

end to indulgences, to the celibacy of the clergy and to convents and monasteries. He, too, favoured the use of the language of the people in preaching.⁷ Zwingli differed from Luther in emphasis by stressing not only salvation by faith but also a life of good works. Like Luther he saw the whole of society within given geographic boundaries as constituting a Christian body. This meant that the church in Zürich consisted of all the citizens of Zürich. Unity of faith was essential to Zwingli's interpretation of the church. It was perfectly proper for the priest of the Grossmünster and the Council of Zürich to work hand in hand in building the kingdom of God.⁸

Among Zwingli's disciples were several young men who were to play leading roles in the Anabaptist movement. One was Conrad Grebel, who had been a student at the universities of Paris, Basel and Vienna. Zwingli and Grebel were attracted to each other. Both had been exposed to the breath of fresh air in religious thought; both were genuinely interested in biblical Christianity; both had high ideals regarding the meaning of Christian discipleship. But ultimately Grebel and other radicals could not become part of Zwingli's experiment in Zürich because of fundamental differences in views on the nature of the church. Authority lay in the Scriptures alone, they said, and the Council of Zürich could not make decisions in theological matters. The church was constituted of believers who voluntarily chose to become disciples of Christ, they declared, and the city or state could not fulfill the requirements of the church's calling.⁹

It was for these reasons that infant baptism became the focal point of the dispute between Zwingli and Grebel. The baptism of all infants into the church was essential to the nature of Zwingli's city of God. The baptism of adults, who freely and voluntarily submitted to Christian discipleship, was essential to the rebirth of the New Testament church as Grebel understood that church.¹⁰ Grebel, Felix Manz, Georg Blaurock (also called Georg vom Haus Jakob), and others of this persuasion were calling for the separation of church and state, an idea conceived by neither Luther nor Zwingli. Grebel also advocated absolute Christian non-resistance.¹¹

The Council of Zürich evidently realized the implications of this stand. The demand was not for a mere institutional change such as a transference of authority from Rome to Zürich. The demand was not for certain further reforms that Zwingli was opposing. If it had been that, negotiation might have been possible. These reformers were hewing at the pillars of the existing religious, social and political order.¹²

The Council of Zürich acted. On January 17, 1525, a public debate was held to silence the radicals. Conrad Grebel and Felix Manz, another young erstwhile follower of Zwingli, represented the dissenting groups at this encounter with Zwingli and the Council.¹³ Shortly thereafter the Council ordered that all children be baptized within eight days,

Arent and Ursula van Essen, Maastricht, Netherlands were executed for their faith during the persecutions of the sixteenth century. Arent was an elder and school teacher. The illustration depicts the tortures of Ursula.

