyer, "Anabaptists in Esslingen," 275.

Christ's imminent return, not as a constitution for a church struggling to survive long-term in an imperial city in the heart of the Holy Roman Empire.

Likewise with the teaching on the sword: Esslingen Anabaptists virtually always opposed the use of weapons; most opposed doing guard duty, even unarmed; still, some did guard duty, and a few carried weapons when performing that duty on the city's walls.⁴⁹⁵ They did not intend to use them, but for some the price of staying in the territory was at least the appearance of such intent and some minimal cooperation with government in defense of the city. The congregation accommodated this variety of conviction and practice with surprising ease.

The choosing and ordaining of pastors from the congregation seems to have been abandoned after the disastrous persecutions of 1528 and the recantation of five local leaders.⁴⁹⁶ Instead of ordaining new leaders, as Schleitheim outlined in article 5, the Esslingen Anabaptists continued as a congregation with informal lay leaders performing the tasks needed. The authorities could not quash the movement by exiling or executing the leaders, because none had been chosen and identified as such. Oyer concludes that the Esslingen Anabaptists were simply protecting their leaders by adopting the practice of informal lay leadership.⁴⁹⁷

There is testimony from the Esslingen Anabaptists that speaks of the use of the ban for the admonition and correction of those who sinned. After a careful study of the documentation, Oyer doubts that the ban was actually applied in the Esslingen congregation with any rigor. There was a flexibility and acceptance of certain "weak" members that manifested itself in continued fellowship with those who had recanted, sworn oaths, carried weapons and attended preaching services in the state church.⁴⁹⁸ This broad acceptance of diverse practice contrasts with the harsh banning practices of some other Swiss congregations who followed the separatist spirit of Schleitheim more closely.

In short, although Esslingen Anabaptists displayed a stubborn commitment to their beliefs throughout the sixteenth century, they did not fit the pattern of a visibly and militantly "separated" congregation that one associates with adoption of the Schleitheim Articles. They

495. The notable case and exception is Jörg Werner, an Anabaptist leader in Esslingen from 1531 to his death in 1559, who approved of the bearing of arms and was willing to bear them himself.—Oyer, "Anabaptists in Esslingen," 277. For an overview of the evidence, see *ibid.*, 277-279.

496. See Oyer, "Anabaptists in Esslingen," 217-223.

497. Oyer, "Anabaptists in Esslingen," 247-253.

498. See the discussion in Oyer, "Anabaptists in Esslingen," 275-277: "They seem to have avoided divisions precisely because they had learned how to paper over disagreements in faith and practice that were clearly evident among them."—*Ibid.*, 276.

manifested their "separateness" primarily by avoiding communion in the state church and celebrating the Lord's Supper together.⁴⁹⁹ Living in a territory whose rulers were not committed to their eradication, but who demanded some minimum requirements for the sake of appearances, these Anabaptists found that they could bend and not be broken. In some measure, all Swiss Anabaptist groups that survived in hostile territory would have to do the same. Strict sectarian boundaries were possible only where toleration was offered, typically by local lords who were willing to accept refugee Anabaptist communities for economic reasons.

Nikolsburg

By far the best possibilities of refuge for Anabaptists on the run between 1526 and 1528 lay in the city of Nikolsburg, under the lordship of Leonard von Liechtenstein. By the time Balthasar Hubmaier sought refuge there (ca. July 1526) Nikolsburg had already moved in a Zwinglian evangelical direction thanks to the efforts of local pastors Hans Spittelman and Oswald Glaidt.⁵⁰⁰ Although evangelical refugees knew about the freedom to be found in Moravia, the first Anabaptist contact apparently was established by Hubmaier.⁵⁰¹ Within a few months Hubmaier had managed to turn Nikolsburg in an officially Anabaptist direction, baptizing Spittelman and Glaidt, as well as the city's lord, Leonhard von Liechtenstein. Within a short time the city had become an Anabaptist center, with the initial number of baptized members estimated at around 2,000.⁵⁰² Bergsten notes that although many Anabaptists with "differing shades of belief" from Switzerland, Germany and Austria came to Nikolsburg, nevertheless there was no initial trouble in the fall and winter of 1526-1527, such as would develop in the spring of 1527.⁵⁰³ The basic ecclesial direction was set by Hubmaier, along the lines he had tested briefly in Waldshut; in other words, Nikolsburg Anabaptism was supported by political power, but was nevertheless Swiss Anabaptist in its essentials.

There is indirect evidence that there were underlying tensions, as one might expect, between the Anabaptist followers of Hubmaier and more

499. This is Oyer's analysis, "Anabaptists in Esslingen," 270-274.

500. Bergsten, *Hubmaier*, 314-320.

501. Jarold K. Zeman, *The Anabaptists and the Czech Brethren in Moravia, 1526-1628* (The Hague: Mouton, 1969), 100-120. On Hubmaier, Hut and Nikolsburg, see Stayer, *Sword*, 162-166; Packull, *Mysticism*, 99-106.

502. Bergsten, *Hubmaier*, 320-324.

503. *Ibid.*, 328.

radically-minded separatist Anabaptist refugees.⁵⁰⁴ From later events, it appears that a separatist faction was led by "the one-eyed Swabian," Jacob Wiedemann, who gathered his followers in the village of Bergen, outside the city walls.⁵⁰⁵ Into this mix came the apocalyptically-minded South German Anabaptist leader Hans Hut in May 1527, who won support not only among the more radical faction, but also among some important supporters of Hubmaier in the city.⁵⁰⁶ The central point of contention seems to have been Hut's end times calendar and preaching; some teaching on community of goods may have been involved as well, but this is not well documented.

Following a private meeting between Hut and Hubmaier, a public disputation was held between them (the Nikolsburg Disputation of 1527) in the church of the city, which was followed in turn by a private disputation at the castle, before Lord Leonard. The main points of contention appear to have been Hut's end times calculations, opposed by Hubmaier, and Hut's accusation of laxity on Hubmaier's part for allowing too many unprepared people into the church.⁵⁰⁷ Hut was thrown into prison by Lord Leonard, himself a baptized member of the Anabaptist community, and in spite of Hut's successful escape from prison and departure from the city, the division of the Anabaptist community in Moravia was a foregone conclusion. Having Hut and some of his supporters leave Nikolsburg eased immediate tensions in the city, but there remained the issue of the sword of government, and the two contrasting Swiss Anabaptist views concerning government.

On June 24, 1527, Hubmaier published his last work, *On the Sword*, composed perhaps with a view to establish his "orthodoxy" in matters political, but nevertheless directed against Schleitheim's Article 6 specifically and the separatist interpretation of Anabaptism more generally.⁵⁰⁸ The remarkable fact is not that open controversy among the Anabaptists in Nikolsburg emerged on this question, but rather that "sword bearing" and "staff bearing" Swiss Anabaptists managed to

504. "The bold criticisms by Hans Hut in May 1527 did not introduce the controversy. They merely voiced tensions which must have been latent at Mikulov [Nikolsburg] since the earliest days of Anabaptism."—Zeman, *Czech Brethren*, 185. See especially the detailed study by Packull, *Hutterite Beginnings*, 55-61.

