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Brothers and Neighbors: The Language of Community in Zwingli's Preaching

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In the early sixteenth century, the central themes of the reform were spread not through the printed word alone, but through the personal presence of dozens of preachers throughout the Germanies and Switzerland – through the face-to-face contact of reformers with local communities.¹ These preachers shared certain key ideas – the exclusive authority of Scripture, the primacy of faith, the unconditionality of grace – but each also gave to the message of reform a more personal and distinctive stamp. Each preached that message in language which was accessible, immediate, and meaningful within local contexts.

For these reformers, Scripture was the source not only for their theology, but also for a new program of Christianity lived, of Christian practice. In the text of Matthew 22:39, “You should love your neighbor as yourself”, many found the new law of Christ, which could serve as the basis for a renewed Christian community. Throughout southwest Germany and Switzerland, Martin Bucer in Strasbourg, Eberlin von Gunzburg in Augsburg, Huldrych Zwingli in Zurich, and Oecolampad in Basel were preaching that love of neighbor, Christian brotherly love, would make possible the reshaping of all forms of human association in accordance with divine law.²

¹ On the impact of preaching, see for example, *Robert Scribner, Practice and Principle in the German Towns: preachers and people*, in: *Reformation Principle and Practice: Essays in Honor of A.G. Dickens*, ed. P.N. Brooks, London 1980, 95–117.

² See, for example, *Bucer, Das ym selbs niemant sonder andern leben soll* (Strassburg, 1523); *Eberlin, Ein schöner Spiegel eins Christlichen lebens* (1524); *Oecolampad, Zwen schon Sermon: inhaltende das man von wegen des herren Nachtmals Bruderliche liebe nitt soll zertrennen* (o.O., o.J.).

A notion of brotherly love has been recognized by historians as a central theme in Reformation preaching. *Bernd Moeller* found in it the ancient ideal of German *communitas* – medieval corporatism – which fused the corporation of the town with the corpus of Christian believers.³ More recently, *Peter Blickle* has argued that the south German reformers preached a notion of brotherly love that was appropriated by the peasants and artisans as the model for their egalitarian community in the revolution of 1525 – a model that those preachers then rejected in horror.⁴ He condemns the reformers, and in particular Zwingli, for failing to see or pursue the implications of their use of those terms that evoked powerful popular ideals.

Yet the language of brotherly love had many connotations in the early sixteenth century. An ideal of brotherhood – Christian brotherhood – was the defining principle in a number of late medieval forms of association: the monastery, the guild, the confraternity – forms of association which were not identical in structure, membership, or purposes.⁵ The language of brotherly love provided patterns for human relations based on an ancient and primary familial bond – the most egalitarian of familial bonds – patterns that allowed for certain kinds of differences and not others.⁶ By the 1520's, the language of brotherly love also provided the terms and the values for widespread attacks on tithes and alms, or rather on their abuse, on the tyranny of the priests, and on the hierarchy of papal and imperial authority.⁷

³ See especially *Bernd Moeller*, *Imperial Cities and the Reformation*, in: *Imperial Cities and the Reformation*, Philadelphia 1972, 41–115.

⁴ *Blickle*, originally made this argument in: *Die Revolution von 1525*, Munich/Vienna 1977; translated Brady & Midelfort, Baltimore 1981, and has continued it in: *Gemeinde-Reformation. Die Menschen des 16. Jahrhunderts auf dem Weg zum Heil*, Munich 1985.

⁵ On the notions of brotherhood in medieval associations, see *Pierre Michaud-Quantin*, *Universitas*, Paris 1970; on guilds, *Antony Black*, *Guilds and Civil Society in European Political Thought from the Twelfth Century to the Present*, London 1984; *Otto Gerhard Oexle*, *Die mittelalterlichen Gilden: Ihre Selbstdeutung und ihr Beitrag zur Formung sozialer Strukturen*, in: *Soziale Ordnungen im Selbstverständnis des Mittelalters*, vol. 12, 1, ed. Albert Zimmermann, Berlin 1979, 203–226; on confraternities, see esp. *Pierre Duparc*, *Confraternities of the Holy Spirit and Village Communities in the Middle Ages*, in: *Lordship and Community in Medieval Europe*, ed. Frederic Cheyette, Huntington, NY 1975, 341–56; most recently, *Ronald Weissman*, *Ritual Brotherhood in Renaissance Florence*, New York 1985.

