

Essay #2  
**The Reformed Reformation Then and Now**  
*or*  
The Reformation and Human Reason:  
Focus on Zwingli and Calvin

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In the sixteenth century, the Reformation was the period of reforming the false doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church. There were many reformers during that period including three great men. They were Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin. Luther and Calvin were very well known but Zwingli was not. Luther and Zwingli were contemporaries. Zwingli was called the forerunner of Calvin because they shared common views of many Christian doctrines. Zwingli and Calvin used human reason in reforming Christianity. Regarding the Lord's Supper, Calvin stood between Luther and Zwingli. Zwingli was a humanist and nationalist. His reformation was based upon humanism and he became an ecclesiastical reformer. Calvin was called the reformer of the second generation. He added to the first generation's reformation also by using human reason.

**Zwingli (1484 – 1531)**

**His Life**

Ulrich Zwingli was born in the small village of Wildhaus in the Toggenburg valley of St.Gallen canton, Switzerland, on January 1, 1484. (Seven weeks earlier Luther had been born.)<sup>1</sup> Zwingli's father was the village mayor (Ammann) as his grandfather had been. His mother was the sister of John Meili who became a priest. He was the third among seven sons and had two sisters. His father was very ambitious for his son and was able to send him to the best schools.

At the age of eight, Zwingli was sent to Wesen where his uncle was dean. At ten he transferred to Basel, where he studied Latin, music, and dialectics. He also studied in Bern and Vienna. Zwingli was tremendously impressed by Maximilian's brilliant reign during his stay in Vienna (1500-1502).<sup>2</sup> When he lived in Basel and Bern, Zwingli was strongly influenced by humanism. He studied scholasticism, astronomy, and physics. He especially focused on the study of the classics.<sup>3</sup> He had excellent musical talents and played the lute, harp, violin, and flute well. He became a friend of Heinrich Glareanus, a leading musical humanist in Switzerland.<sup>4</sup> Zwingli returned to Basel, where he received his B.A. degree in 1504 and received his M.A. in 1506.<sup>5</sup>

In Basel, Zwingli met Dr. Thomas Wytttenbach, an Erasmian reform-minded scholar. His influence made him enjoy reading the New Testament in Greek and books of the early church

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<sup>1</sup> Philip Schaff, *History of The Christian Church, Vol. 8*, trans. KyoungSoo Park (Seoul: Christian Digest, 2004), 39.

<sup>2</sup> Lewis W. Spitz, *The Renaissance and Reformation Movements: The Reformation*, rev. ed., vol. 2 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1987), 382.

<sup>3</sup> Schaff, *Christian Church*, 41.

<sup>4</sup> Spitz, *Renaissance and Reformation*, 382.

<sup>5</sup> Justo L. Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity: The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation*, Vols. 1 and 2 (Peabody: Prince Press, 1985), 46.

fathers.<sup>6</sup> He became proficient in Greek. Later, he called Dr. Wyttenbach his loving and faithful teacher. From Dr. Wyttenbach, he became aware of the Catholics' false teachings and learned that salvation is by Christ alone.<sup>7</sup> At the age of 22, Zwingli was installed as a priest in Glarus by the bishop of Constance. He served there for 10 years (1506 – 1516).<sup>8</sup> That experience gave him a solid foundation for his later reform activities.<sup>9</sup> He twice experienced war as a military chaplain--in 1512 and in 1515. So he was called a nationalist. The second experience as chaplain made him see one of the great evils of Switzerland, namely, that mercenary service enriched and corrupted Swiss youth and destroyed the moral values of society. After that, he condemned mercenary service as a sinful action. While in Glarus, Zwingli corresponded with Erasmus through a friend. Zwingli praised Erasmus as an extraordinary philosopher and theologian. Erasmus regarded Zwingli as an intelligent and witty man.<sup>10</sup> Zwingli might have adopted humanism because of Erasmus. It was from him he derived the mild opinion about hereditary sin and guilt. He was against semi-Pelagianism and strongly supported the doctrine of predestination.<sup>11</sup>

In 1516, Zwingli received a call from the church at Einsiedeln and left Glarus.<sup>12</sup> Einsiedeln was a popular place for pilgrims because a statue of the Virgin Mary was there. Zwingli read many books by the early church fathers during his stay in Einsiedeln. He put notes in his own Bible from the Bible which Erasmus first published in March, 1516.<sup>13</sup> That August, Zwingli blocked the activities of monk Bernardin Samson, who was going to sell indulgences.

