

“It Varies from Canton to Canton”: Zurich, Basel, and the Swiss Reformation

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One of the most important developments in the study of the Reformation over the past generation has been a growing appreciation of the various influences that went into the making of the Reformed tradition. Fifty years ago, the American historian John T. McNeill could write the book, *The History and Character of Calvinism*, which treated the Zurich Reformation as merely a prelude to the much more important developments in Geneva and beyond. In comparison, in his recent book, *Christ's Churches Purely Reformed*, Philip Benedict avoids the term *Calvinism* unless referring specifically to the Genevan reformer, and he places much more emphasis not only on Ulrich Zwingli but also on Heinrich Bullinger and the other reformers of south Germany and Switzerland who contributed to the Reformed tradition.¹

Much of this change in emphasis is due to the initiatives of the Institute for Swiss Reformation History at the University of Zurich, which has sponsored the publication of critical editions and supported research on the German-speaking Swiss Reformed tradition. We now know much more, for example, about the development of the Zurich church in the years after Zwingli's death and about Bullinger's European-wide influence.² Similarly, conference volumes and translations have made clear the important role played by Bullinger's co-workers, particularly Peter Martyr Vermigli, in developing the “Zurich school of Reformed theology” as a complement to “the Genevan school.”³

¹John T. McNeill, *The History and Character of Calvinism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954); Philip Benedict, *Christ's Churches Purely Reformed: A Social History of Calvinism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).

²See especially the articles presented in the two volumes that resulted from the International Bullinger Congress in 2004: Emidio Campi and Peter Opitz, ed., *Heinrich Bullinger: Life, Thought, Influence. Zurich, August 25-29, 2004. International Congress Heinrich Bullinger (1504–1575)*, Zürcher Beiträge zur Reformationsgeschichte, vol. 24 (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag Zurich, 2007).

³Emilio Campi, et al., eds., *Peter Martyr Vermigli: Humanism, Republicanism, Reformation*,

For obvious reasons, much of this research has focused on Zurich,⁴ but Zurich is not all of German-speaking Switzerland, nor can the developments in Zurich be used to interpret or evaluate developments in the other Protestant areas of the Swiss Confederation without some adaptation. One of the first things foreigners learn when visiting Switzerland is that the standard answer to any question about how things are done in that country is, “it varies from canton to canton.” This variety is as true of the Swiss Reformation as it is of everything else; thus, this article will examine how and why the Reformation in Basel differed from that in Zurich. The development of the Basel Reformation is relatively well known, but it is usually dismissed as atypical because of its supposedly “Lutheran” interlude under the leadership of Simon Sulzer, cathedral pastor from 1553 until his death in 1585.⁵ I suggest instead that Basel demonstrates that the Reformation in Switzerland could take many different forms, and that we should not assume that developments in Zurich were normative for all of German-speaking Switzerland.

At first glance, the similarities between Zurich and Basel during the early years of the Reformation seem to outweigh their differences. Both cities fit generally into the pattern of urban Reformation that is typical of south Germany and the Swiss Confederation. The Reformation in both Zurich and Basel was a popular movement led by well-educated preachers who mobilized their followers to pressure the council into introducing wide-ranging reforms. There were close ties between Ulrich Zwingli and Johann Oecolampadius, the reformers of the two cities, as attested by their frequent correspondence. From the outbreak of the eucharistic controversy at the end of 1524, the two men worked hand in hand to defend and propagate their shared understanding of the Lord’s Supper. Both were concerned with educating current and future pastors and introduced daily lectures on the Bible, either as something completely new, as was the case for Zurich’s *Prophetei*, or as a reform of existing structures, as was the case for Basel’s theology faculty. The resemblances continue even to the fact

Travaux d’Humanisme et Renaissance, vol. 365 (Geneva: Droz, 2002); Frank A. James III, ed., *Peter Martyr Vermigli and the European Reformations*, Studies in the History of Christian Traditions, vol. 115 (Leiden: Brill, 2004). Vermigli’s works in translation are appearing in the Peter Martyr Library, published by Truman State University Press.