505. George H. Williams, *The Radical Reformatton*, 3rd ed. (Kirksville, Mo.: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1992), 340.

506. Packull, *Mysticism*, 99-104.

507. On the controverted issue of the actual questions under debate, as compared with the "Nikolsburg Articles," I am guided by Stayer, *Sword*, 162-166, and Packull, *Mysticism*, 99-103. Compare with Bergsten, *Hubmaier*, 365-370; Williams, *Radical*, 341-344. Bergsten and Williams repeat the now untenable view that Hut defended pacifism against Hubmaier. E.g. Williams, *Radical*, 342: "Hut pressed his pacifistic views with his wonted passion. . . ."

508. Packull, *Mysticism*, 104.

coexist for so long in Nikolsburg without first resolving this difference. The immediate objects of Hubmaier's pamphlet probably were the brethren gathered around Jakob Wiedemann in the village of Bergen.

In the Schleitheim Articles, Michael Sattler had argued that there are two opposed kingdoms, and that the Christian belongs under the lordship of Christ. Hubmaier argued in *On the Sword* that Christians are not Christ: "Christ alone can say in truth 'My kingdom is not of this world.'" As far as Christ's followers and disciples are concerned, "we are stuck in [this world] right up to our ears, and we will not be able to be free from it here on earth."⁵⁰⁹ Here Hubmaier sounded the same note as in his earliest Anabaptist writing, when he emphasized human limitation and the need for God's grace, over against optimistic claims of "sinlessness," attributed, not without reason, to Felix Mantz.⁵¹⁰

The other side of Hubmaier's argument was pneumatological, even if unstated at this place: Hubmaier had less confidence in the power of the Spirit to regenerate human beings. Hubmaier was less optimistic in both his anthropology and pneumatology, and this turned his ecclesiology away from perfectionist separatism toward a broader, more inclusive understanding of the church. Hubmaier's ecclesiology, while thoroughly Anabaptist and so also, of necessity, regenerationist, nevertheless expected the church to be made up of those who were still "stuck in this world up to their ears," both personally and corporately.

Hubmaier's second argument against Schleitheim's view maintained that the example of Christ's life was unique and could not be universally binding on all persons in every conceivable social station or "office." Everyone, concluded Hubmaier, should thus continue in their proper stations and offices in this life, performing the duties appropriate to those offices: "Just as Christ wanted to do justice to his office on earth, likewise we should fulfill our office and calling, be it in government or in obedience."⁵¹¹ To these arguments Hubmaier added a third: God, said Hubmaier, did not "ordain" two opposed kingdoms, but rather intended a harmony to exist between church and government. The proper way of harmonizing the command not to kill (Matthew 5) and the divine "ordering" of the sword of government (Romans 13), Hubmaier said, is

509. Pipkin and Yoder, *Hubmaier*, 497.

510. That some Anabaptists claimed the possibility of sinlessness was not purely the polemical invention of opponents—although sometimes it was that as well. The charge was leveled again in Appenzell, apparently with good reason, but the position was not so unusual as to warrant the designation of this being a "special" kind of Anabaptism, unlike any other.

511. Pipkin and Yoder, *Hubmaier*, 500.

to see the *personal* focus of the first command (which calls even more fundamentally for a lack of hate or anger on the part of individual Christians), and the *social* focus of the second, which establishes government which "does not kill out of anger ... but by the order of God...."⁵¹² Against an ethic based exclusively on the measure of Christ's life (a "Lordship of Christ" ethic), Hubmaier insisted on "the Lordship of God," who ordained both personal nonresistance and the "legitimate" use of force, each in its proper sphere.

A fundamental ecclesiological tension already was discernible among Swiss Anabaptists in 1525. The essential building blocks of the later Schleitheim position were being utilized by Felix Mantz in 1525, including a strong Christocentric focus, an emphasis on rebirth and a call for blameless living on the strength of that rebirth. Against the ecclesiological implications of this position Hubmaier presented, in essence, the same anthropological and pneumatological arguments in July 1525 as he would repeat later in *On the Sword*: human beings remain human, even after spiritual rebirth, and continue to require God's grace at every step. Hubmaier's position was Anabaptist, even if it was not leading in a separatist and sectarian direction. Even separatist Anabaptists would have to face the question of the limits of regeneration and the ability of the regenerate to live without sin. Sometimes their answers echo Hubmaier's appeal to God's necessary grace for holy living, but even so with more optimism than Hubmaier could muster.⁵¹³

Just one month after the publication of *On the Sword*, Hubmaier was arrested by Austrian authorities, and subsequently burned at the stake in Vienna on March 10, 1528; his wife, Elsbeth, was drowned three days later in the Danube.⁵¹⁴ Back in Nikolsburg, the Jakob Wiedemann group continued its separatist opposition to Lord Liechtenstein's Anabaptist majoritarian church, now led by Hans Spittelmaier. Early in 1528 a debate was held in Bergen between Spittelmaier on the one side, and Wiedemann and Philip Jäger on the other. The Wiedemann group insisted on nonresistance in the manner of the Swiss followers of Schleitheim; Wiedemann and Jäger also seem to have incorporated some of Hut's end times teaching—although obviously not Hut's views on the sword. Lord Leonard eventually asked the dissidents to leave, which they did in late winter, 1528. This particular crisis seems to have been

512. *Ibid.*, 515.

513. At the Bern Disputation of 1538, Georg Träffer of Ammergouw (im Beyerland oben: Bavaria?) explained that temptation in the flesh (the "outer man") occurred daily and had to be opposed daily "through the power of the Spirit, through Christ, which is in our power to do, since the power of God suppresses the vices through rebirth."—QGTS, IV, 265, 317.

514. Bergsten, *Hubmaier*, 379.

precipitated because Liechtenstein had mobilized armed defense in the face of a threat by the Austrian provost.⁵¹⁵ The “staff-bearing” group of more than 200 refugees from Nikolsburg found a political space in the Moravian city of Austerlitz, where the local lords promised them freedom of worship. In the course of their journey there they did establish a common purse, based upon a seven-point constitution that established community of goods in an eschatological context. It was to this group that Jacob Hutter came in 1529 from the Tyrol.

Hubmaier’s state-affirming Anabaptism and the separatist Anabaptism of Schleitheim grew out of the same Swiss Anabaptist roots, but divergent anthropological and regenerationist principles eventually bore fruit in significantly different ecclesiologies, under the pressure of changing social and political circumstances. The story is one of evolution, not one of differing points of origin. Furthermore, it is often suggested (implicitly if not explicitly) that Schleitheim marked an immediate and thorough consolidation in Swiss Anabaptism, and that Schleitheim thus represents the essence of mature Swiss Anabaptism. We have seen that in Anabaptist communities in Switzerland and elsewhere, however, Schleitheim did not immediately define the parameters of the baptizing communities, nor did its seven articles exhaust the issues deemed important by all Anabaptist leaders.