In 1519, Zwingli became a people's priest at Zurich. He was called to the Great Minster (Grossmünster) because he was a preacher and a famous patriot.<sup>14</sup> Later, some called him the Luther of Zurich. He did reform many things in that city. Bullinger said, "Zurich was the same as Corinth in Greece before the gospel was preached."<sup>15</sup> Because of the mercenary service, the city was filled with wealth, extravagance, and the desire for power. Zwingli's preaching, devotion, and learning soon won him the respect of his parishioners in Zurich.<sup>16</sup> His sermon themes were only focused on the contents of the Bible. He regarded the Bible as the canon of theology and practice. When Francis I of France requested Swiss mercenary soldiers, all cantons except Zurich (where Zwingli lived) sent them. Zwingli feared harmful consequences. The pope insisted that Zurich dispatch the soldiers, but Zwingli focused on the Pope's unjust use of power. He became more sharply focused on the evil effects of the papacy.<sup>17</sup> Zwingli's enemies spread the word that his teachings were the same as those of the German heretic. Later Zwingli would declare that, even before having heard of Luther's teachings, he had come to similar conclusions through his study of the Bible. Some historians said that he seemed to be influenced by Luther. In any case,

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<sup>6</sup> Spitz, *Renaissance and Reformation*, 382.

<sup>7</sup> Schaff, *Christian Church*, 42.

<sup>8</sup> Schaff, *Christian Church*, 43.

<sup>9</sup> Spitz, *Renaissance and Reformation*, 382.

<sup>10</sup> Schaff, *Christian Church*, 44.

<sup>11</sup> Schaff, *Christian Church*, 44.

<sup>12</sup> Spitz, *Renaissance and Reformation*, 383.

<sup>13</sup> Schaff, *Christian Church*, 48.

<sup>14</sup> Schaff, *Christian Church*, 54.

<sup>15</sup> Schaff, *Christian Church*, 55.

<sup>16</sup> Gonzalez, *Story of Christianity*, 48.

<sup>17</sup> Gonzalez, *Story of Christianity*, 49.

Zwingli's reformation seemed not to be directly influenced by Luther. Rather it was a parallel movement that soon established links with its counterpart in Germany.<sup>18</sup>

Zurich was under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Bishop of Constance. In 1522, when Zwingli preached against the laws of fasting and abstinence, some of his parishioners ate smoked sausages on Ash Wednesday.<sup>19</sup> When the bishop accused them of sinning, they threw the entire blame on Zwingli. Zwingli then wrote the paper *Regarding the Choice and the Freedom of Food*, in order to defend his stance.<sup>20</sup> On January 29, 1523, he gave a speech in the Great Hall of Zurich where he publicly rejected Roman teaching. After that, he expanded the scope of his attacks on traditional Christianity by declaring that priestly celibacy was not biblical. A debate between Zwingli and a representative of the bishop followed. Zwingli won that debate. After that, he published *Sixty-Seven Articles*<sup>21</sup> which clearly outlined his objections to the wrong teachings of the Roman Catholic Church:

The rest of the articles spelled out his objections to the assumption of high priestly powers by the pope, the celebration of the mass as a sacrifice rather than as a remembrance, prayer for the intercession of saints, compulsory fasting, pilgrimages, monastic vows, clerical celibacy, the misuse of the ban, gabbled prayers, the sale of indulgence, the doctrines of penance and purgatory, the priesthood, the role of the state in religion, and other teachings and practices.<sup>22</sup>

The relationship between Zurich and Rome was broken. After that, Zwingli's reformation continued, and his goal was to restore biblical faith and practice. His methods were different from that of Luther's.

Luther's reformation was different because he was willing to allow all traditional customs except those things which the Bible prohibited. But Zwingli took an opposite view. He rejected all customs of the Roman Catholic Church except those things which the Bible commanded.<sup>23</sup> Radical changes took place in Zurich. For example, divine statues were destroyed, distributing bread and wine to laity was allowed, and priests, monks, and nuns could marry. Zwingli also prohibited the use of instruments in the worship service even though he had excellent musical talents. But Zwingli was a humanist and remained a humanist.<sup>24</sup>

The Swiss Confederation was not centralized. Each canton had its own laws and government. In 1291, three cantons—Uri, Schwyz, and Unterwalden—were united and eventually grew into a confederation of 13 cantons.<sup>25</sup> Seeking common goals such as mutual defense treaties and independence from the German Empire, they came together and held a diet. Because of these

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<sup>18</sup> James M. Kittelson, *Luther The Reformer: The Story of the Man and His Career*, (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1986), 187.

<sup>19</sup> Schaff, *Christian Church*, 62.

<sup>20</sup> Schaff, *Christian Church*, 63.