⁶ *Michael Clanchy* has delineated the use of the language of brotherly love in late medieval legal transactions and its function in reaffirming ties of community as well as financial obligations, “Law and Love in the Middle Ages”, in: *Disputes and Settlements, Law and Human Relations in the West*, ed. John Bossy, Cambridge 1983, 47–67.

⁷ Although the Twelve Articles only refer to brotherly love once, many of the more popular pamphlets place a notion of brotherly love at the center of their call for reform. See, for example, *Johannes Boschenstein*, *Ain Christlicher Vnderricht der Bruederlichen lieb* (1524); *Otto Brunfels*, *Von dem Pfaffen Zehenden* (o. o. o. J.); *Hans Ritter*,

The language of brotherly love was employed by a number of reformers who, in the end, articulated a range of visions of the Christian reformed community, from the egalitarian artisanal vision of Balthasar Stanberger or the Anabaptists, through Bucer and Zwingli's civic Christian communities, to Luther's endorsement of the hierarchical Saxon arrangement of princes and magnates. In one way, this language can be said to represent the juncture from which the reformers diverged as they pursued differing visions of Christian society. It is also a bridge, linking the reformers' formal theology with more broadly based notions of community, with certain ideals of behavior for collective life.

In this essay, I would like to explore some of the sources for Zwingli's language of brotherly love, how he drew upon them and how he transformed them. Zwingli is a good place to start in an exploration of the language of brotherly love because it was his vision of a Christian community – more than Luther's – that was reflected in the preaching of Bucer in Strasbourg, Eberlin in Augsburg, Oecolampad in Basel, as well as in the pamphlets of popular propagandists such as Utz Eckstein, Balthasar Stanberger, and Johannes Boschenstein.⁸ Like these other reformers, Zwingli was directly engaged with a civic community in reforming the Christian community.⁹ In looking at Zwingli's use of the language of brotherly love we may begin to understand the relationship between reformation preaching and popular notions of community.

Zwingli employed the language of an ancient text, Matthew 22:39 – to love one's neighbor as oneself – language that had been applied over time to a wide range of situations. This particular text provided not only an ideal of social relations, but also a language to describe and give value to those relations. Its message was articulated in terms – words – that were multivalent: love, neighbor, self. What did it mean to love one's self in sixteenth century Zurich? What did "neighbor" signify in Zurich? Was it a compelling bond for Zwingli?

I would like to suggest another explanation for the disjuncture between Zwingli's use of the language of brotherly love and, on the one hand, that of the peasants of 1525, and, on the other, that of Luther. This explanation can be no more than tentative, a first effort to enter into particularly multivalent and sig-

Welcher gern wissen will//von armutz nott und ungefell (1525); *Balthasar Stanberger*, *Ein Dialogus... zwischen einem Prior/Leyenbruder un Bettler* (o. O. o. J.). The scholarship on these attacks is extensive. On the connection between notions of community and attacks on the church's economic exactions, in addition to Blickle, see especially, *Henry J. Cohn*, *Anticlericalism in the German Peasants' War 1525*, in: *Past and Present* 83 (1979), 3–31. For Zurich, still the most extensive treatment is *Walter Claassen*, *Schweizer Bauernpolitik im Zeitalter Zwinglis* (Sozialgeschichtliche Forschungen 4), Berlin 1899.

⁸ In addition to Boschenstein and Stanberger, given above, see *Eckstein*, *Dialogus* (Zürich, 1525) and *Klag des Gloubens* (Zürich, ?1525).

⁹ See, especially, *Hans-Christoph Rublack*, *Zwingli und Zürich*, in: *Zwingliana* 16 (1985/1), 393–426.

nificant vocabulary, to explore that language in the preaching and writing of Zwingli. I would like to suggest that Zwingli's use of the language of brotherly love did not denote the same values and associations as Luther preached or as the artisans and peasants of 1525 embraced. Zwingli's use was circumscribed by the series of contexts in which he placed that language: immediate issues and experiences within collective life in Zurich; the contours of his theology; and issues under debate in many south German towns about the nature and form of the Christian community.