⁴ Although it is not by any means limited to Zurich, the recent overview by Bruce Gordon tends to emphasize the importance of Zurich: Bruce Gordon, *The Swiss Reformation*, New Frontiers in History (Manchester and New York: Palgrave, 2002). The same is true of the classic work on the Swiss Reformation in German, Gottfried W. Locher, *Die zwinglische Reformation im Rahmen der europäischen Kirchengeschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979).

⁵ The standard work in English is Hans R. Guggisberg, *Basel in the Sixteenth Century: Aspects of the City Republic before, during, and after the Reformation* (St. Louis: Center for Reformation Research, 1982).

that both reformers died within weeks of each other in the fall of 1531.⁶

These superficial similarities, though, hide more important and more fundamental differences between the two city-republics. Perhaps most importantly, Basel's status as a member of the Swiss Confederation was only two decades old. In the 1520s, the city on the Rhine had far more extensive economic and cultural ties to the Holy Roman Empire than it did to the rest of the Swiss Confederation. Although its university was small, it was integrated into a regional network that brought students and professors from throughout southern Germany. Its printing industry was important for the transmission of Italian humanism to northern Europe, and the book trade generated profitable international connections and a cultural cosmopolitanism that set Basel apart from its fellow Swiss confederates.⁷ Through the tumultuous first decade of the Reformation, these differences were submerged, but they surfaced during the 1530s and caused Basel's Reformation to develop in a different direction from Zurich's. This change in direction was not obvious nor were those involved even truly conscious of it, but it would have significant consequences for Basel by mid-century.

The first divergence occurred in the wake of Zwingli's and Oecolampadius' deaths. Zurich was fortunate in successfully calling the talented and energetic young Heinrich Bullinger to succeed Zwingli. In comparison, Basel's choice of Oswald Myconius as cathedral pastor seems almost accidental. By all measures, Myconius was not suited for the job⁸—he was not a priest but a schoolteacher. He had relatively little university education and no formal training in theology; he acquired his knowledge of the Bible through participation in the *Prophezei* and by lecturing to his students on the *New Testament*. He had been associated with great men—first with the circle around Erasmus in Basel and later with Zwingli in Zurich—but unlike Bullinger, he had neither the charismatic personality nor the intellectual gifts to become a great man himself. I do not say this disparagingly;

⁶ Developments in each city and the ties between the two reformers are described in the biographies of both men: G. R. Potter, *Zwingli* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), and Ernst Staehelin, *Das theologische Lebenswerk Johannes Oekolampads, Quellen und Forschungen zur Reformationsgeschichte* (Leipzig: Heinsius, 1939). For a recent brief survey of Oecolampadius' life and significance in English, see Thomas R. Fudge, "Icarus of Basel? Oecolampadius and the Early Swiss Reformation," *Journal of Religious History* 21 (1997): 268–84.

⁷ Amy Nelson Burnett, *Teaching the Reformation: Ministers and Their Message in Basel, 1529–1629*, Oxford Studies in Historical Theology (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 20–32. On Basel's entrance into the Swiss Confederation, Edgar Bonjour and Albert Bruckner, *Basel und die Eidgenossen. Geschichte ihrer Beziehungen: Zur Erinnerung an Basels Eintritt in den Schweizerbund, 1501* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 1951). Basel's continued ties to the empire are described by Julia Gauss, "Basels politisches Dilemma in der Reformationszeit," *Zwingliana* 15 (1982): 509–48.

⁸ For a brief biography, see Peter Bietenholz, ed., *Contemporaries of Erasmus: A Biographical Register of the Renaissance and Reformation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985–1987), 2.475.

to judge from Thomas Platter's autobiography, Myconius was loved and esteemed by his students, and it was his skill as a preacher that landed him his first pastoral position in Basel in the days after Zwingli's death.⁹ Basel tried to recruit both Bullinger and the Strasbourg reformer Martin Bucer to succeed Oecolampadius. When these attempts failed, it was forced to choose from among the pastors already in the city, and Myconius had the right combination of age, experience, and preaching ability to be promoted to the most important post in the city's church.

Myconius' weaknesses would become apparent when another more qualified individual, Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, moved to Basel in 1534. Karlstadt was everything Myconius was not: an ordained priest with doctorates in both theology and law, an experienced university professor who was also apparently a very popular preacher, and a man with a self-confident and assertive personality who did not easily defer to others.¹⁰ Although Karlstadt may have mellowed in the years since his conflict with Luther and his first exile from Saxony, he was not likely to submit to the authority of the more unassuming Myconius. The almost inevitable result was conflict between the two men over the leadership of Basel's church during the second half of the 1530s.