<sup>21</sup> Spitz, *Renaissance and Reformation*, 385.

<sup>22</sup> Spitz, *Renaissance and Reformation*, 385.

<sup>23</sup> Gonzalez, *Story of Christianity*, 50.

<sup>24</sup> Theo. Dierks, "Huldreich Zwingli, the Father of Reformed Theology," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 14, No. 6, (1943), 337; August Baur, *Zwingli's Theologie*, Vol. I: 46, says: "In his theological education and development Zwingli shows himself essentially dependent on Humanism and especially on Erasmus and must therefore be designed as an Erasmian in philosophy and theology."

<sup>25</sup> Spitz, *Renaissance and Reformation*, 381.

complex issues, some cantons became Protestant, while others remained faithful to Rome. Some feared that religious disagreement could bring civil war. The Catholic cantons took steps to seek an alliance with Charles V, and Zwingli recommended that the Protestant cantons initiate military action before it was too late. But authorities in the Protestant cantons did not listen to Zwingli's advice.

In October of 1531, the five Catholic cantons suddenly attacked Zurich.<sup>26</sup> Sadly, Zwingli died on the battlefield at Kappel on October 11, 1531.<sup>27</sup> (Zwingli died 15 years before Luther.) Slightly more than a month later, the Peace of Kappel was signed. The Protestants agreed to cover the expenses of the recent military actions, and in return each canton would have the freedom to make its own choice in matters of religion.

### **His Theology**

Zwingli and Luther had some agreements regarding theology, but basically, they held different beliefs concerning God. Zwingli didn't have a conversion event similar to Luther's. Luther had a frightening experience and swore to become a monk. Zwingli gradually became a Christian by studying the Bible. Luther's "monastic discovery" was the basis of his reformation, but Zwingli based his on the study of humanism. Zwingli regarded his reason to be more important than Luther did his. One good example is the doctrine of predestination. Both Zwingli and Luther agreed that the salvation was only by grace. Luther insisted on the doctrine of justification and salvation by faith alone without human merits. Zwingli said that salvation is the consequence of the nature of God. He understood that God is almighty and omnipotent and that God decides everything, including man's salvation. Basically, his understanding of God was that God created the world and that man was corrupted since Adam's Fall. He insisted man was not capable of knowing God and that God revealed Himself to man:

God exhibits man to himself so that he recognizes his disobedience, treachery, and misery no less than Adam (did); as a result, man despairs of himself. But God at the same time exhibits the fullness and riches of His goodness to man, so that, when he has despaired in himself, he nevertheless recognizes that his Creator and Father still has for him a certain and ready grace, so that he cannot under any condition be torn away from Him, whose grace he desires.<sup>28</sup>

In addition, Zwingli had a very poor understanding of the atonement of Christ. He did not understand that God forgave men their sins in Christ Jesus—once, for all. In his *Exposition of the Christian Faith*, Zwingli wrote that many pious, wise, faithful, constant, valiant, and virtuous men would be found in heaven. He included Hercules, Theseus, Socrates, Aristides, Antigonus, Numa, Camillus, the Catos, and the Scipios.<sup>29</sup> This meant that Zwingli regarded them as heirs of heaven even though they were not even Christians. Zwingli agreed that salvation was through Christ alone, but he taught salvation had a wider way, that is, God revealed Himself not only through Christ but also in many other ways.<sup>30</sup> Zwingli insisted that all those who are not capable of understanding the law are "in a state of innocence."<sup>31</sup> It meant that he denied the doctrine of

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<sup>26</sup> Gonzalez, *Story of Christianity*, 50.

<sup>27</sup> Spitz, *Renaissance and Reformation*, 381.

<sup>28</sup> Dierks, *Zwingli*, 336.

<sup>29</sup> Dierks, *Zwingli*, 337.

<sup>30</sup> Dierks, *Zwingli*, 337.

<sup>31</sup> Dierks, *Zwingli*, 342.

original sin and corrupted the doctrine of justification by faith alone. His interpretation could be seen as the forerunner of pluralism in modern times, which teaches many ways to reach salvation.

Zwingli held that the Bible had to be the inspired Word of God. He agreed that Scripture interprets Scripture. He denied the means of grace. He believed that the Holy Spirit works faith immediately without means.

