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Second Presbyterian Church, Greenville, SC  
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# Profiles in Christian Courage

## 4. Huldrych Zwingli



# Huldrych Zwingli

- ▶ Born in 1484 in the Toggenburg Valley of Switzerland
- ▶ Received a first-rate Renaissance education in Basel and was exposed to proto-Reformation views. Was ordained a Catholic priest in 1506
- ▶ Served rural parishes at Glarus and Einsiedel
- ▶ Developed a close relationship with the humanist scholar Erasmus.
- ▶ Becomes persuaded of the sufficiency of Christ, sola Scriptura, and sola Fide in 1514 through the influence of Erasmus
- ▶ Begins preaching and writing about these doctrines



# Opposition to Corruption

- ▶ The Swiss Confederation consisted of 13 self-governing republics
- ▶ Due to the military supremacy of Swiss pikemen, France and the Holy Roman Empire paid for thousands of Swiss mercenaries. This brought hard currency into Switzerland and killed huge numbers of Swiss youth.
- ▶ Is present as a chaplain at the Battle of Marignano (1515) in which the Swiss were defeated. Was horrified by the butchery and the great loss of life.
- ▶ Took on the nobles and aristocrats who enriched by the mercenary system, becoming a hero to the common people.



# The Great Munster in Zurich

- In 1518, Zwingli is called to be primary preacher at the Grossmunster in Zurich.
  - His appointment was almost derailed by his record of sexual indulgence at Einsiedel, which he confessed.
- Instead of preaching through the established lectionary, he begins an expository series on the Gospel of Matthew.
  - Focused not on cultivating virtues but on the all-sufficient work of Christ.
- Zwingli's preaching electrifies Zurich, exposing the people for the first time to the teaching of Scripture in their own language.
- Zwingli uses his pulpit to challenge the most obviously unbiblical Roman Catholic practices.
  - Demanded the church be ruled by the teaching of Scripture alone.
  - Urged his people not to pray to Mary
  - Opposed the sale of indulgences
  - Joined a group of friends who ate meat during Lent
- Unlike Luther at the same time, Zwingli was not condemned by the pope, because Rome did not want to hinder their access to Swiss mercenaries (which Zwingli continued to preach against).
- Nearly died in the plague of 1519; concluded that God had spared him to do a great work.






# Reformation in Zurich

- ▶ Zwingli spear-headed the reformation in Zurich, between 1521 and 1531.
  - ▶ Disputations: Public debates with Roman Catholic scholars before the city council. The result would be a change in policy.
  - ▶ Supported by the Great Council but opposed by the Small Council (dominated by nobles). He had to win over / isolate the nobles to succeed.
  - ▶ Zwingli ceaselessly wrote books and tracts to propagate the Reformation doctrine.
  - ▶ In 1522, Zwingli married (against the law)
  - ▶ In 1525, all images, vestments, altars, etc were removed from the churches. The mass was banned and Zwingli wrote a Reformed liturgy for the Lord's Supper.
  - ▶ Indian authorities pursued the missionary to London, but Amy had actually sent Muttammal to Ceylon with a different missionary.