Karlstadt's move to Basel points to another important difference with Zurich: the presence of an established university. Karlstadt came to Basel to assume the post of professor of Old Testament, and, in his role as theology professor he became a key figure in the conflict that shook the Basel church and university at the end of the 1530s. While the theology faculty, and to a lesser extent the arts faculty, could be redefined to meet the new task of educating present and future pastors, the faculties of law and of medicine were less inclined to abandon traditional procedures and prerequisites. The two sides clashed in 1538 when a committee headed by the jurist Bonifacius Amerbach proposed a reform of the university statutes that would require all of the city's pastors to matriculate in the theology faculty and the two theology professors to have doctorates in that discipline. Karlstadt supported these reforms; Myconius did not.¹¹

⁹ Platter was Myconius' student in Zurich, and he looked to the older man as a father figure. He was also responsible for recruiting Myconius to Basel's ministry in the fall of 1531; Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *The Beggar and the Professor: A Sixteenth-century Family Saga* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 29–30; 40–42; 58–60.

¹⁰ The best work on Karlstadt in English, which focuses on his early years in Wittenberg, is Ronald J. Sider, *Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt: The Development of His Thought, 1517–1525*, Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought, vol. 11 (Leiden: Brill, 1974).

¹¹ Amy Nelson Burnett, " 'Kilchen ist uff dem Radthus'? Conflicting Views of Magistrate and Ministry in Early Reformation Basel," in *Debatten über die Legitimation von Herrschaft: Politische Sprachen in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Luise Schorn-Schütte and Sven Tode (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2006), 49–65.

In the course of the controversy, Karlstadt's supporters persuaded the *Rat* to modify the working relationship among the city's pastors: Rather than being presided over by the cathedral pastor, the weekly meetings of the clergy were to be led by each of the four parish pastors in rotation. Although as cathedral pastor Myconius was still the most visible member of Basel's clergy outside the city, this procedural change gave Karlstadt—who was also the pastor of St. Peter's—the same authority within the city's leadership as Myconius. Karlstadt died in 1541, which brought an end to the immediate struggle, but it left the city's church with a collegial rather than a hierarchical structure, thereby weakening its position vis-à-vis the magistrate. In contrast to the situation in Zurich, there was not, and would not be, a leader in the Basel church whose authority was officially recognized until Johann Jakob Grynaeus requested the *Rat* to give him this power at the beginning of his tenure of office in 1586.

Potentially, the most significant divergence from Zurich, however, was not structural but doctrinal. The roots of this divergence go back to Martin Bucer's efforts to achieve eucharistic concord between Luther and the Swiss. While Oecolampadius was open to Bucer's activities, Zwingli rejected them in a sharp letter to Bucer written in February 1531.¹² The deaths of both Zwingli and Oecolampadius at the end of that year left the two cities in somewhat different positions. As Zwingli's successor, Bullinger was bound to uphold the honor and the orthodoxy of Zwingli and the Zurich church more generally against Luther's virtual sentence of excommunication. Although Basel was closely associated with Zurich and Zwingli, it did not have the same obligation. Myconius had long been a close associate of Zwingli's, but his irenic nature made him open to concord with Wittenberg. Oecolampadius' willingness to support Bucer's efforts gave the Baslers an option that was not open to the Zürchers, and Bucer astutely made use of Oecolampadius' own words to win the Baslers over to his side. His efforts were also welcomed by Basel's political elite, whose interests still lay as much with the empire as they did with the Swiss Confederation. The result was that Bucer won the support of the dominant figures in Basel's church—not only Myconius but also Karlstadt and the Greek professor Simon Grynaeus—for the Wittenberg Concord. Myconius' sermons and other works from the 1540s demonstrate that this endorsement was not merely on paper; his eucharistic theology was a faithful reflection of that formulated by Bucer and contained in the Wittenberg Concord.¹³

¹² Jean Rott, et al., *Correspondance de Martin Bucer*, Martini Buceri Opera Omnia Series 3 (Leiden: Brill, 1979), 5.261–66.