Zwingli did not know the proper distinction between law and gospel. He designated the revelation of God as law and gospel. He did not stress their antithesis but rather their agreement.<sup>32</sup> Zwingli thought in a broad sense that law was merged into gospel, as noted by John Maxfield:

In a narrow sense, Gospel refers to the salvation in Christ, to redemption and forgiveness of sin but in a wide sense, it includes the law. The Gospel is everything that has been made known by God to men in the Old and New Testament by which they can be made certain of the grace and will of God.<sup>33</sup>

Maxfield insisted that Zwingli taught a universal atonement rather than a limited atonement; however, some theologians did not agree.<sup>34</sup> He said that the Formula of Concord never condemned the Reformed doctrine regarding atonement.<sup>35</sup> He also focused on the original language of the Bible. This might have been influenced by humanism.

### **The Colloquy of Marburg**

Luther and Zwingli were contemporaries. There was a famous debate between Luther and Zwingli called the Colloquy of Marburg. (It took place in 1529.)<sup>36</sup> That debate addressed the question of how Christ is present in the Lord's Supper. Luther and Melancthon came from Wittenberg. Bucer from Strasburg, Oecolampadius from Basel, and Zwingli from Zurich were also there. The purpose of this meeting was to try to unite Protestants of Germany with those of Switzerland and to confront the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. Before that meeting, Luther and Zwingli had fiercely criticized each other. For example, Zwingli had stated regarding his Wittenberg foe:

That rash man Luther keeps killing human and divine wisdom in his books, though it would have been easy to restore this wisdom among the pious. But since the heretics, that is, his followers, together with the wicked, have become so deaf to all truth that they refuse to listen, I was for a long time doubtful about expending this enormous labor which I knew would be in vain... May I die if he does not surpass Eck in impurity, Cochlaeus in audacity, and, in brief, all the vices of men!<sup>37</sup>

At Marburg they quickly came to agreements concerning the person of Christ, justification by faith, baptism, and other teachings of Scripture. Among the 15 items in the Marburg Articles, 14 were agreed upon, but one was not. Luther accused Zwingli of using poor logic when applying

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<sup>32</sup> Dierks, *Zwingli*, 339.

<sup>33</sup> Dierks, *Zwingli*, 339–40.

<sup>34</sup> John A. Maxfield, "Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin on the Significance of Christ's Death," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 75 (2011), 96.

<sup>35</sup> Maxfield, *Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin*, 96.

<sup>36</sup> Gonzalez, *Story of Christianity*, 52.

<sup>37</sup> Spitz, *Renaissance and Reformation*, 391.

John 6:53–58 to the doctrine of the Real Presence. Zwingli responded, “this passage is going to break your neck.” Luther retorted, “Don’t boast too much. Necks do not break that easily here. You are in Hesse, not Switzerland.”<sup>38</sup> German punishment did not allow breaking a man’s neck. Even though the men agreed with the first part of the 15<sup>th</sup> Article, in the last part there was no agreement:

We all believe and hold concerning the Supper of our dear Lord Jesus Christ that both species should be used according to the institution of Christ; also that the mass is not a work whereby one obtains grace for another, dead or living; also that the Sacrament of the Altar is a sacrament of the true body and blood of Jesus Christ, and that the spiritually partaking of this body and blood is especially necessary for every true Christian. In like manner, that the use of Sacrament, like the Word, is given and ordained by almighty God in order that weak consciences may thereby be excited to faith by the Holy Spirit. And although at present we are not agreed as to whether the true body and blood are bodily present in the bread and wine nevertheless each party should show Christian love to the other, so far as conscience can permit, and both should fervently pray Almighty God that he, by his Spirit, would confirm us in the right understanding. Amen.<sup>39</sup>

At the conclusion of Colloquy at Marburg, Luther refused the hand of fellowship to Zwingli, saying, “You have a different spirit.” They had failed to reach a consensus. Zwingli thought that the sacraments did not cause or convey grace. It is from Christ though the Spirit alone that grace and faith are received, apart from the means of grace. Zwingli focused on the role of the Holy Spirit rather than the means of grace. He sarcastically said that the Spirit does not need a wagon to come to us. He thought that the Lord’s Supper was not Christ’s body and blood for the forgiveness of sins but rather a mere memorial meal with bread and wine. After the colloquy of Marburg, Protestants were divided into Lutherans and Reformed.

## **Conclusion**

What was the influence of Zwingli in the history of the Christian church? Zwingli thought that the reformation of Luther did not go far enough. Zwingli radically changed all religious and civic teachings except those which the Bible commanded. As a humanist and patriot, he regarded human reason the norm of his reformation. Zwingli really wanted all cantons under the rule of the papacy. The main difference between Luther and Zwingli was the interpretation of the means of grace. Zwingli thought that the Holy Spirit worked directly. In other words, the activities of the Holy Spirit did not need means. He strongly believed in the will of God and predestination. Currently, there are many Presbyterian churches in Korea. Some of them remove the cross from the altar because they regard it as a sort of idol worship. These churches seem to follow the teachings of Zwingli.