The pacifist brethren in Nikolsburg also were still working out the full implications of the “two kingdoms” Schleitheim position. The problem for the nonresistant Anabaptists in Nikolsburg was unique, in that an *Anabaptist* ruler had granted them asylum and was protecting them with his own sword against their mutual enemies. As a territorial lord who was born to his office and station in life, had Leonard not been “ordained of God” to punish evil and protect the good with the sword? Separatist ecclesiology did not function well in this shade of gray; it worked best in a context of unrelenting conflict and persecution, where it was beyond question that the magistrates were ravenous wolves and that not a one of them was inside the “perfection of Christ.” In the end, the clash between “faithfulness to Christ in nonresistance” (Matthew 5) and “responsible governance as ordained by God” (Romans 13) could not be avoided by Anabaptists in Nikolsburg, in spite of an extended period of coexistence.

The political openings that allowed a legitimist, majoritarian Anabaptism to come into being in Waldshut and Nikolsburg would soon disappear, leaving the baptizers facing a polarized world of black and white, good and evil, church and world, Christ and Belial. In such a

515. Stayer, *Sword*, 168; Bergsten, *Hubmaier*, 383.

setting, to accept Hubmaier's arguments for a majoritarian church of the baptized was to move toward recantation of Anabaptism, for no Anabaptist majoritarian church would again be possible in sixteenth-century Europe. Sixteenth-century Anabaptism had to become separatist or invisible (or both), or face eradication. This, however, was the result of external historical developments, not the result of an inevitable separatist ecclesial logic within original Anabaptist principles themselves.

It is important to note that the various Anabaptist tendencies that met at Nikolsburg did not emerge unchanged from that setting. The pacifist "staff bearers" who formed communal settlements in other parts of Moravia underwent a fusion of Schleitheim's teaching of absolute separatist nonresistance with Hans Hut's apocalyptic expectations, to which eventually was added the ecclesiological distinctive of a legislated sharing of goods. This was a further refinement of the Anabaptist position that had not existed exactly in this form before, either in Hubmaier, in the Schleitheim Swiss Anabaptists or in Hut.⁵¹⁶

Hubmaier's majoritarian Anabaptism did not long outlive him, since the requisite political support soon disappeared; Hut's apocalyptic excitement waned quickly following his death in 1527. Nevertheless, the contributions of both leaders to the baptizing movement were immense. Hubmaier's overall contribution to Anabaptism should not be measured solely on the scale of the success or failure of his vision for a politically-legitimate Anabaptist church—an ecclesiological vision that failed totally in the sixteenth century. Beyond that failure, however, Hubmaier not only managed to define the biblical bases for the baptism of adults, but he also was the first to establish the essential shape of Anabaptist ecclesiology, placing it on solid biblical and theological foundations. It was Hubmaier who first articulated the theological relationships between repentance, regeneration, faith, baptism, church discipline and the Lord's Supper, all of which were to lead to a new life lived in community. The essential shape of this ecclesiology, marked by the visible "ceremonies" of baptism and the Lord's Supper, continued to define Anabaptist churches, even after "separation" was added to the basic ecclesial definition by ever more Anabaptists.

Likewise, Hans Hut's contribution should not be measured primarily on the basis of his failed apocalyptic calendar. Hut's apocalyptic "mood" survived in the Hutterite zeal to gather together the elect into their communities "in these dangerous last days."⁵¹⁷

516. In Packull's words, "a form of Anabaptism under a mixed Swiss-Hut influence."—*Hutterite Beginnings*, 61.

517. Stayer, *German Peasants' War*, 141.

While Hut's contributions were not as broadly theological as Hubmaier's, he and other South German Anabaptist leaders, such as Hans Denck, did introduce a deep mystical current to Anabaptism that found its theological expression in the teaching of *Gelassenheit*—yieldedness to God in rebirth—and that later would be given ecclesial expression in the teaching on community of goods—yieldedness of all of one's possessions to the body of Christ.⁵¹⁸ The heightened pneumatological expectation of Hans Hut contrasts with Hubmaier's more pessimistic expectations for the regenerate, and led to a fundamental ecclesial difference separating the two Anabaptist reformers and the baptizing movements they informed and influenced. *Gelassenheit* provided the basis for the unnatural yielding of one's concrete claims to property. Hubmaier's theology had no room for such a level of regeneration, or such a separatist ecclesiology: one shared with the needy, of course, but remained an imperfect steward of God's possessions. The diminished pneumatology of the Swiss Anabaptists generally, Hubmaier included, and their heightened emphasis on the "rule of life" provided by written Scripture, led more naturally to the retention of private property whose use was to be governed by broader scriptural norms.

The separatist, but noncommunitarian, Anabaptism of the Swiss Anabaptists who generally followed Schleitheim (those who came to be called "Swiss Brethren") and the separatist, communitarian Anabaptism that emerged from the Nikolsburg experience (later the Hutterian Brethren) were interpretations and expressions of Anabaptism that would survive to the end of the sixteenth century and beyond. Both had important common roots in communitarian Swiss Anabaptism, but each was shaped by distinct theological currents.

Strasbourg

The beginnings of Anabaptism in Strasbourg can no longer be identified in the sources, although it appears that there were small groups of Anabaptists in the city already by late summer of 1525; with the fall of Waldshut in December and increased persecution in Zurich and elsewhere, refugees began to arrive in earnest. Among the first to be noted in the record was Wilhelm Reublin. Reublin stayed in the home of Jörg Ziegler, a tailor whose house would remain an important meeting

518. Ulrich Stadler gives a classic expression of this connection in his "Cherished Instructions," trans. G. H. Williams and A. Mergal, *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1957), 272-284.

place for Anabaptists; Reublin was not the originator of this small group, but rather came to visit a group already functioning.⁵¹⁹

Although there was a report in July 1526 that preachers were subjected to insults when they baptized infants.⁵²⁰ The preachers were hopeful that the Anabaptist movement was on the wane, but in November 1526 Hans Denck arrived, followed by Ludwig Hätzer, Jacob Groß and Michael Sattler in quick succession. Of these, Hans Denck was the most active, and disturbed the city's preachers the most. Hätzer had consorted with Anabaptists in Zurich and been expelled; he would work closely with Hans Denck later in Worms on a translation of the Old Testament prophets. He was Capito's house guest for about a month in December 1526, but he disavowed any connections with the Anabaptists and left the city voluntarily early in 1527. Jacob Groß worked primarily among small conventicles in the city; Michael Sattler appears to have done no proselytizing or baptizing in the city. Hans Denck, to the contrary, quickly gained a significant gathering in the city to the point that the reformers felt directly threatened. Following a private disputation in Capito's home with Cellarius, a public disputation was held on December 22, 1526, with the city's clergy, in front of 400 interested citizens. Martin Bucer carried the debate for the Strasbourg preachers; Denck was characteristically irenic and evasive. The end result was that Denck was banished from the city and departed on December 25.⁵²¹

Likely as a result of the public disputation, the civic authorities rounded up a group of Anabaptists: Jacob Groß, the itinerant Anabaptist evangelist from Waldshut; Jörg Tucher from Weissenburg, Switzerland; Mathias Hiller, a furrier from St. Gallen, who was baptized by Groß in Strasbourg; Wilhelm Echsel, a cobbler from Valois, who was baptized in Zurich; and Jörg Ziegler, the Strasbourg tailor who had given lodging to Reublin earlier.⁵²² Their testimony is particularly important, for it is one of the few glimpses we have of the emerging Anabaptist and radical conventicles in Strasbourg in late 1526 and early 1527.