¹³ Amy Nelson Burnett, "Basel and the Wittenberg Concord," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 96 (2005): 33–56.

To interpret later developments in Basel rightly, it is crucial to understand both the contents and the purpose of the Wittenberg Concord in the 1530s and 1540s. The Concord was not a confession of faith to which both sides agreed but rather a summary of the understanding of the Lord's Supper taught by the churches of south Germany, which the Wittenbergers were willing to acknowledge as orthodox. Bullinger rejected it because it made too many terminological concessions to the Lutherans, but it did not fully endorse Luther's theology. Most importantly, it avoided the issues of oral manducation and of the ubiquity of Christ's body, and, by using the term *indigni* rather than *impii* it allowed its signatories to deny that unbelievers received Christ's body in the sacrament. Bucer's own eucharistic theology illustrates the importance of these omissions and ambiguities. He rejected both oral manducation and the reception of Christ's body by unbelievers, positions held by the Swiss from the beginning of the eucharistic controversy. On the issue of Christology, however, Bucer deviated from the Zwinglian view. His fundamental position was that the presence of Christ's body in the Supper was a mystery unfathomable by human reason, but he also agreed with Luther that "the right hand of the Father" must be understood as a metaphor for God's majesty and that Christ's body was not locally circumscribed in heaven.¹⁴

The Wittenberg Concord thus allowed for the existence of understandings of the Lord's Supper that differed from those of either Luther or Zwingli. The Concord was important, however, not as a definition of doctrine but rather as a definition of orthodoxy. At the time it was drafted, the Wittenberg Concord specified the central points on which Luther believed there must be agreement if Wittenberg was to establish fellowship with the churches of South Germany and Switzerland. By accepting the Concord, he and his followers acknowledged that its signatories were not heretical, even if they did not explicitly endorse the *manducatio oralis et impiorum* or share the same understanding of the properties of Christ's human body. The Concord is thus best understood as a lifting of the virtual sentence of excommunication that Luther had imposed when he declared that he could not have fellowship with Zwingli and his followers.

Bucer and the Baslers did all they could to promote the Wittenberg Concord up to the spring of 1538 when Zurich's staunch opposition ended further negotiations with Luther. This meant, of course, that Luther's "absolution" did not extend to Zurich. In both published works and letters from the early 1540s, Luther identified Zwingli with heresy, causing Bullinger and his colleagues to respond with their *True Confession*

¹⁴An account of the negotiations that resulted in the Wittenberg Concord, the text of the Concord, and Bucer's interpretation of it is in David F. Wright, ed., *Common Places of Martin Bucer*; Courtenay Library of Reformation Classics (Appleford, UK: Sutton Courtenay Press, 1972), 355–79; see also James M. Kittelson and Ken Schurb, "The Curious Histories of the Wittenberg Concord," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 50 (1986): 119–37.

of the *Ministers of the Church of Zurich* that was published in 1545. The following year, the Zurich church told its stipendiates in Strasbourg that they should not receive the Lord's Supper in that city, which was the exact counterpart of the breaking of fellowship that Luther had proclaimed with regard to Zurich.¹⁵

Myconius, however, did not see his adoption of Bucer's eucharistic theology or his church's endorsement of the Wittenberg Consensus as a rejection of Zurich. He remained on good terms with both Bucer and Bullinger, even as relations between the Zurich and Strasbourg churches cooled over the first half of the 1540s. By the end of the decade, he was supported by Simon Sulzer, who had been expelled from Bern in 1548 when that church decisively rejected the Buceran line it had followed over the previous decade and turned instead toward Zurich. Although condemned by his opponents as a Lutheran, Sulzer's understanding of the Lord's Supper was a faithful reproduction of that of his mentor, Martin Bucer.¹⁶ Elected to succeed Myconius as cathedral pastor in 1553, Sulzer would apply all his energy to hold Basel's church to the theology of the Wittenberg Concord for the next two decades.¹⁷

Sulzer's theological orientation made good sense for Basel in the 1550s. Its acceptance of the Wittenberg Concord enabled it to maintain good relations with neighboring churches in the empire and to participate actively in the Reformation of the *Markgrafschaft* of Baden from 1556. In view of the weak leadership structure of Basel's church, though, Sulzer could not have pursued a policy of *entente* with the German churches by himself, and, in fact throughout the 1550s, he was supported by his colleagues in the ministry. Only at the very end of the decade were there signs of discord among Basel's pastors.