Let us first turn to the collective life of Zurich. How would brotherly love be defined within the town of Zurich? The medieval forms of association that employed that language – monasteries, confraternities, and guilds – were all present in the life of the town.¹⁰ That Zwingli, Leo Jud, and other reformers in Zurich did not address their efforts to the monastic houses in Zurich suggests how very much the influence of the Dominican, Franciscan, and Augustinian houses had waned.¹¹ All were dissolved in the years 1523–24.¹² Confraternities, of which there were 13 when they were dissolved in 1525,¹³ were more populated, but they, too, were relatively silent in the life of the town.¹⁴

Guilds, on the other hand, were the dominant form of association within Zurich collective life.¹⁵ Not only did they determine economic policy and practice, from fishing rights to the kinds of cloth the town would produce to the foreign markets where the town could trade.¹⁶ For the laity they also were the sole access to political life: membership in a guild was a prerequisite to participation in the town council.¹⁷ It was through the guilds that the laity entered into the religious life of the town: not only did guilds sponsor processions and provide endowments for the construction and maintenance of altars, stained glass windows and belltowers,¹⁸ but all the confraternities in Zurich were linked to the

¹⁰ *Rudolf Pfister*, *Kirchengeschichte der Schweiz*, vol. I, Zürich 1964, beginning with Section II.

¹¹ The populations of all religious houses had declined substantially by 1520.

¹² *Emil Egli*, *Actensammlung zur Geschichte der Zürcher Reformation in den Jahren 1519–1533*, Zürich 1879; *Nieuwkoop* 1973, (hereafter AZürcherRef, nos. 426, 595, and 598–99. See also, *Paul Schweizer*, «Die Behandlung der zürcherischen Klostersgüter in der Reformationszeit», in: *Theologische Zeitschrift aus der Schweiz*, Zürich, 1885.

¹³ AZürcherRef no. 620.

¹⁴ With the exception of the actual dissolution of the confraternities, *Egli's* collection contains no references to them, and I have not yet found record of their activities in the Staatsarchiv.

¹⁵ For the description of the guilds that follows, see *Hans Morf*, *Zunftverfassung und Obrigkeit in Zürich von Waldmann bis Zwingli*, Zürich 1969; and *Walter Jacob*, *Politische Führungsschicht und Reformation*, Zürich 1970, 1–38.

¹⁶ Staatsarchiv Zürich [hereafter StAZ], A 73: Zunftwesen.

¹⁷ *Morf* (Anm. 15).

¹⁸ StAZ, A 73, 1–2: Zunftwesen; A 77: Verschiedene Handwerke.

guilds.¹⁹ And finally, guild membership provided a framework for the social stratification of the town: membership in a powerful guild such as the Saffran or Weggen brought prestige and status to most, if not all members, while only the most influential member of the lesser guilds had access to decision-making in the town.²⁰

It is important to keep this last role of the guilds in mind when discussing notions of brotherly love. The guilds in Zurich stratified: both their membership into ranks of masters, journeymen, wage laborers, and widows;²¹ and their towns, according to the relative status and influence of different guilds.²² The language of brotherly love did not reflect egalitarian relations within the guilds.²³ Rather, as *Antony Black* has suggested, the language served to articulate a brotherhood in which there were no fathers or mothers, but in which brothers were not equal – relations were not hierarchical, nor egalitarian, but differentiated in station and influence. This language also reflected a brotherhood in which the whole counted for more than the individual parts.²⁴ The language of brotherhood served to reinforce ties among the members, to reinforce oaths of loyalty – and to suggest a model of association which contrasted with the patriarchal papal and imperial hierarchies. The guilds in Zurich offered a form of association in which access to positions of importance was not closed, but followed a carefully designated and controlled path, and in which the collectivity could act effectively within the political and economic life of the town, even if single members could not.²⁵

Zurich in the 1520's was a town defined by guilds. The last two active patrician families were being forced to act through the patrician Constaffler guild, its own power curtailed in the preceding 50 years. To the people of southwestern Germany, the town of Zurich represented an image of fraternity:²⁶ guilds, not

¹⁹ AZürcherRef no. 620; *Pfister* (Anm. 15), 358 ff.

²⁰ Both *Jacob* and *Morf* AZürcherRef explore the influence of different guilds. On the career of one members of a less powerful guild, see *Heinzpeter Stucki*, *Bürgermeister Hans Rudolf Lavater 1492–1557*, Zürich 1973 (*Zürcher Beiträge zur Reformationszeit*, 3).

²¹ On the intervention of the wool weavers' guild in the dispensation of one of its member's widow's inheritance, see StAZ, A 77, 12, unnumbered, apparently duplicated from the Ratsbuch of 1466.

²² This is especially clear in *Jacob's* (Anm. 15) prosopography of town council members, 104 ff.