The persons arrested testified to teachings that would later be associated with the Swiss Brethren, with some interesting details and variations. Tucher described their worship as follows: "They began with

519. For the early movement, see Hans-Werner Müsing, "The Anabaptist Movement in Strasbourg from Early 1526 to July 1527," *MQR* (Apr. 1977), 91-126.

520. QGT, Elsaß 1, 56.

521. For a detailed account, see Müsing, "Anabaptist Movement," 101-107.

522. The record is undated, but the arrests and questioning probably took place at the end of 1526. See QGT, Elsaß 1, 62-67, and the excellent summary in Müsing, "Anabaptist Movement," 107-112.

prayer asking for patience in cross and suffering. Then each one explicated Scripture to the best of his ability. Thereby they strengthened their intention to do nothing contrary to God's will and to practice love of neighbor.⁵²³

On the question of the sword, Tucher clarified that although three or four of their group had been in Zurich, nevertheless they were not agreed on whether or not they were bound to render military service if called to do so by the authorities. Furthermore, they practiced a kind of community of goods, sharing their possessions with those in need. Besides emphasis on the obedience to the letter of Scripture and the admonition to live a new life (love of neighbor), Tucher's mention of a rudimentary teaching of community of goods and his comments about the sword both reflected the uncertain ecclesiastical definition of Swiss Anabaptism at this time.

The emphasis on a new life was underscored by Wilhelm Echsel, who said that when they gathered together "they admonished each other to desist from sin and scandal."⁵²⁴ He also insisted on the basis of Mark 16:16 that one must first believe, and then be baptized. Echsel clearly was one of those "from Zurich," for he had been imprisoned with Grebel, Mantz, Blaurock and others, and had escaped prison with them; he was re-arrested and then expelled from the canton in April of 1526.⁵²⁵

Jacob Groß, who emerged as the primary spokesman for the group, was not inclined to reticence: he attacked the ministers for the "lack of fruit" of their preaching in Strasbourg, suggesting that they would have more success if they didn't proceed to imprison those with whom they disagreed. He argued for adult baptism on the basis of 1 Peter 3:21 and Matthew 28:19, and said that he would obey government "in all that was not against God"; he stated clearly that killing was against God's command, and argued besides that no Christian may swear an oath, citing Matthew 5:34. He admitted to having baptized Mathias Hiller and an unnamed potter while in Strasbourg.⁵²⁶

At about this same time Michael Sattler appeared in Strasbourg, held conversations with Capito and Bucer, and then pleaded in writing for the release of Groß and the other prisoners. Sattler related to the Swiss Anabaptists in Strasbourg, as is clear from his connections to the individuals involved both before and after the arrest of Groß and his

523. Müsing, "Anabaptist Movement," 108; QGT, Elsaß 1, 63.

524. QGT, Elsaß 1, 64.

525. QGTS, I, #178, 191-192.

526. QGT, Elsaß 1, 64-65.

compatriots. Groß and Sattler both missionized in Lahr, across the Rhine from Strasbourg, and both baptized converts there—Groß prior to coming to Strasbourg, and Sattler after having been in Strasbourg; whether they worked in Lahr concurrently is no longer clear from the sources.⁵²⁷ When Sattler was arrested in Horb, Wilhelm Reublin, who had had earlier connections with Jörg Ziegler in Strasbourg, was present with the group. Mathias Hiller, baptized by Groß in Strasbourg and one of the prisoners for whom Sattler appealed, was arrested with Sattler and was executed with him in Rottenburg.⁵²⁸ What, if any, Sattler's contacts were with the "Denckian" group in Strasbourg is no longer clear, but Ludwig Hätzer's negative comment concerning Sattler—that Sattler was "a sly evil lurker . . . of whom we expected better things"—suggests an underlying tension with Hätzer at least, if not with Denck.⁵²⁹

There were, then, emerging Swiss Anabaptist groups in Strasbourg just prior to the composition of the Schleitheim Articles on February 24, 1527. They operated primarily among the craftsmen of the city, namely furriers, tailors, tanners, coopers, weavers and cobblers. There were, in addition, persons who had associated more closely with Hans Denck and Ludwig Hätzer, such as the notary Fridolin Meyer, who continued to organize meetings in the city; and finally, local grassroots reformers like Clemens Ziegler continued their activity.⁵³⁰ But the lines of division between the grass roots radicals still were not firmly established. Clemens Ziegler (who never became an Anabaptist) was present at one Anabaptist meeting where a baptism took place, and he continued to host Anabaptist meetings;⁵³¹ Jörg Ziegler claimed that he had been asked by Capito as well as by Hans Denck to lodge Anabaptists. One would have to agree with Müsing's observation that "the boundaries between the various groups were fluid" and probably not clearly visible to the participants themselves in early 1527.⁵³² Likewise the clergy were not of one mind as to how to deal with the various dissenting groups and individuals; Capito's vacillation and Bucer's growing determination point to either end of the spectrum.

527. On Groß's Lahr activity, see QGT, Elsaß 1, 129; on Sattler's activity, see the testimony of Ottelinus, reformed pastor at Lahr, in QGT, Elsaß 1, 72-4, summarized in Snyder, *Life and Thought*, 95-96. Groß's companion in Waldshut, who was expelled with him, was Ulrich Teck; Sattler was arrested with Teck later in Zurich.

528. See Snyder, *Life and Thought*, 89-107.

529. Cited in Müsing, "Anabaptist Movement," 100.

530. Müsing suggests a close connection between Meyer, Hätzer and Denck—"Anabaptist Movement," 115. See also Stephen B. Boyd, *Pilgram Marpeck: His Life and Social Theology* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1992), 50.

531. Müsing, "Anabaptist Movement," 108.

532. *Ibid.*, 119.

The Strasbourg city council, while not yet declaring itself on doctrinal questions, was particularly concerned with preserving peace and order. On July 27, 1527, half a year after Zurich had drowned Felix Mantz for Anabaptism, the Strasbourg authorities promulgated their first decree against any who might reject a Christian government and destroy the unity of the community. With characteristic leniency, the penalties for disobedience to the mandate were not specified, but were to be applied in each particular case.⁵³³ In light of increasingly harsh measures being taken elsewhere, this mandate encouraged, rather than discouraged, the arrival of religious refugees.⁵³⁴

The definition and the actual functioning of dissenting conventicles in Strasbourg are hidden from view for the years 1526 and 1527, but two facts are indisputable: Capito and Bucer knew and conversed with both Hans Denck and Michael Sattler; and, they were as unanimous in condemning Denck's "heretical" and "dangerous" views as they were in praising Sattler as a "dear friend of God." At the end of May 1527, after Sattler's martyrdom, Capito wrote to the authorities in Horb pleading for the release of Sattler's compatriots, in prison there; he also wrote to the prisoners themselves. Capito said that although Sattler "did hold to some errors regarding the Word," nevertheless "he demonstrated at all times an excellent zeal for the honor of God and the church of Christ."⁵³⁵ Martin Bucer, in his *Getrewe Warnung* of July 2, 1527, called Sattler "a dear friend of God" and "a martyr of Christ."⁵³⁶ At what points did Sattler and Denck agree and disagree, and what did Bucer and Capito mean by praising Sattler over Denck?