During the 1560s that discord would increase, due to several factors. The most important of these was the new controversy that arose between Johannes Brenz and the Zurich theologians concerning the ubiquity of Christ's body.¹⁸ The Wittenberg Concord could maintain agreement between the two sides only as long as Christology was not a central issue in the eucharistic controversy. This was indeed the case in the 1550s, for

¹⁵ Kurt Jakob Rüetschi, "Bucer und Bullinger in ihren persönlichen Beziehungen," in *Martin Bucer and Sixteenth Century Europe: Actes du colloque de Strasbourg, 28-31 août 1991*, ed. Christian Krieger and Marc Lienhard (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 429–39.

¹⁶ Amy Nelson Burnett, "The Myth of the Swiss Lutherans: Martin Bucer and the Eucharistic Controversy in Bern," *Zwingliana* 32 (2005): 45–70.

¹⁷ For a more detailed account of what follows, Amy Nelson Burnett, "Bucers letzter Jünger: Simon Sulzer und Basels konfessionelle Identität zwischen 1550 und 1570," *Basler Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Altertumskunde* 107 (2007): 137–72.

¹⁸ The controversy is described in Hans Christian Brandy, *Die späte Christologie des Johannes Brenz*, Beiträge zur historischen Theologie, vol. 80 (Tübingen: Paul Siebeck, 1991), 13–70.

Basel's pastors do not seem to have followed the exchanges between Calvin and Westphal. Both parties were quite distant, whether conceptually or geographically, from Basel's concerns, but the conflict between Württemberg and Zurich was close at hand, and it clearly had repercussions in Basel.

Those most likely to follow the new christological debate in Basel were the students preparing for the ministry and new pastors who had just completed their theological training. From the scanty evidence concerning theological instruction at the university during this period, it seems that Sulzer tried to avoid extended consideration of the aspects of Christology on which Lutherans and Reformed disagreed and focused instead on the areas where both Protestant churches differed from Catholicism. This, however, did not prevent students from obtaining and reading the arguments of both Brenz and the Zürchers and drawing their own conclusions concerning Christology. Moreover, there were a few older pastors who had come to oppose Sulzer for a variety of reasons—some theological, some personal. They functioned as a pole around which younger men attracted to Zurich theology gathered. As a result, Basel's pastoral corps slowly divided into two factions, an older one that still supported Sulzer and a younger one that clearly endorsed the Reformed position.

Because of the Basel church's collegial leadership, Sulzer could not have imposed his will on the church as a whole. The dominance of the older faction through the 1560s was due to two factors. First, Sulzer was backed by other influential pastors; including two of the city's three other senior pastors and the newly created dean of the rural clergy. Sulzer and his brother-in-law Ulrich Koch also held the two posts as theology professors from the early 1560s. By acting together, these men were able to suppress open dissent and maintain Basel's policy of confessional openness.

Second, Sulzer's faction was supported by an influential circle within the city's intellectual and political elite. This party was centered in Kleinbasel, the part of the city on the right bank of the Rhine, and its members who held influential posts in both the university and the Senate were linked by ties of marriage and friendship. The extended Amerbach family played a key role: Bonifacius Amerbach, his son Basilius, and his son-in-law Hans Ulrich Iselin held the chairs in the law faculty. Their connections extended to the Senate through Bonifacius Amerbach's nephew, Franz Rechberger, who would become one of the four "heads," the collective leaders of the city, in 1566.¹⁹ Other important Senators included the printer Heinrich Petri; Petri's later brother-in-law and future *Oberstzunftmeister* Bernhard Brand; Sulzer's two brothers-in-law, Ulrich and Theodor Merian; and the city chancellor Heinrich Falkner. Many of these men had traveled extensively

¹⁹ The *Häupter* or heads were the *Bürgermeister* and *Oberstzunftmeister* of the current year's Senate along with the *Bürgermeister* and *Oberstzunftmeister* from the Senate of the previous year; Guggisberg, *Basel*, 6–7.

outside Switzerland, whether as students or on business, which gave them an international and cosmopolitan perspective that shaped their attitude toward the religious controversies of the 1560s. Although they regarded themselves as the heirs of Basel's reformers, they were unwilling to adopt a Reformed position that would damage their ties with other Protestant churches. Because the *Deputaten*, the three men in charge of the city's church and schools, came from this circle, they had a disproportionate influence on the city's ecclesiastical and educational policies. The Buceran faction within the church could therefore rely on the support of the Senate as it pursued its policy of confessional neutrality.