## **Calvin (1509 – 1564)**

### **His Life**

John Calvin was born in the small town of Noyon, northeast of Paris, France, on July 10, 1509.<sup>40</sup> He was one of five sons. When Calvin was born, Luther was teaching his first lectures at the

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<sup>38</sup> Spitz, *Renaissance and Reformation*, 392.

<sup>39</sup> Hermann Sasse, *This is My Body: Luther’s Contention for the Real Presence on the Sacrament of the Altar*, (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publisher, 2001), 219–20.

<sup>40</sup> Gonzalez, *Story of Christianity*, 61.

University of Wittenberg. Calvin's father, Gerard Cauvin served as secretary to the bishop and procurator of the cathedral chapter. His family belonged to the middle class in Noyon.<sup>41</sup> Calvin's mother, Jeanne Lefranc, died when Calvin was young.<sup>42</sup> Calvin was a boy of eight when Luther published his ninety-five theses. When he was only eleven, Calvin was appointed to a chaplaincy. With the income of a chaplain, he could study in Paris.<sup>43</sup> Calvin's father wanted him to become a priest. Calvin learned grammar and rhetoric from Marthurin Cordier who was not only a first-rate teacher, but also the founder of modern pedagogy, which advocated universal education. He also learned Latin from Cordier. Later, Calvin dedicated his commentary on Thessalonians to Cordier.<sup>44</sup> Next, Calvin moved to the College de Montaigu and learned philosophy and theology. The College de Montaigu became famous because Erasmus and Loyola were graduates. Erasmus was the prince of humanism and Loyola was the founder of the Society of Jesuits in the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>45</sup>

In March 1528, Calvin's father changed his mind and suggested that he study law at Orleans. His father wanted Calvin to pursue a career in law just as Luther's father had wanted for his son.<sup>46</sup> Calvin became captivated by the study of humanism and the classics. In the College de Orleans, Melchior Volmar taught Calvin Hebrew and Greek. Prof. Volmar publicly agreed with the Reformation of Luther. Calvin was influenced by Prof. Volmar's stance. Later, Calvin dedicated his commentary on 2 Corinthians to Prof. Volmar.<sup>47</sup> After studying humanism, Calvin learned of the harmful teachings of the Roman Catholic Church and agreed with the need for a reformation. This realization propelled him to transfer to Bourges in the fall of 1529.<sup>48</sup> There he studied the New Testament in Greek and was possibly introduced to Lutheran theology. Calvin was basically influenced by Luther and Zwingli because they were the first generation of reformers. Calvin studied in Paris from 1528 to 1533.<sup>49</sup> His conversion to Protestantism happened no later than 1533. In 1532, he published his first book, *'The Commentary of On Mercy.'* This book well represented Calvin's literary taste and preference. Philip Schaff commented on his book:

This book belongs to the category of classical philosophy and moral philosophy. It deals with the highest level of special affection for the Stoic school, considerable insight into Greek Roman literature, mature Latin, uncommon commentary technique, clear and sound judgment, and sharp insights into the harmful consequences of the autocracy and the weaknesses of the judicial system.<sup>50</sup>

It is interesting to note that his first book was not related to the Reformation but to the commentary of an ethics philosopher. This book was a compilation of humanistic teachings that Calvin had learned in his youth.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Gonzalez, *Story of Christianity*, 61.

<sup>42</sup> Schaff, *Christian Church*, 261.

<sup>43</sup> Schaff, *Christian Church*, 263.

<sup>44</sup> Schaff, *Christian Church*, 263.

<sup>45</sup> Yangho Lee, *The Reformation: Aimed at a World in Which God's Will is Achieved*, (Seoul: DongYeon Publishing House, 2016), 193.

<sup>46</sup> Gonzalez, *Story of Christianity*, 62.

<sup>47</sup> Gonzalez, *Story of Christianity*, 265.

<sup>48</sup> Lee, *Reformation*, 194.

<sup>49</sup> Schaff, *Christian Church*, 264.

<sup>50</sup> Schaff, *Christian Church*, 267.

<sup>51</sup> Lee, *Reformation*, 195.