It is a commonplace to begin by indicating the differences between Denck and Sattler with regard to Scripture: for Hans Denck the primary "Word" was the inner Word, to which the written outer Word of Scripture provided a witness; for Sattler, the outer Word (particularly the New Testament) was authoritative and called for obedience in the manner of a rule of life. But Denck's spirit/letter distinction pointed to more fundamental positions: Denck's Christology and his anthropology both placed more importance on the incarnate Word within believers than they did on the incarnate Christ of history. Thus the satisfaction or

533. Summarized in *Ibid.*, 122-23; see QGT, *Elsaß* 1, 122-123 for the mandate.

534. Two Anabaptist refugees who came to Strasbourg were the St. Gallen Anabaptist Lorenz Hochrütiner, after his expulsion from Basel; his son Jakob came to Strasbourg later, after having been expelled by Bern. Both are mentioned in a testimony of November, 1527. Lorenz purchased his citizenship in May, 1528.— QGT, *Elsaß* 1, #109, 133, nn. 12 and 14.

535. See Yoder, *Legacy*, 86-99; QGT, *Elsaß* 1, 80-91; citation on 87.

536. QGT, *Elsaß* 1, 110.

atonement of Christ on the cross was not the central feature of Denck's soteriology; rather, salvation was attained when the incarnate Word worked within believers. There had to be cooperation between human beings and the divine, and salvation was thus "a gradual deification process in man."⁵³⁷ But, said Denck, because believers were ruled by the Spirit of Christ, they would manifest a new life of love, in conformity with Christ's life on earth as witnessed to in Scripture.

Given Denck's mystical worldview and his individualistic emphasis, his Anabaptist ecclesiology was of secondary concern. For a time in 1526 and 1527 Denck said that the outer manifestations of love would include water baptism, the ban, and the Supper, but at the end of his life he repented of having insisting on the outward ceremonies: they had led to division, disagreement and schism in Christendom at large and within Anabaptism in particular.⁵³⁸

It is not difficult to see why these teachings, as they came to light in debate, would be opposed by the evangelical reformers. Denck's Christology and devaluation of the historical sacrifice and atonement of Christ could not be reconciled with the reformers' stress on salvation by faith and traditional understandings of atonement. Again, Denck's optimistic anthropology (the inner Word in all human beings; cooperation with the Word; and progressive deification) collided head-on with the evangelical stress on universal human depravity, and salvation by faith received as a free gift of God in which no human work (or cooperation) could play a part. What came to light in all of this was Denck's spiritualist or mystical interpretation of written Scripture, which also ran counter to the Reformation stress on Scripture alone.

In what ways did Sattler's views not agree with Denck's? Martin Bucer's statement is often cited: "concerning the satisfaction (or atonement: *erlösung*) of Christ, on which all depends, we have found no error in this Michael Sattler as we did with Denck."⁵³⁹ In fact, in articles 1 and 3 of the letter that Sattler wrote to Bucer and Capito, Sattler underscored (perhaps with Denck in mind?) the centrality of Christ's sacrifice and the necessity of faith for salvation: "Christ came to save all those who would believe in Him alone. . . . Faith in Jesus Christ reconciles us with the Father and gives us access to Him."⁵⁴⁰ All this has led some to argue that Sattler and the mainline reformers were in essential agreement on Christology and soteriology, with Sattler

537. See Packull, *Mysticism*, 51. For the above, see 47-52.

538. Packull, *Mysticism*, 59-61.

539. QGT, Elsaß 1, 110.

540. Yoder, *Legacy*, 22.

standing with the reformers against Denck. Such a conclusion, however, is imprecise and overdrawn.

Although there were significant dogmatic differences—Sattler did not share Denck's Christology of the "immanent Word" or Denck's Neoplatonist anthropology—nevertheless in describing what is required for salvation, Denck and Sattler stood very close together indeed, against the evangelical reformers. Sattler would emphasize (as Denck might not) that salvation is granted only to those who have faith in Christ's historical sacrifice, but Sattler's letter to Bucer and Capito immediately insisted on further steps that recall Denck's Anabaptism:

Baptism incorporates all believers into the body of Christ, of which He is the head. Christ is the head of His body, i.e. of the believers or the congregation. As the head is minded, so must its members also be. The foreknown and called believers shall be conformed to the image of Christ.⁵⁴¹

This "conforming to the image of Christ" Sattler explains later by saying that "the true Christians are those who do Christ's teaching *with works* (*mitt wercken*)."⁵⁴²

The crucial soteriological point that salvation depends on conformity between inner Christ-mindedness and outer Christ-like works was shared by both Denck and Sattler; without such conformity of faith and works there was no true inner faith, and no salvation. This the reformers could never accept. Of course, Denck explained such "conformity" as being the result of yielding to the power of the inner Word residing in all; for Sattler, the "elect" would receive grace that would enable obedience. Sattler never defined his anthropology, but it is clear that he expected the Spirit of Christ to enable believers to "do Christ's teaching with works," and in this optimism (both pneumatic and anthropological) he stood close to Denck, and at some distance from Bucer and Capito.

An anonymous Swiss Brethren tract, bound in one volume with Schleitheim and other writings by Sattler, makes the point clearly:

How then has Christ worked satisfaction for our sins? Answer: Not alone for our own, but for the sins of the whole world, insofar as the world believes in Him, and follows after Him according to the requirement of faith. . . . Yea, he as the head of His church, has done

541. Yoder, *Legacy*, 22.

542. QGT, Elsaß 1, 69, *italics mine*.

enough; yet He will nevertheless day by day again do enough in His members and for them, until the end of the world. . . .⁵⁴³

Was Bucer aware of the fact that Sattler's soteriological requirement for an "obedience of faith" was in essence the same critique of evangelical soteriology as was Denck's, namely that Christ's satisfaction for sin would only be efficacious for one who "follows after Christ" in obedience? Was Bucer aware of the fact that Sattler also was calling for "cooperation" with grace?

No doubt he was, but following the notorious execution of Sattler by Roman Catholic authorities in Rottenburg, Bucer probably was inclined to be charitable, and to leave some things unsaid. In Bucer's refutation of Jacob Kautz's seven articles (written under Denck's influence and posted at Worms in the summer of 1527), Bucer attacked Kautz's statement on Christ's atonement by labeling Kautz a follower of Denck and one of "Münzter's children," who have no true faith in Christ. But Kautz's statement was unexceptional from *any* Anabaptist perspective; in fact Kautz simply restates the same point we have cited above from a published Swiss Anabaptist tract. Kautz wrote: "Jesus of Nazareth in no way suffered for us or made satisfaction [for our sins], *unless we follow in his footsteps and walk the path that he walked before* and follow the command of the Father as did the Son, each one in his own manner."⁵⁴⁴ Bucer's description of Denck's view (which Bucer says he had heard often from Denck himself in Strasbourg) agrees with what Kautz wrote: "that all the elect, after they are members of Christ's body, must be conformed to the example (*ebenbildt*) of Christ through the Spirit of God. . . ." Although Bucer was not inclined to include Sattler among "Münzter's children," he well knew that Sattler had made precisely the same point in Strasbourg, for Sattler made the point in his letter to Bucer and to Wolfgang Capito.⁵⁴⁵

Capito's letter to the government in Horb following Sattler's execution is more direct: "We were not in agreement with him," said Capito of Sattler, "as he wished to make Christians righteous by their acceptance

543. Yoder, *Legacy*, 115; *italics mine*. The entire tract "On the Satisfaction of Christ" is required reading for any who wish to understand Swiss Brethren soteriology. Translation in Yoder, *Legacy*, 108-120.