By the 1570s, though, this policy was becoming increasingly difficult to maintain. The 1560s had been a crucial decade for the growth and consolidation of the Reformed church, as testified by the closer ties between Geneva and Zurich, the conversion of the Palatinate, and the drafting of several influential Reformed confessions of faith. The outbreak of religious war in both France and the Netherlands caused the Reformed churches there to look to coreligionists beyond their own borders. The result was a stronger, more unified and self-conscious international Reformed identity. At the same time, the Lutheran churches in the empire were also moving toward a more precise definition of their beliefs. These efforts for Lutheran concord would eventually marginalize the Philippists who occupied a relatively open stance toward the Reformed, analogous to that of Basel toward the Lutherans.

The situation in Basel also changed fundamentally with the appointment of Johann Jakob Grynaeus to the theology faculty in 1575. Grynaeus' key role in Basel has long been recognized, but, like the theological direction of Basel as a whole, his own theological evolution has been misunderstood. His father, Thomas, was a close associate of Simon Sulzer who shared Sulzer's Buceran theology. Educated in Basel during the 1550s, Johann Jakob served as pastor in the Margraviate of Baden, just north of the Rhine from Basel, until he was sent to Tübingen to obtain his doctorate in theology. As might be expected, his study there turned him from a moderate Buceran to a staunch Lutheran and defender of Brenz's ubiquitarian Christology. Grynaeus returned to Baden in 1564, where he succeeded his father as superintendent of the district of Röteln. Encouraged by his brother-in-law, Thomas Erastus, he began to correspond with Zurich. By 1573 he had rejected not only Brenzian Christology but also the *manducatio oralis et impiorum*. Grynaeus's "conversion" was not a complete repudiation of his past but rather a return to the theological tradition dominant in Basel at mid-century—with one important difference. By endorsing the Reformed position concerning the location of Christ's human body, Grynaeus adopted an understanding of the Lord's Supper that was fully Reformed, rather than one that fell between the two poles of Lutheran and Reformed.

Grynaeus' conversion was made easier by the fact that in the intervening decades the ties between Zurich and Geneva had been strengthened both theologically and personally. In the 1540s, Bullinger had regarded Calvin with suspicion because of his association with Bucer, but the Consensus Tigurinus and the outbreak of the second eucharistic controversy had placed the two churches side by side and on the opposite side of the divide defined by Westphal and other Gnesio-Lutherans.²⁰ The correspondence between Bullinger and Theodore Beza demonstrates the growing sense of alliance between the two churches.²¹ Thus, while Grynaeus's eucharistic theology brought him closer to Geneva than to Zurich, it was clearly Reformed, in contrast to Bucer's position in the 1540s.

Most importantly, within Basel, time tipped the balance as the older generation of pastors died or was weakened by age and was replaced by a younger, more clearly Reformed generation. The consolidation of both the Lutheran and Reformed churches around doctrinal positions that were mutually exclusive left no room in the middle for Sulzer and the Basel church. Just as Lutheran confessionalization in the Zwinglian cities of south Germany was driven both by political circumstances after 1555 and by an increasingly well-educated and self-consciously Lutheran clergy, so Basel's eventual adoption of a clearly Reformed identity was determined by its membership in the Swiss Confederation and the identification of its younger clergy with Zurich and Geneva.²² During his first decade in Basel, Grynaeus educated a cohort of young pastors who were clearly Reformed in their commitments, and these young men were appointed to parish positions throughout the first half of the 1580s. Grynaeus certainly resented Sulzer's opposition, which was one of the reasons for his move to Heidelberg in 1584, but, by the early 1580s, Sulzer had lost too many supporters due to age and ill health to be able to lead the church effectively. He could postpone but not prevent the inevitable, and after his death in 1585 and Grynaeus's election as his successor, Basel's church moved very quickly and relatively easily to the Reformed fold.