In 1534, Calvin returned to his hometown of Noyon and gave up his ecclesiastical position. In 1535, Francis I changed his policy of tolerating Protestants to being intolerant of them, so Calvin went into exile in Switzerland.<sup>52</sup> At Basel he published his famous *Institutes of the Christian Religion* in 1536. The publication of *Institutes* by the twenty-six-year-old was a very important event for Calvin. Calvin reworked and enlarged the text for many years. The final edition came out in 1559, but no basic idea was ever changed. While Calvin moved toward Protestant views, his homeland of France experienced increasing religious turmoil.<sup>53</sup>

After visiting some cities of France, Calvin headed to Strassburg. But the route was closed by military operations and he had to make a detour through Geneva. Guillaume Farel, the local Protestant leader, heard that Calvin was in Geneva. He came to Calvin at night. Calvin had not intended to become a leader of the Reformation in Geneva. He just wanted to settle down in a calm environment where he could study Scripture and write about his faith. But Farel threatened him with a curse.

“May God condemn your repose, and the calm you seek for study, if before such a great need you withdraw, and refuse your succor and help.”<sup>54</sup>

Calvin changed his mind and stayed in Geneva. Later, Calvin said of the meeting with Farel:

Everywhere I went I was careful to hide that I was the author of the book. Finally, in Geneva, Guillaume Farel continued to be buried alone until he held me in Geneva with a terrible curse, not as advice or counsel. I felt the curse of Farel as if God had put the hand of power upon me from heaven to captivate me.<sup>55</sup>

Before Calvin’s arrival in Geneva, the reformers were facing difficulties. The Protestant city of Bern had dispatched missionaries to Geneva. These missionaries were supported by small groups of educated laity. The members of the group were ardently eager to reform the church because the clergy there were simply obeying the orders of the government of Geneva. The Bern missionaries, whose leader was William Farel, lacked sufficient personnel to reach their goals.

In 1538, Calvin and Farel were driven out of Geneva when the city council turned against them. Calvin went to Strassburg, where Martin Bucer was the leading reformer. Calvin was influenced by Bucer. The church government and church discipline in Strassburg left a strong impression on Calvin. Calvin would carry these ideas with him when he returned to Geneva. It was during his stay at Strassburg that he signed the Augsburg Confession in its “Variata” form. While staying in Strassburg, he married Idelette de Bure, the widow of an Anabaptist. Unfortunately, she died in 1549. Calvin recalled that staying in Strassburg was the happiest time in his life.<sup>56</sup> In 1541, Calvin was invited back to Geneva because Farel’s Protestant party had regained control of the city. He did not want to return to Geneva, but Bucer and Farel strongly persuaded him. When he returned to Geneva, his purpose was to make it a theocracy, that is, a community ruled by God. He set out to create a city where people believed and lived as Christians. Dancing, playing cards,

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<sup>52</sup> Gonzalez, *Story of Christianity*, 63.

<sup>53</sup> Lynn Hunt, *The Making of the West: Peoples and Cultures*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Boston: Befford/St. Martin’s, 2007), 480.

<sup>54</sup> Gonzalez, *Story of Christianity*, 65.

<sup>55</sup> Lee, *Reformation*, 197.

<sup>56</sup> KyungSoo Park, *The Reformation: Visiting the historical places*, (Seoul: The Christian Literature Society of Korea, 2013), 137.



and theaters were forbidden. Everyone was required to attend church twice each Sunday, and those who failed to do so without good reason were disciplined. Eventually, Geneva became a single theocratic community, in which dissidence was not tolerated.<sup>57</sup>

The Zwinglian reformers merged with the Calvinists. In 1549, Calvin and Bullinger succeeded in overcoming the differences between Zurich and Geneva regarding the Lord's Supper. The so-called Zurich Consensus declared that the Lord's Supper is not merely a metaphor for the spiritual meal.<sup>58</sup>

In June 1559, the Genevan Academy was founded. It was important to Calvin and Calvinism. Many people came from all over Europe in order to study Calvinism. This academy helped spread the teachings of Calvinism. Calvin oversaw the operation of the Geneva Academy, until his death on May 27, 1564.

Calvin and Luther had different personalities. Luther was sociable to the point of volubility, free and open, warm and cordial with people of all stations of life, but Calvin was shy to the point of diffidence, precise, and restrained.<sup>59</sup> Even though they had different temperaments, they made big contributions to the Reformation.

### **Calvin's Theology**

Calvin's main focus was to affirm the sovereignty of God and to glorify His glory.<sup>60</sup> The Lutherans focused on the grace of God and justification by faith. They shared some common beliefs, such as total depravation, verbal inspiration, and negating free will in the role of salvation. But the main difference was the use of human reason in understanding Scripture. Calvin insisted that revelation never contradicted reason. The doctrine of double predestination was the main example of salvation based on human reason. It was used to answer a common question: "Why some and not others?"

