Zwingli

**Early life and career.**

* Zwingli was the son of a free peasant who was a village magistrate.
* Zwingli was priest of Wildhaus and later dean of Wesen.
* Huldrych went to school at Wesen, then [Basel](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/54790/Basel) (1494), and [Bern](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/62333/Bern) (1496)
* university studies at Vienna (1498) and then Basel (1502), where he was graduated in 1504.
* Supported by teaching, he read [theology](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/590855/theology) and was ordained to the priesthood.
* He was sympathetic toward the Renaissance movement and valued his correspondence with Erasmus.
* At [Einsiedeln](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/181346/Einsiedeln), where he enjoyed both wide opportunities for [preaching](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/474274/preaching) to the many pilgrims and fine facilities for study at the convent.
* Zwingli afterwards dated his evangelical understanding of the Scriptures from the period of transition to Einsiedeln.

**Beginnings of reformation.**

* Zwingli at once began to preach his new convictions.
* Apart from topical criticism of abuses, he did not at first attack traditional positions, being content to expound the regular [Gospel](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/239489/Gospel) passages.
* A minor [indulgence](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/286800/indulgence) crisis arose in 1518, but Zwingli’s witty castigation of the abuse found ecclesiastical favour and, finally, a titular honour by the papacy, from which he also drew a chaplaincy pension.
* In 1520 he secured permission from the city’s governing council to preach the “true divine scriptures,” and the resulting sermons helped to stir revolts against fasting and clerical celibacy that initiated the Swiss [Reformation](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/495422/Reformation) (1522).
* In pursuance of his view of the supremacy of Scripture, Zwingli preached his now famous sermons at the Oetenbach

**Victory of the** **[Zürich](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/658483/Zurich) Reformation.**

* The year 1523, Zwingli published his challenging 67 *Artikel.* His main contentions were adopted by most priests in the district and, in consequence, the celibacy of clergy came to be flouted, liturgical reform was begun, and a plan for the reform of the Grossmünster was drafted.
* A key part of this program was the reconstitution of the cathedral school as both a grammar school and a theological seminary to train Reformed pastors.
* The question of removing the images from the churches provoked a second disputation in October, in which Zwingli and his most intimate friend and fellow Reformer [Leo Jud](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/307115/Leo-Jud) carried the day.
* Successive steps taken during 1524 and 1525 included the removal of images, the suppression of organs, the dissolution of religious houses, the replacement of the [mass](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/368145/mass) by a simple Communion service, the reform of the baptismal office, the introduction of prophesyings or [Bible](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/64396/Bible) readings, the reorganization of the ministry, and the preparation of a native version of the Bible (the *Zürcher Bibel* appeared in 1529).
* He married Anna Reinhard on April 2, 1524

**67 Theses**

The main theses he put forth were

(1) that the church is born of the Word of God and has Christ alone as its head;

(2) that its laws are binding only insofar as they agree with the Scripture;

(3) that Christ alone is man’s righteousness;

(4) that the Holy Scripture does not teach Christ’s corporeal presence in the bread and wine at the Lord’s Supper;

(5) that the mass is a gross affront to the sacrifice and death of Christ;

(6) that there is no biblical foundation for the mediation or intercession of the dead, for purgatory, or for images and pictures; and

(7) that marriage is lawful to all. With the friendly cantons of Basel and Bern, Zürich negotiated a Christian Civic Alliance (or League) based on the treaty by which Basel had been received into the Swiss confederacy but also including a common profession of faith.

# The beliefs of Ulrich Zwingli

Ulrich Zwingli had seven primary beliefs that were adopted by Zurich. Zwingli expanded his beliefs in his [’67 Articles’](http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/67_articles.htm) that were published in 1523.

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|  | * Faith demanded an active commitment to God |

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|  | * The practices of the [Roman Catholic Church](http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/Roman_Catholic_Church_in_1500.htm) took one’s mind away from what Christ taught. There was no justification for these practices in the Bible. |

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|  | * Whatever could not be justified by the Bible was to be abolished. |

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|  | * Religion was a personal experience which did not require sacraments or ceremonies to sustain it. |

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|  | * Zwingli denied that there could be any trace of God in the consecrated sacraments. The service of communion was simply an act of commemoration. The belief that there was a presence was mere superstition. In this, Zwingli differed from [Martin Luther](http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/Martin_Luther0.htm). |

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| * Zwingli put a great deal of emphasis on the law of God as set out in the Bible. Zwingli claimed that it was Christ who gave Man the will to obey. |

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|  | * A truly Christian community must follow the Bible as closely as possible. |

* As a result of the final point, the state virtually merged with the church in Zurich. Magistrates not only kept order but they were seen as guardians of public morality – “a church without a magistrate is mutilated and incomplete.”
* A Court of Morals was set up. “This evangelical reform of the lives of individual men and women, carried out through the agency of civil government, was one of Zwingli’s major contributions to the Protestant Reformation.” Nothing like this was attempted by Martin Luther.

* Zwingli’s approach impressed the city council of Zurich. In January 1523, Zwingli was ordered by the council to attend a public disputation between himself and the Bishop of Constance, and Zwingli was considered to be the victor. This support allowed Zwingli to introduce into Zurich the reforms that he felt the city required.

* All symbols of medieval religion were removed from the city’s cathedral and churches.
* Zwingli claimed that these hindered the true worship of God. Pictures, organs, shrines and images were removed.
* Public Bible readings were introduced in January 1524 and clerical marriage was allowed. In 1525, the monasteries in Zurich were dissolved.
* In April 1525, Mass was formally abolished and replaced with a simple communion service in which preaching and prayer played the most important part.
* People no longer knelt at the alter but received bread and wine in their seats.
* By the end of 1525, the authority of the pope and the Bishop of Constance was formally abolished in Zurich and ecclesiastical authority was passed to the city council. In 1529, attendance church became compulsory and those who did not attend were punished.
* Lay people were also given a role to play in that they could teach. Daily public lectures were introduced at the city’s cathedral, which were devoted to the Bible. Laymen were encouraged to discuss issues and to question.

Marburg Colloquy

* Zwingli and Luther met at the Marburg Colloquy in 1529. Hoping to present unity within the Protestant world so that it presented a united front to the [Catholic Church](http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/Roman_Catholic_Church_in_1500.htm).

* Philip of Hesse wanted to unify all the leading Protestants because he believed that as a divided entity they were vulnerable to Rome, as a unified force, they would appear to be more powerful. Philip’s theory was sound but it failed to take into account one major issue – beliefs.

* Luther and Zwingli had corresponded in the early years of the [Reformation](http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/german_reformation.htm) and they met at Marburg in October 1529. However, Luther and Zwingli fell out over the sacrament.
* Luther believed that Christ was present at every celebration of the sacrament – though he was never too sure about what happened to the bread and wine in the Mass. Zwingli believed that the communion service was a commemoration of Christ’s sacrifices and that the bread and wine were purely symbolic.
* Both men clashed over the phrase ‘***hoc est corpus meum’***.
* Luther held the view that this meant ‘this is my body’. Whereas Zwingli believed it meant ‘this signifies my body’. Both men believed that they were right and the meeting only served to demonstrate that the Protestant world was a divided one especially over interpretation.
* Luther refused to shake hands with Zwingli when he departed and he made his dislike of Zwingli very public. With Luther’s standing in northern Germany so high, it is easy to understand why the beliefs of Zwingli did not take root there.