544. Emphasis mine. For Kautz's articles, see *Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer*, IV., *Baden und Pfalz*, ed. Manfred Krebs (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1951), 113-114.

545. Bucer's reply to Kautz is found in QGT, Elsaß 1, 91-115; on atonement, see 105-106. In this same writing Bucer misrepresents Sattler's view by claiming that Sattler held that "only faith saves." While this may have been technically correct (all Anabaptists would have agreed), Bucer neglects to mention that "faith" for Sattler and other Anabaptists required visible obedience, and thus disagreed with Bucer's own view on the "satisfaction" of Christ, available to sinners by faith *alone*.

of articles and an outward commitment. This we thought to be the beginning of a new monasticism.⁵⁴⁶ Capito urged instead reliance on Christ's merits, offered to sinners "out of pure grace." Or, as Capito stated later in his letter: "Their foundation is truly that we must hear Christ the Son of God and that he who believes in Him has eternal life. This foundation stands fast against the gates of hell. On it, however, they build wood, hay, and stubble. . . ."⁵⁴⁷ But it was precisely the "wood, hay, and stubble" of a visible life of conformity to Christ and the commands of Scripture that Sattler insisted was an integral part of "salvation by faith," as Capito (and doubtless Bucer too) knew well. Capito says: "It is true that, if they believe baptism upon confession to be necessary for salvation, they are in error."⁵⁴⁸ Capito knew that Sattler and his followers believed just that, for Sattler said so explicitly in his letter to the Strasbourg reformers, citing Mark 16:16. If in fact, as Capito noted in a letter to Zwingli, Denck's "heresy" was that he minimized "the sufficiency of Christ's redemptive work,"⁵⁴⁹ the same had to be said (from the evangelical reformers' perspective) of Sattler's insistence on "the obedience of faith." The Anabaptists (Denck and Sattler alike) did hold that "Christ had done enough," but the crucial soteriological point for them was that Christ would *continue doing enough* in his members.

In soteriology, Sattler and Denck stood essentially united against the Protestant soteriological foundation of salvation by grace through faith alone. Nevertheless, the theological differences between Denck and Sattler also were real, and led to different ecclesiological conclusions that would bear fruit later, in the spiritualist and Anabaptist controversies. Insofar as Denck and the later spiritualists focused on the workings of the Spirit within as the only true essence, they saw external works as potentially expendable. Insofar as Sattler and later ecclesial Anabaptists focused on the life of Christ and the commands of Scripture as the unfailing rule for the living of a spiritual life, they saw external works as primary and in no way expendable. Sattler and Denck (to the extent that they knew each other) probably were aware of those differences. Hätzer's dismissal of Sattler is partly clarified by Hätzer's subsequent comment that praised the Strasbourg reformers for "leaving baptism free."⁵⁵⁰ Hätzer's critique of Sattler was the spiritualist reproach that

546. Yoder, *Legacy*, 87.

547. *Ibid.*, 90.

548. *Ibid.*, 89.

549. Packull, *Mysticism*, 195, n. 100.

550. Cited by Bucer, in QGT, *Elsaß* 1, 114.

Sattler was making an "outward observance" salvifically necessary, rather than optional.

The tension in early Anabaptism between spirit and letter, and contrasting understandings of the church as either essentially spiritual or essentially physical, were divergent directions in early Anabaptism well represented by Denck and Sattler respectively; the early cooperation between Anabaptists of both tendencies is explained by the fact that early Anabaptists could agree that both poles were to be held together. The differences between Denck and Sattler that came to light in Strasbourg in 1526 and 1527 would remain to be worked out later in Anabaptist and spiritualist soteriology and ecclesiology.

In September 1528, Pilgram Marpeck, a former mining magistrate from Rattenberg in the Tyrol and an Anabaptist refugee, became a citizen of Strasbourg through the purchase of citizenship. He stood in the South German Anabaptist line of Denck and Hut, but was not as spiritualist as Denck or as apocalyptic as Hut. His Anabaptist convictions and concerns for social justice led him to associate with Fridolin Meyger and Lukas Hackfurt in Strasbourg, the latter of whom was responsible for poor relief.⁵⁵¹ These interests led to Marpeck's arrest in October 1528 for having allowed a meeting of Anabaptists in his house; arrested along with him were Meyger, Reublin and Kautz, the latter two of whom had returned to Strasbourg in spite of having been banned earlier.⁵⁵² Meyger recanted and swore an oath at this time; Reublin and Kautz would not, and remained in prison; the record is silent concerning Marpeck's fate. Perhaps he was pardoned, for in his defense he argued that the meeting had taken place in order to help the many poor refugees that were to be found in the city, and there is no record of further hearings with him concerning this arrest. In any case he soon was in the employ of the city, supervising the purchase of forest land, the cutting of trees and the construction of dams to transport the wood to Strasbourg.⁵⁵³

The arrest of Reublin and Kautz sheds some interesting light on how these two Anabaptists, representing "Swiss" and "Denckian" streams respectively, understood each other in late 1528. Although Reublin said that he did not agree with all of Kautz's points, nevertheless in January 1529 they composed a joint confession, written in the first person plural.⁵⁵⁴ They considered themselves members of the same group, and agreed on essential teachings, including the existence of an inner or

551. See Boyd, *Marpeck*, 52-56.

552. QGT, Elsaß 1, 184-186.

553. Details in Boyd, *Marpeck*, 56-59.

554. Reublin's disclaimer is in QGT, Elsaß 1, 195; their confession is found in QGT, Elsaß 1, 197-199.

spiritual church called directly of God, which became the outer or visible church, recognizable through obedience to the commands of Christ and the practices of the apostles, particularly through water baptism.⁵⁵⁵

It would not be long, however, until the lines of division between the more ecclesial Anabaptists and the more spiritualist baptizers—implicit already in Sattler and Denck, and visible, though not divisive, in Reublin and Kautz—would be drawn clearly in Strasbourg. The year 1529 saw the arrival of Hans Bünderlin, Christian Entfelder, Sebastian Franck and Caspar Schwenckfeld, all of whom were, or soon became, defenders of a more militantly “spiritual” (and nonecclesial) Christianity. Both Bünderlin and Entfelder were Anabaptists in the South German line of Denck and Hut, but clearly more influenced by Denck’s spiritualism. Bünderlin had led the Anabaptist congregation in Linz, but fled to Strasbourg in early 1529. He published four books there before being expelled later in the same year. The third of these, *Explanation through Study of the Biblical Writings*, was directed against the Anabaptist practice of water baptism and celebration of the Supper. Bünderlin had moved to a purely spiritualist position.⁵⁵⁶