In 1536, Calvin published the first edition of his book, *Institutes of the Christians Religion*. In this book, he followed the outline of Luther's *Small Catechism* and added Christology. Before explaining Christology, he mentioned sin and Adam's Fall. Calvin's intention was to emphasize the grace of God, that is, the gospel first and then the law.<sup>61</sup> He did not fully understand the law and gospel.

In 1551, the Parisian Jerome Hermes Bolsec, a former Carmelite friar, spoke out against teachings of Calvin.<sup>62</sup> Bolsec insisted that Calvin's predestination doctrine made God the author of sin. He insisted that the grace of God should be given to all people in the world. Bolsec maintained that when the gospel was preached, some people accepted it and others did not. He insisted that the reason was due to their own free will. In Calvin's view, Bolsec did not understand the exact meaning of free will. Calvin agreed with the doctrine of total depravation. And he also insisted that the grace of God was needed in order to be saved, as Luther did.

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<sup>57</sup> Hunt, *Making of the West*, 481.

<sup>58</sup> Schaff, *Christian Church*, 503.

<sup>59</sup> Spitz, *Renaissance and Reformation*, 412.

<sup>60</sup> Spitz, *Renaissance and Reformation*, 418.

<sup>61</sup> Jaejin Kim, "Consideration of Calvin's acceptance of the theology of Luther: focusing on slave will and freedom of choice," (paper presented at the annual meeting by *Korea Reformed Theological Society 67<sup>th</sup> Conference*, Seoul, November 7, 2009), 3.

<sup>62</sup> Spitz, *Renaissance and Reformation*, 427.

However, in the process of salvation, Calvin did not allow for the free will of a person.<sup>63</sup> Luther said that a man is like a horse with a saddle,<sup>64</sup> Calvin said that a man is like a horseman and horse.<sup>65</sup> The horse can be pulled by the horseman. Both Calvin and Luther did not accept the teaching that man's free will played a role in salvation.

Luther and Calvin had different understandings concerning the salvation process. Luther accepted it as a mystery because it was beyond human reason. Calvin believed that salvation was the decision of God based upon his sovereignty. Double predestination was the result of this concept. Calvin's belief in double predestination held an important position in his teachings. He insisted that God already decided both those who were saved before one's birth and those who were damned. However, Luther believed only those who were saved were predestined. Calvin agreed with Luther that all people are totally depraved by nature and that grace was needed for salvation. But Calvin did not agree in only the election to salvation. Calvin explained the process of salvation using human reason. If God elects some to salvation through the gospel message, then others are logically elected to damnation if they do not accept it, even though they listen to the same message. That is Calvin's human reason and understanding. Calvin did not accept the mystery of salvation. Calvin's theology also logically assumed that God was the author of sin even though Calvin never stated that directly. In addition, Calvin did not think that baptism was important to the Christian. He claimed that if someone were elected to salvation, he would be saved without baptism.

In Geneva, religious conflicts under the leadership of Calvin were severely dealt with. Take for example the case of Michael Servetus. Michael Servetus was a prominent Spanish physician. He had also published a treatise *On the Errors of the Trinity*.<sup>66</sup> In it he denied some teachings such as the Trinity, infant baptism, the union of church and state, and the Council of Nicea. Servetus was connected to a group called Libertines.<sup>67</sup> He was condemned as a heretic. The leaders in Geneva decided that Servetus should be burned to death even though Calvin had argued in favor of a less cruel death by beheading.<sup>68</sup> It shows how severe Geneva's leaders and Calvin were. After Servetus's execution, there was no rival for Calvin's authority in Geneva.

Regarding the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, Calvin held a middle position between Luther and Zwingli. Luther insisted on the real presence, and Zwingli insisted on symbolism. Calvin seemed to be inclined towards Luther's teachings. He agreed that Christ is present during the Lord's Supper, but only in a spiritual way. Martin Bucer and Calvin prided themselves on standing midway between Zwingli and Luther, but their beliefs were basically Zwinglian in a more refined form. Gonzalez summarized Calvin's position:

Calvin affirmed that the presence of Christ in communion is real, although spiritual. This means that such presence is not merely symbolic, nor is communion a mere devotional exercise; rather there is in it a true divine action for the church that partakes of the sacrament. On the other hand, this does not mean that the body of Christ descends from heaven, nor that it can be present in several altars at the same time, as Luther claimed.

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<sup>63</sup> Kim, *Calvin's acceptance*, 5.

<sup>64</sup> Schaff, *Christian Church*, 344.

<sup>65</sup> Kim, *Calvin's acceptance*, 12.

<sup>66</sup> Spitz, *Renaissance and Reformation*, 406.

<sup>67</sup> Schaff, *Christian Church*, 591.

<sup>68</sup> Gonzalez, *Story of Christianity*, 67.

