

Footstep #39 – A Theological Summit Meeting!

Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin had similar theological ideas on many of the critical issues of the Protestant faith – forgiveness of sins, the Holy Bible as the basis of truth, salvation based on faith, the evangelical importance of spreading the gospel, and that believers did not need the pope or the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church.

Briefly, some of the differences between Luther and other reformers during the 1520's were:

Desiderius Erasmus – the teaching about man; namely that good people are ethical and not corrupt or sinful by their nature.

John Calvin (Reformed)- the issue of the predestination of the elect to heaven and wanting a different form of worship from the Roman Catholic liturgy.

Ulrich Zwingli (Methodists)- Denial of the real presence of Christ in the sacrament of the bread and wine by understanding it as a remembrance in the perspective of the Passover as a commemoration of the escape from Egypt.

Henry VIII (Anglicans/Episcopal) – the liberty and independence of the local congregation without the supervision of the state or clergy.

Carlstadt (Puritans) – Infant baptism and that the bread and wine are reminders of God's grace.

John Knox (Presbyterian) – The importance of moral and spiritual change in one's life.

Thomas Munster (Anabaptists) – The Holy Bible is inadequate in motivating people to seek God; they need a divinely inspired interpreter or voice.

Information is from Chapter 3 in *The Spirit of Protestantism* by Robert McAfee Brown.

In 1529, Luther (the great German reformer) and Zwingli (the great Swiss reformer) met from October 1-4 1529, in the castle of the 25 year old prince, Philip (Landgrave) of Hesse, in Marburg for what might be described as a “summit meeting” from October 1-4, 1529 to unite the two religions. Zwingli hoped the meeting would produce a united Protestant alliance from Scandinavia to northern Italy but Luther would not compromise on the teaching of the Real Presence of Christ in The Lord's Supper.

Dr. Bainton explains Zwingli's position: ***“Zwingli retained the sacraments only by denuding them of their meaning. The Lord's Supper he regarded as a memorial of Christ's death, though later in life he would concede that there might be a communion with His spirit. Participation in the Supper does more however, to benefit those who see it taken than those who receive, because to take it in the presence of a congregation is to give a public testimonial and to strengthen the faith of the witnesses.”*** (Roland Bainton. *The Age of the Reformation*. p. 41)



The Lord's Supper or Holy Eucharist

Philip of Hesse was an important ally for Luther but he was a fornicator, adulterer, and bigamist! His motives were likely less spiritual than political or economic as Philip hoped to gain the confiscated church lands and wealth from the Holy Roman Empire. This appeared possible since Rome was sacked by the army of Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor. (The conflict was part of a larger one between France and the Holy Roman Empire.)



The castle where Luther and Melancthon met with Zwingli and Oecolampadius