²³ The guild charters of the fourteenth century employ the term, "Gesellen", to describe their associations (StAZ, A 73, various). In 1480, however, when the Shoemakers' guild excluded a member, they referred to him as "bruder" (StAZ, A 73, 2: no. 3, dated 1480).

²⁴ See especially *Black*, Chapter 2 (Anm. 5).

²⁵ This is one of *Morf's* (Anm. 15) major arguments.

²⁶ *Thomas A. Brady, Jr.*, *Turning Swiss: Cities and Empire, 1450–1550*, Cambridge, 1985.

private wealth or noble birth, formed the basis for political, economic, and social influence.

In 1524, Zwingli drew upon the language of brotherly love when he formulated his response to the peasants and artisans who were refusing to pay the tithe, who were increasingly sympathetic to the nascent Anabaptist or radical party, and who addressed one another as “brother in Christ.”²⁷ This work, *Wer Ursach gebe zu Aufruhr* (Who is the Source of Sedition), represents one of Zwingli’s more extensive and complex efforts to articulate the nature of the Christian community on earth. Zwingli grounded his response in Matthew 22:39:

Mark briefly therefore: God commands: you should love your neighbor as yourself. If you fulfill that, then you do not need many of God’s commandments, namely: You should not kill, not steal, not commit adultery, lie. For whoever loves his neighbor as himself, does not lie to him; for he will also not suffer that one lies to him. Therefore we would not need the sum of all commandments Gal. 5[:14]. We would not need the commandment in Romans 13[:7]: “You should give to all men, what you owe them”, if each man were to love his neighbor as himself.²⁸

Zwingli employed the terms the radicals used to describe themselves.²⁹ Yet he linked those terms not with the Anabaptist egalitarian vision of society, not with any reshaping of economic or social relations,³⁰ but with a notion of debt.

²⁷ Much has been written on Zwingli’s troubled relation with the Anabaptists. See, for example, *Harold S. Bender*, *Conrad Grebel, 1498–1526, The Founder of the Swiss Brethren*, Sometimes called Anabaptists, Goshen 1950; *Fritz Blanke*, *Brüder in Christo*, *Die Geschichte der ältesten Täufergemeinde (Zollikon 1525)*, Zürich 1955; *John H. Yoder*, *The Turning Point in the Zwinglian Reformation*, in: *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 32 (1958), 128–40; as well as the more general *Claus-Peter Clasen*, *Anabaptism: A Social History, 1525–1618*, Ithaca 1972, and *James M. Stayer*, *Anabaptism and the Sword*, Lawrence, Kansas 1976 (1972).

²⁸ «Merck kurtz also: Gott heysst: du solt den nächsten also lieb haben als dich selbs. Wenn du das erfüllst, so darffst du ouch viler gotzgebotten nüt, nämlich: Du solt nit töden, nit stälen, eebrechen, liegen. Dann welcher den nächsten als lieb halt als dich selbs, der lügt imm nit; denn er wil ouch nit lyden, das man imm liege. Also dörfind wir viler gotzgebotten nit, wenn wir die summ aller gebotten Galt. 5 hieltind. Wir dörfindind das gebottes Ro. 13: «Ir söllend allen menschen geben, das ir inen schuldig sind» nit, wenn yeder den nächsten als lieb hielte als sich selbs.» *Welche Ursach gebind ze ufruren*, originally published by Christoph Froschauer in Zurich, in 1524, reprinted under the title of «*Wer Ursach gebe zu Aufruhr usw.*», in *Corpus Reformatorium*, (hereafter CR), vol. 90: *Zwinglis Sämtliche Werke*, (hereafter Z), vol. III, 401–402.

²⁹ This was not the first time that Zwingli used this language, nor the only context. *Heiko A. Oberman* notes the function and significance of the identification, “Bruder in Christo”, in the “Synode” of January, 1523, in: *Werden und Wertung*, Tübingen 1979, 295–303; as does *Hans-Christoph Rublack* (Anm. 9), 397 ff.

³⁰ On Anabaptist positions, see, in addition to Clasen and Stayer, *Kenneth Davis*, *Anabaptism and Asceticism*, Scottdale 1974; and *Walter Klaassen*, *Michael Gaismair, Revolutionary and Reformer*, Leiden 1978.

