

Becoming Anabaptist

Cast of Characters in the Drama of the Reformation

- They tried to prevent being a separate group, dragged unwilling or unwittingly, they changed roles, some left the stage early.
- They were scholar, priests, monks, laymen and women, peasant and noblemen.
- They did not develop into a homogeneous movement
- Therefore they had no single theological leader – Calvin, Luther
- Therefore did not fit into either RC or Prot camp
- Did not like the name Anabaptist – did not see it as rebaptism because they rejected the first baptism
- Preferred *Bruder* (brethren) in German or *Doopsgezinde* (baptism minded) in Dutch

Switzerland		Netherlands
Conrad Grebel	Hans Denck	Melchior Hoffman
Felix Manz	Hans Hut	Menno Simons
George Blaurock	Michael Sattler	Obbe and Dirk Philips
Wilheilm Reublin	Balthazar Humbaier	* Jan Matthys, Jan van Leiden

The Radical Reformation

- Historians have called the Anabaptist movement the Radical reformation.

Christendom

- To understand the impact of this we must see the world as it was
- The Constantine Synthesis in 333 AD assumed the essential unity of religion and society – Christendom
- The difference between Christendom and the believers church lies in the answer to this question:

- Does God work his purposes in the world primarily through the existing society and its structures or through the creation of a new society?
- Two possible answers
 - 1) Christianity is a renewal movement in society that transforms it into the kingdom of God
 - 2) Christianity must leave existing society, symbolically, in order to join God's society
- For example – in America there is formal separation - state does not dictate worship, but church influences the nations by saying the nation is founded on beliefs of Christianity. Say that one serves God by serving the nation. – compromise?
- Ana – church is an alternative to society AND to Christendom
- Church is an alternative rather than an integral part of society - know if you have abandoned Ana if abandoned this idea

Where it all Started: Zurich

Ulrich Zwingli 1484-1531

- Priest, Grossmunster church, canton of Zurich, Switzerland.
- schooled in Humanism, read Erasmus and Luther, and Greek to understand bible better
- reputation as a charismatic preacher
- Attacked many of the abuses in the church, same ones Luther attacked.
- Resigned from office in 1522 because he felt that his views could not be tolerated by Rome, however his congregation voted him back in.
- led a number of 'bible study' groups with university students
- Felix Manz joined in 1519, Grebel in 1523
- Debated sacramental issues such as Lord's Supper and baptism.

The Question of Authority

- Grebel et al and Zwingli broke, not over theology as much, but over authority.
- Zwingli believed both the clergy and government derive **authority** from God therefore, both must be assured of God's authority over the community
- Implementation of reforms was in the hands of the city council.
- Zwingli careful not to upset city councilors – backed down on some issues: like infant baptism.
- In the beginning Grebel and others wanted a new church – wanted a new 'political party' to elect a new reform minded city council – ie out with the old, in with the new.
- It was not until Schleithem that they realized that they could no longer work within the current system – needed separation of church and state
- **significance** :represents their growing independence from the Catholic church beginning of the state church – where the state claims right to name ministers and choose religion

Conrad Grebel 1498-1526

- Son of wealthy nobles in Zurich
- Attended University of Basel, at Vienna, and Paris – got kicked out.
- 1520-21 joined other students to study Greek, Hebrew and classics with Zwingli.
- Quickly developed own ideas about religions reform.
- Was focused on the idea of living out faith, nature of the church, and baptism.
- Concluded that
 - Salvation involves will
 - True Christians are those who respond deliberately to the Gospel of Christ John 3:16-17 – thus rendering infant baptism void.

- Church is a community of love, accountability and mutual edification
- State should not influence church affairs.
- Multiple public debates on religious issues that involved Zwingli, city council and reformers like Grebel
- Zwingli saw Grebel, Manz and Blaurock as young and impatient.
- Grebel and group felt that Zwingli had compromised.
- Grebel and many others were kicked out of Zurich, banned from the church and marked as heretics.

Concerning Baptism...

The Example of Christ

- The one who believes and is baptized will be saved Mark 16:16
- Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Matthew 28:19

Arguments For Infant Baptism

- Believed it removed guilt and sin, protected the soul from damnation and made the infant a member of the church
- taxes to the church were gathered from baptismal registries
- legitimacy as a citizen was based on church records

Arguments Against Infant, For Voluntary

- Sin involves will. Infants cannot 'choose evil', thus the sacrament of baptism has no meaning for them.
- There is no scriptural reference to infant baptism.
- Baptism cannot take away sin. Someone's faith cannot take away someone else's sin
- Teach first, then baptize – the words of Christ.
- Infant baptism only secured as a sacrament at the 4th Lateran Council by Pope Innocent III in 1215
- Baptism is more than a one time symbol

Disagreement with Zwingli

- Zwingli objected on the grounds that it would disrupt society too much:
- what would be put in its place?
- should everyone be re-baptized?
- what if they were wrong? Then everyone would be heretics!!!
- December 1524 some Zurich fathers refused to baptize their infants

Jan 17 1525 First Disputation on Baptism

- January 1525 Council calls for a public debate on baptism
- Result:
- All parents ordered to baptize their children within 8 days
- Forbade the Anabaptists to assemble
- banished all non-citizens from Zurich

“Baptize Me” George Blaurock - 1492-1529

- attended school at University at Leipzig
- tall, powerful, fiery eyes, black hair with bald spot
- became part of the Grebel circle after there was a rift between Zwingli and Grebel
- 25 January 1525 in the home of Felix Manz, Blaurock asked Grebel to baptism him.
- first official ‘Anabaptist’
- burned at the stake, 6 September 1529