Rather, in the act of communion, by the power of the Holy Spirit, believers are taken to heaven and share with Christ in a foretaste of the heavenly banquet.<sup>69</sup>

Calvin seemed to favor Luther in this matter, but he did not agree that Jesus's resurrected body was not limited to space and time. In other words, Calvin did not accept Jesus's body as omnipresent and omnipotent. Calvin apparently considered the sacramental controversy between Lutherans and Zwinglians solved when the Zurich Consensus of 1549 modified Article X of the Augsburg Confession.<sup>70</sup> Calvin insisted that one spiritually participates in the body and blood of Christ through the Holy Spirit. He rejected Zwingli's symbolism. He believed that the Lord's Supper is a powerful and effective sign by which the Holy Spirit unites the heavenly Lord to us through food. Christ's body and blood are present efficaciously but not in reality. Thus Calvin rejected the transubstantiation of the Catholics and the real presence of the Lutherans. Calvin maintained that the finite is not capable of the infinite. Therefore, the elements cannot contain the body and blood of the Lord or be His true body and blood.

Calvin did agree with Luther's views on Christian liberty. The Christian is the freest of all in being above the law but is the servant of all in acting willingly in love for the good of his fellow man.<sup>71</sup>

### **The Institutes**

Calvin felt a need to write a summary of the Christian faith because there were few summaries available. Most Protestant literature was focused on controversial issues and said little regarding basic doctrines such as the Trinity and the incarnation. So Calvin wrote the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. The first edition of the *Institutes* appeared in Basel in 1536 and was a 516-page book.<sup>72</sup> It consisted of six chapters. Gonzalez in his book summarized it briefly:

The first four dealt with the law, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the sacraments. The last two, more polemical in tone, summarized the Protestant position regarding the "false sacraments" of Rome, and Christian freedom.<sup>73</sup>

Spitz commented about the book:

The centrality of Paul and the influence of Augustine and Luther are evident throughout, although Calvin's comprehensive knowledge of the Scriptures and patristic writers also comes through in force.<sup>74</sup>

This first edition was sold out in nine months. Calvin continued to edit his book. The Latin and French editions of 1559 and 1560 were the last versions published during Calvin's lifetime. His book began with only six chapters but ended up with four books and eighty chapters.

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<sup>69</sup> Gonzalez, *Story of Christianity*, 68.

<sup>70</sup>The text of the two editions (1530 and 1540) is as follows: Ed. 1530. Of the Supper of the Lord, they teach that the body and blood of Christ are truly present [under the form of bread and wine], and are distributed to those that eat in the Lord's Supper. And they disapprove of those who teach otherwise. Ed. 1540. Of the Supper of the Lord, they teach that with bread and wine are truly exhibited the body and blood of Christ to those who eat in the Lord's Supper.

<sup>71</sup>Spitz, *Renaissance and Reformation*, 417.

<sup>72</sup> Gonzalez, *Story of Christianity*, 63.

<sup>73</sup>Gonzalez, *Story of Christianity*, 63.

<sup>74</sup>Spitz, *Renaissance and Reformation*, 417.

Calvinism spread widely in Europe partly due to the *Institutes* but mainly due to the influence of the Geneva Academy. Because of the Academy, many students came from various areas in Europe. After graduation, they returned to their native lands and shared the teachings of Calvin.

### **Conclusion**

The Renaissance and humanism were major themes of the sixteenth century. In modern times, pluralism and atheism are major themes. We should return to Luther's main theme: *Sola Fide, Sola Gratia, Sola Scriptura*. The absolute truth is not attained in multiple ways as pluralism insists. Those who believe in pluralism confuse others by suggesting that there are several ways to reach the truth. Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6 NIV) Jesus is the only way to reach the truth. The Scripture is only the source of truth. This is not negotiable.

Atheism is growing rapidly in Korea. The proportion of atheists to the total population is above 50 percent. Unfortunately, teenagers and young adults especially make up a large portion of this group. Atheism is increasing worldwide. Atheism basically stems from human reason. Those who try to understand God by human reason and logic fail and then turn to atheism.

Today, advanced technologies tend to lead younger generations to become atheists. But in Luther's time the advances in printing technology helped the Reformation spread quickly and widely. It is said that the Reformation gave the laity the Bible. Nowadays, advanced technologies give people lots of information including theologies, commentaries on the Bible, lectures, and sermons. Those resources can give people a better understanding of God's Word. It depends on how they use them. The ideals of the Reformation should be carried on. Luther reformed false teachings that contradicted what the Bible taught. The source of the Reformation was the Bible. We should stay faithful to the infallible Word of God!

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