

Footstep #33 Rapid Changes

“Through their windows the nuns could see the populace abused and the smoke rising from burning castles. When the war ended, 70 cloisters had been demolished in Thuringia, and in Franconia 270 castles and 52 cloisters. When the Palatinate succumbed to the peasants, the disorder was so great that their own leaders had to invite the former authorities to return to assist in the restoration of order. But the authorities preferred to wait until the peasants had first been beaten.” (Roland H. Bainton. *Here I Stand*. pp. 213-214)



Thomas Munster - Anabaptist

“The result of the Peasants’ Revolt for the Reformation was twofold. It cost Luther the support of many of the common people, whom he had, as they saw it, abandoned in a moment of crisis. He now feared chaos as he had formerly feared the devil. The fear made him increasingly intolerant of any form of Protestantism other than his own, and this in turn meant the loss of large regions to rival reforming movements.” (George L. Meese. *The Reformation*. p. 41)

Unfortunately, Luther’s teaching on the priesthood of all believers as being equal before God was misunderstood and contributed to the demand for social and political equality with princes and nobles in the secular world. In addition, the more radical movement of the Anabaptists was developing in Switzerland. This movement rejected infant baptism and required a second baptism following an inward experience of rebirth. The Anabaptists interpreted the Sermon on the Mount literally and called for a communal society separate from the government. Some extreme Anabaptists called for exclusion from the institution of the church. Luther was concerned about the divisions in the Christian Church that were a result of his criticisms of the Roman Catholic Church.