Christian Entfelder likewise had solid Anabaptist credentials, serving as elder of an Anabaptist congregation in Eibenschitz, Moravia. He also fled to Strasbourg in 1529 and, although there is no documentation of contact with Bünderlin, the first of Entfelder’s three books, *On the Many Divisions in the Faith*, is very close in spirit and content to Bünderlin’s *Explanation*. In this writing Entfelder distanced himself from all the disagreeing Reformation groups, including the Anabaptists, and called for an internal (and invisible) spiritual unity instead.⁵⁵⁷

Much as had Hans Denck’s repudiation of “external ceremonies” in his last writing in Basel, the move away from Anabaptism to spiritualism by Bünderlin and Entfelder, both erstwhile Anabaptist leaders of some repute, brought to light a fundamental tension present in the sacramental position of Anabaptism: why should mere “ceremonies” be

555. A further writing from Reublin and Kautz is no longer extant, but more can be inferred from the lengthy writing submitted to the council by the preachers. There both Reublin and Kautz are said to hold to both an invisible and visible church, as described above. The preachers refer in more detail to Kautz than to Reublin in their refutation—QGT, Elsaß 1, 201-18.

556. ME, 1:469-470; see also Packull, *Mysticism*, 155-163 and Boyd, *Marpeck*, 59. On his baptism in Augsburg, see QGT, Elsaß 1, 232.

557. See Packull, *Mysticism*, 163-175; ME, 2:226-27. Entfelder remained sympathetic to Anabaptists after he separated from them; he entered the service of Albrecht von Hohenzollern as councillor in 1536 and negotiated the first large settlement of Anabaptists from the Netherlands in East Prussia.—Packull, *Mysticism*, 163.

observed, since the essential work is spiritual and the ceremonies only serve to divide believers from one another? To this challenge Pilgram Marpeck responded with two booklets written in 1531: *A Clear Refutation* and *A Clear and Useful Instruction*.⁵⁵⁸ Lending weight to these spiritualist defections from Anabaptism in Strasbourg were Sebastian Franck and Caspar Schwenckfeld, both of whom were influential spiritualist evangelicals and prolific writers. The spiritualist option was presented in a variety of appealing ways in 1529 and following; it was made all the more attractive by unrelenting persecution, growing division within Anabaptism and the spiritualist root at the heart of Anabaptism itself.

It was into this rich and volatile setting that Melchior Hoffman came in the summer of 1529. Hoffman developed yet a third expression of Anabaptism that, although it incorporated adult baptism, the ban and a memorial Supper, nevertheless placed these ecclesiological ordinances in a visionary, apocalyptic context. Hoffman was influenced strongly by the spiritualists he encountered in Strasbourg, as can be seen in the spiritualized Christology he apparently borrowed from the spiritualist Caspar Schwenckfeld and modified to fit his brand of Anabaptism. From Hoffman would originate a third variety of Anabaptism, namely the Melchiorite Anabaptism that flourished in North Germany and the Netherlands.

The Philipite strand of the Swiss Anabaptist story, while developing most visibly in Moravia, has its roots in Strasbourg and so can logically be told here. Philip Plener, the founder and bishop of the communal Moravian group called the Philipites, was a weaver from a small town near Strasbourg.⁵⁵⁹ Historical records do not say when he became an Anabaptist, but Werner Packull suggests a likely date of 1526 or 1527. He may have been in Nikolsburg as early as 1527 or 1528.⁵⁶⁰ Although it is impossible to sort out an unambiguous line of influence from a particular Anabaptist leader or direction, there are Swiss Anabaptist connections throughout Plener's known biography, and his teachings, including his conception of a voluntary community of goods, correspond closely to Swiss Anabaptist teachings elsewhere.⁵⁶¹ The Philipite

558. William Klassen and Walter Klaassen, eds., *The Writings of Pilgram Marpeck* (Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1978), 43-106. See Boyd's theological analysis of Marpeck's response to the "radical individualism" of Bündnerlin and Entfelder in *Marpeck*, 84-90.

559. He was from Blienschwiller, near Strasbourg. The essential biographical work has been done by Werner Packull, *Hutterite Beginnings*, 77-98.

560. He may be the same person as the "Philip Jäger" who left Nikolsburg and traveled with Jacob Wiedemann and other *Stäbler* to Austerlitz in the spring of 1528.—Packull, *Hutterite Beginnings*, 78.

561. See Packull, *Hutterite Beginnings*, 85-6, 98: "Philipite teaching and practice appear to have been akin to those of early Swiss Anabaptism as reflected in the *Swiss Order*."

community established in Moravia, with Philip Plener at its head, lived in community and shared goods together. Of course, voluntary communal sharing of goods went a step beyond what took place (or was able to take place) in Swiss territories; but Swiss Anabaptist refugees from the Palatinate, Neckar River valley and Württemberg appear to have had no trouble adapting their Anabaptism to Philipite communal life in Moravia.

Clearly, public communal living was possible in Moravia only because of the forbearance of the Moravian lords. The case of the Philipites suggests that the strong emphasis on Christian sharing and mutual aid in early Swiss Anabaptism could develop easily into a full communal life, when the external circumstances permitted such a development. Community of goods was not the exclusive product of Hutterian South German Anabaptism; neither can Swiss Anabaptism up to 1530 be characterized as opposing community of goods on principle. The process of accepting life in community also worked in reverse for the Philipites, when circumstances dictated. When the Philipites were exiled from Moravia in 1535, they fled back to their homelands and reintegrated quickly back into the noncommunal Swiss Anabaptism of the upper Rhine, the Palatinate and Württemberg, contributing their hymnody to form the core of the *Ausbund*, the Swiss Brethren hymnal.⁵⁶² It was not until a legislated community of goods became a divisive marker between Hutterites and all other Anabaptists that the label "Swiss Brethren" came to designate those Anabaptists who held to separated communities and mutual aid, but on a voluntary basis, without the giving up of private property.⁵⁶³

By 1533 the Strasbourg council and preachers set out to define their reformation in the face of the varied challenges posed by the religious dissidents in their midst. The end result of several synodal sessions in 1533 was the emergence of Martin Bucer as the preeminent pastor in Strasbourg—"the bishop of our church" in the words of Capito—and the firm establishment of the Reformation in the city. The council now had the mandate to regulate not only law and order in the city, but also matters of church doctrine and discipline. Strasbourg remained a tolerant city, and remained an Anabaptist center important especially to

562. For the story of the return of the Philipites after their expulsion, and their "turning Swiss," see Packull, *Hutterite Beginnings*, 284-289. The Philipite hymns are found in translation in *The Earliest Hymns of the Ausbund*, ed. G. A. Peters, trans. Robert A. Riall (Kitchener, Ont.: Pandora Press, 2003).