# Highlights of Zwingli's Reformation

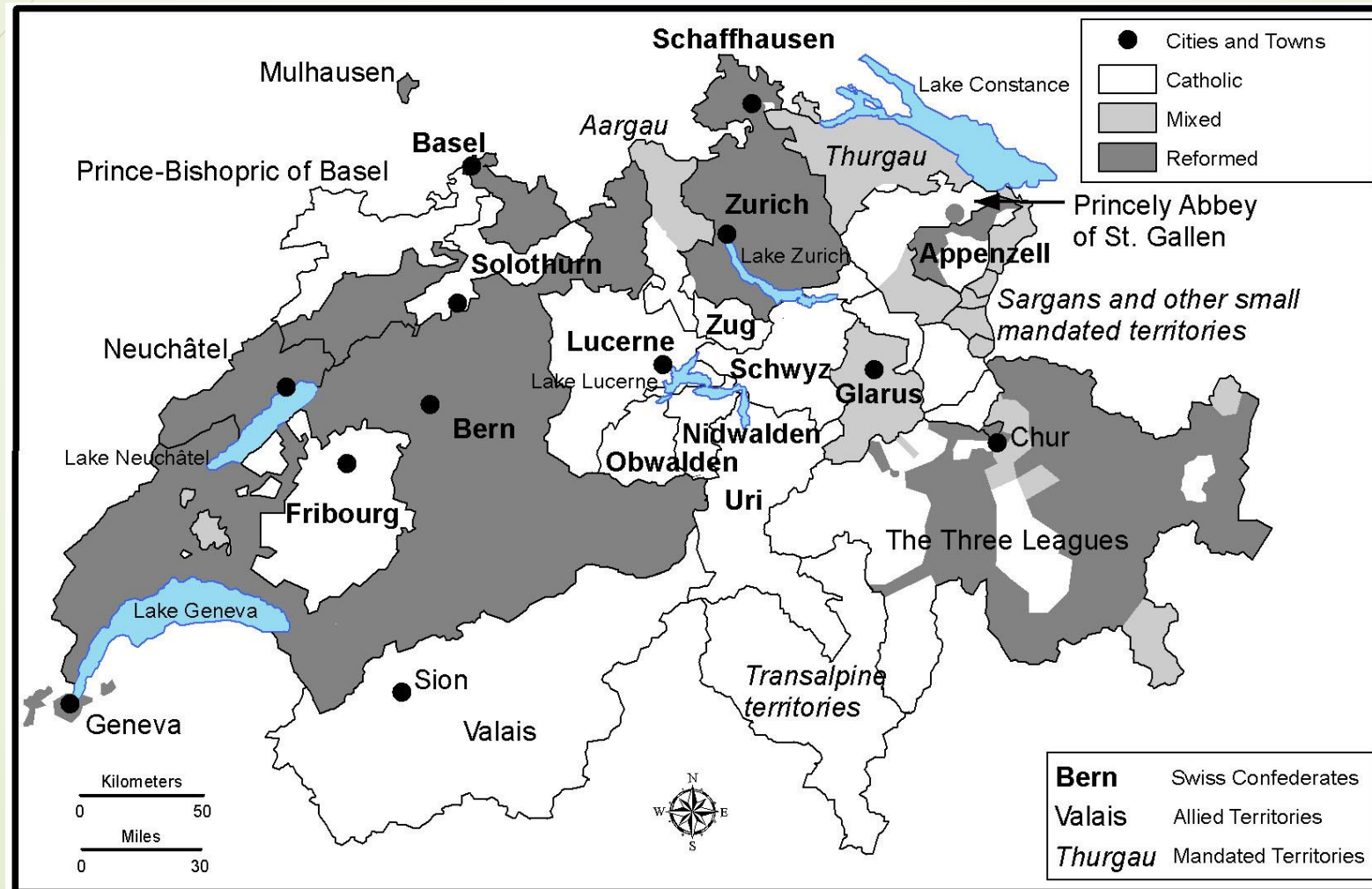
- Established theological education for clergy.
  - Began the *Prophezei* – a daily meeting of scholars to translate & interpret Scripture, resulting in a Swiss Bible
  - Persecution of the Anabaptists
  - Reformed the worship and doctrine of the Swiss church according to Scripture
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# The Marburg Controversy

- Zwingli was not dependent on Martin Luther, but he greatly admired him.
- By the late 1520's, it became clear that the Lutherans and the Reformed differed on worship generally and the Lord's Supper in particular
- Philip of Hesse summoned the Marburg Colloquy in 1528 for this to be ironed out, since this issue threatened the unity between Germany and Switzerland needed for military defense.
- Luther insisted on *consubstantiation* – Christ is present physically in the elements of the Lord's supper; Zwingli insisted on a *memorialist* view – “this is my body” means “this represents my body”
- Following the failure to agree, Luther denounced Zwingli as a servant of Satan and condemned the entirety of his teaching (99% of which agreed with Luther).
- Zwingli left the colloquy in tears.



# The Cantons of Switzerland





# Danger and Death

- ▶ Throughout his career, Zwingli lived under a death threat, with numerous attempts made on his life.
- ▶ In 1531, the Catholic states of Switzerland (aided by the Holy Roman Emperor) attacked Zurich.
- ▶ At the Battle of Kappel, Zwingli stood in the field as chaplain to the soldiers of Zurich.
- ▶ Wounded in the defeat, papal soldiers found Zwingli and demanded that he pray to Mary. When he refused, they killed him.



# Lessons from Zwingli's Life

- Leaders must lead from the front!
- Formed his convictions from Scripture, taught them from Scripture, and won over his culture by the preaching of Scripture
- Was unusually devoted to his circle of friends, who supported and sustained him in great trials.
- Was willing to die for his beliefs and therefore was bold in propagating them.