²⁰ Alasdair I. C. Heron, "Calvin and Bullinger 1536–1549," in *Profile des reformierten Protestantismus aus vier Jahrhunderten: Vorträge der ersten Emdener Tagung zur Geschichte des reformierten Protestantismus*, Emdener Beiträge zum reformierten Protestantismus, vol. 1, ed. Matthias Freudenberg (Wuppertal: Foedus, 1999), 49–69.

²¹ Emidio Campi, "Beza und Bullinger im Lichte ihrer Korrespondenz," in *Théodore de Bèze (1519–1605): Actes du Colloque de Genève (septembre 2005)*, ed. Irena Backus (Geneva: Droz, 2007), 131–44.

²² Peer Frieß describes the significant role played by political forces in the development of a Lutheran confessional identity in the south German cities that had been Zwinglian in the early Reformation, "Lutherische Konfessionalisierung in den Reichstädten Oberschwabens," in *Konfessionalisierung und Region*, ed. Peer Frieß and Rolf Kießling (Constance: Universitätsverlag Konstanz, 1999), 71–97.

This brief summary of Basel's confessional history has several implications for interpreting the course of the Reformation not just in Basel but in the Swiss Confederation more generally. First, it highlights the importance of knowing the local circumstances for correctly interpreting long-term developments. Basel's independent course was shaped by its political, cultural, and intellectual situation: its longstanding ties with the empire; its network of economic interests outside of the Swiss Confederation, especially a printing industry whose products were obtained from and sold throughout Europe; as well as the existence of a university with its own longstanding traditions. It is certainly not a new insight to point to the importance of nontheological factors in the development of the Reformation, but the case of Basel illustrates the importance of identifying what those factors were in each of the places where the Reformation became established in the Swiss Confederation.

Second, one of the theological factors that has until now been almost entirely neglected in the study of the Swiss Reformation is the influence of Martin Bucer. His supporters, both in Bern in the 1540s and in Basel in the 1550s and 1560s, were labeled "Lutherans" already in the sixteenth century. As a consequence, the divisions within the early Reformed tradition have been obscured and the dominance of Zurich overemphasized. The disagreements among the Swiss Reformed churches were certainly mild in comparison to the divisions among the Lutherans in the second half of the sixteenth century. There are interesting parallels, however, between the two confessions as they each faced the problem of preserving the legacy of the first generation of reformers. These parallels merit further study.

Third, the case of Basel reveals the importance of looking not only at the formulation but also the transmission and reception of Reformed theology. Unlike either Zurich or Geneva, throughout most of the sixteenth century, the leaders of Basel's church were not creative theologians who contributed to the formation of Reformed doctrine. Instead, they were teachers who chose from among the competing positions emanating from Zurich, Strasbourg, and eventually Geneva.²³ The same could be said about the pastors in the other Reformed areas of the Swiss Confederation. While theologians have rightly focused on the key figures in the development of Reformed theology, historians are also interested in their followers: the pastors and teachers who staffed the churches and schools outside the centers of Zurich and Geneva. We need to ask where these men studied and what they learned. This is all the more important because the early Reformed tradition was by no means unanimous. There were and continued to be disagreements not only over the precise definition of the Lord's Supper but also concerning the doctrine of predestination and the relationship between church and state (to mention only the most prominent

²³ Burnett, *Teaching the Reformation*, 127–54.

issues). We must look not only at the biographies of pastors, teachers, and students, but also at the academic curricula and institutional structures of each church in order to understand how, why, and when certain positions and practices came to be accepted as normative within the Reformed tradition.

This brings me to my final point. The Swiss Reformation did not end with the deaths of Zwingli and Oecolampadius, its two most important early leaders, or with the political settlement following the defeat at Kappel. It was an ongoing development, tied to the spread and consolidation of Reformed theology and to the formation of new practices and ecclesiastical structures over the course of the sixteenth century. Although we can certainly discern general patterns and tendencies, the precise course that it would take was influenced by both local factors and developments on the international stage. Rather than looking at Zurich as normative and seeing other cities as deviating from that pattern, then, it is time to acknowledge the rich variety within the Swiss Reformation. As with everything else in Switzerland, the course of the Reformation differed from canton to canton.