563. A process noted by Packull: "the label *Swiss Brethren* was in use by the late 1530s as an inter-Anabaptist distinction."—*Hutterite Beginnings*, 288.

small numbers of Swiss Brethren in the 1540s, after Bucer managed to win over the Melchiorite leaders Georg Schnabel and Peter Tasch, and most of their following, in 1538 and 1539.⁵⁶⁴

Conclusion

A virtual truism in Anabaptist historiography has been that Schleitheim Anabaptism found quick and wide acceptance among Swiss Anabaptists. As we have seen, however, the acceptance of the articles in Swiss Anabaptist communities was uneven—not sudden and universally defining—and depended very much on local political conditions and local Anabaptist leadership. Careful examination of local records cautions against too facile an acceptance of the generalization of the triumph of Schleitheim in a time of crisis. There were degrees of “separation” put into practice among Swiss Anabaptists after 1527, with the sources suggesting that accommodation with amenable political authorities was the preferred Anabaptist option for those who wished to remain in their home territories—an option that could only be exercised when such political authorities were in place. Whether militant Schleitheim separatism in fact served migrating Anabaptist refugee communities better than it did indigenous communities who were attempting to survive underground bears further examination. The evidence from 1525 to 1530 reviewed here suggests that this may be so. Widespread appeals for religious toleration in the last quarter of the sixteenth century in Swiss territories suggest not the victory of militant Schleitheim sectarianism in Swiss territories, but rather the attempt to find accommodation with local authorities and to create a minimal political space for the practice of Anabaptist Christianity.

Reviewing the evidence for Swiss Anabaptism from 1525 to 1530 underlines the early appearance and stubborn survival of social and economic issues that remain hidden when one focuses exclusively on the Schleitheim Articles as the defining template for both early and late Swiss Anabaptism. The contentious issue of income from tithes and interest was an important biblical and economic issue even before baptism began, and continued to be debated in Swiss Anabaptist testimonies and disputations with the Reformed. The issue cannot be brushed aside as insignificant, as if it were the concern of only those who

564. See Werner Packull, “The Melchiorites and the Ziegenhain Order of Discipline, 1538-39,” in Walter Klaassen, ed., *Anabaptism Revisited* (Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1992), 11-28. Strasbourg’s central geographical location and continuing relative toleration made it the site of Anabaptist gatherings in 1554, 1555, 1557, 1568, 1592, and 1607. See John Oyer, “The Strasbourg Conferences of the Anabaptists, 1554-1607,” *MQR* (July, 1984), 218-229. Oyer notes that in the second half of the sixteenth century the city authorities still did not practice capital punishment, but relied on exile to control the Anabaptist movement.

were "half-Anabaptists." The refusal of Swiss Anabaptists to accept the biblical legitimacy of tithe and interest income and their persistent criticism of those who lived from such income is a continuation of a crucial early theme in their disagreement with Zwingli and the Zurich authorities. It points to a stubborn anticlerical current continuing in later "separated" Anabaptist communities, for those who lived from such incomes were none other than the Reformed clergy in Swiss territories and the newly-reformed imperial cities. That Swiss Anabaptists quickly agreed to pay such taxes (as ordered by legitimate governments) meant little, when they simultaneously preached in the countryside that people who collected and were supported by such incomes were sub-Christian. The question of tithes and interest income continued to be, for later Anabaptists, a biblically-argued issue that critiqued social, economic and political realities at the same time. It is not surprising, given the historical dissatisfaction of the peasantry, that political authorities continued to place the topic of tithe and interest income on the agenda for debate with Anabaptists.

The conclusion that economic sharing was a biblical requirement for membership in the Body of Christ appears in the very first records from Zollikon, the day after the first baptisms in Zurich, and thus marks an ecclesiological teaching more fundamental than the ban, the latter of which was still invisible in the establishment of Zollikon Anabaptism. Given the centrality of economic sharing among the brethren as a sign of regeneration and commitment to living a new life—cemented by the celebration of the Lord's Supper—perhaps Schleitheim did not include a separate article on the subject simply because it was assumed, much as there are no separate articles on repentance, conversion and regeneration in the Schleitheim Articles, although that process is assumed prior to baptism. In short, the Schleitheim Articles provide a handy summary for those who put together anthologies of Reformation texts, but when the articles are considered the final word on Swiss Anabaptism, they are incomplete and misleading.

The spread of Swiss Anabaptism into the Empire and Moravia resulted in a fruitful interaction of Swiss Anabaptists with baptizers of more apocalyptic and spiritualist bent. That Swiss Anabaptism provided a creative impulse in these interactions is demonstrable, as can be seen in the migration and influence of Blaurock, Hubmaier, Reublin, Groß and Plener, and the continued influence of the Swiss Order and the Schleitheim Articles outside Switzerland. There was surprising collaboration among Swiss and South German Anabaptists in Augsburg, initially in Nikolsburg, Strasbourg and Esslingen, and later in Appenzell.

At the same time, the beginnings of permanently divisive fissures among Anabaptists begin to appear in this period as well.

The division between spiritualist Anabaptists and ecclesial Anabaptists, a division visible already in comparing Denck and Sattler in 1526 and 1527, developed into a full-blown crisis and separation in Strasbourg in 1529 and following, when Bünderlin and Entfelder appealed to Anabaptists to leave behind all visible "ceremonies."

On the matter of sharing material goods, the early Swiss Anabaptist emphasis did, in one instance at least, develop into a full, voluntary community of goods in the Moravian context. However, neither Philip Plener nor the majority of his followers could agree with the Hutterite conclusion that the community of the faithful is necessarily limited to those who submit to a legislated community of goods, as their return to the Swiss Anabaptists demonstrated. This fissure, like the spiritualist one, came to light in the 1530s and became permanent.

The appearance of Melchior Hoffman in Strasbourg in 1529 marked the beginning of a third Anabaptist stream, which had more in common with apocalyptic and spiritualist South German Anabaptism than it did with ecclesial Swiss Anabaptism. The repudiation by Swiss Anabaptist spokesmen of Hoffman's "celestial flesh" Christology, and their denial that Hoffman was a "brother" at the Bern Disputation of 1538 point to a real division between Melchiorite and Swiss Anabaptists—one that was gradually overcome only later in the century as Mennonites from the north began to exert an influence on the Swiss.

Swiss Anabaptists from 1525 to 1530 began experiencing a pattern of life that would remain a reality for the movement for centuries, namely the need to negotiate a dangerous and hostile political landscape. It became necessary for them to flee territories where the authorities were determined to extirpate the movement; under such conditions, even an underground existence was not viable. Mass recantations are not unusual in this period, as the costs of insisting on Anabaptist belief and practice became too high for many. At the same time, in places such as Esslingen and Appenzell, where the authorities were not inclined to look very carefully, an underground existence was still possible, and continued for decades. The reality for many determined Swiss Anabaptists, however, was the need to flee elsewhere. A wide underground network of Anabaptist contacts sprang up across Switzerland, the Empire and Moravia that offered help to Anabaptists on the run, and suggested locations where some political space and employment might be available.

Numerically speaking, these refugee communities would become the most prosperous and viable in the long run, especially after the

disastrous Thirty Years' War raised the stock of any available agriculturalists and craftsmen. It was from such a refugee community at the end of the seventeenth century that the Swiss Anabaptist reformer Jacob Amman insisted on a strict "separation from the world" according to Schleitheim principles, criticizing the "lax" Swiss Anabaptists who had managed to survive in Swiss territories for a century and a half through accommodation and compromise. The roots of the later Amish division can be seen developing, in nucleo, in the Swiss Anabaptist communities of 1525 to 1530.



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