Zwingli directly connected brotherly love with the text of Romans 13, stating that love of neighbor impels the payment of debt. On one level, he was invoking the mutual obligation that the guilds demanded of their members.³¹ Obligations for Zwingli, and for the guilds, were not only of an intangible nature, but also of a concrete, material nature. He reminded his audience: as a member of a brotherhood, one has debts – financial and material responsibilities – which one willingly acknowledges and pays.

Zwingli's use of Romans 13:7 also draws upon a deeper level of meaning. The language of Romans 13:7 had a different connotation in the sixteenth century, which did not know the notion of private property as we do today: property was not held absolutely, but conditionally, through custom, through privilege, through law, through marriage and kinship, through memory. Zwingli's position on property ownership followed traditional lines: property was ordained by God and had been distributed originally according to divine will.³² Man has received his property from God; he is first God's debtor. Thus, Zwingli argued, those who refuse to pay tithes, who refuse to give to all men what they owe them, have assumed that their possession of goods is absolute, that is, that they have the full right to determine the use of their goods or wealth. Their decisions about the use of their property are controlled by their own selfish concerns.³³ If each man were to love his neighbor as much as himself, this love would be a counterforce to his self-interest, weakening its hold. A man would then be better able to recognize that his neighbor's need constituted a fair and moral demand on his goods.³⁴ In loving his neighbor, his brother, a man would be able to recognize that his property was subject to demands higher than his own, to uses determined by his community and God.

Zwingli argued in this text that the only Christian motivation in questions of temporal goods is fraternal love. Love of neighbor – the law of Matthew 22:39 – should be the standard for each Christian in determining the use of his wealth. For Zwingli, economic transactions were symbolic of deeper motives: while wealth itself is neither good nor evil, its use is an external sign of a man's inner nature. To refuse to pay one's communal debts was to deny one's brotherhood with one's neighbor, and that, for Zwingli, was to express that attitude most basely human and most removed from God.

³¹ *Black* (Anm. 5); *StAZ*, A 73, various: Guild Charters.

³² *Leonhard von Muralt*, Zwingli als Sozialpolitiker, in: *Zwingliana* 5 (1931), 283–84. See also, *Gottfried W. Locher*, *Der Eigentumsbegriff als Problem evangelischer Theologie*, Zürich and Stuttgart 1962, 29–35. On the economic theories delineated by scholars of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, especially with regard to the use of wealth, see *Oberman* (Anm. 29), Chapter 8.

³³ *Wer Ursach gebe zu Aufruhr* (Anm. 28), 402 ff.

³⁴ *Paul Wernle*, *Der evangelische Glaube nach den Hauptschriften der Reformatoren*, vol. 2: Zwingli, Tübingen 1919, 113.

It is at this point that Zwingli's use of the language of brotherly love leads us into the heart of his theology.³⁵ For Zwingli, the vision of community was inseparable from man's relationship to God. Only in Zwingli's definitions of man's nature and of God's grace – of the relationship of God to man – shall we discover the anchoring of his language of brotherly love. Others have explored Zwingli's theology with care and precision; I wish here only to touch on its relationship to Zwingli's notion of brotherly love.

As Zwingli was to argue in his major theological treatise, *Concerning True and False Religion*, to value oneself over one's neighbor, to allow one's own interests to overrule communal obligations, was the expression of fallen human nature:

By nature, therefore, man is a lover of self, not by that nature, with which he had been furnished and provided by God, but by that fate, which God had given him, not content with his own house, he desired to become knowledgeable in good and evil, indeed to become equal with God. Since therefore man becomes accused of self-love, and condemned by this crime, it is manifest, that the death of sin, because it pertains to the mind, is that, by which man loves himself continuously, pleases himself, trusts in himself, bears all things received to himself, thinks to see what is straight, what is crooked; and what he himself approves he believes ought to be approved by all, even his creator.³⁶

Zwingli's definition of man centers on the psychological: man is the creature whose nature is self-love. And it is that part of human nature that led to man's fall from grace. Love of self is the essence of sin:

This, then, is the bait which [Adam] longed for, and by which he was captured: to be God, to know himself what is good, what is evil. Yet, where else could this appetite have originated, than love of self? For we all prefer that it be better for ourselves than for others: love of self, therefore, was the cause, why Adam acquiesced to the evil counsel of his wife.³⁷

³⁵ For more thorough and detailed treatments of Zwingli's theology, see *W. P. Stephens, The Theology of Huldrych Zwingli*, Oxford 1986; *Gottfried W. Lober, Huldrych Zwingli in neuer Sicht*, Zürich 1969.

³⁶ "Natura ergo est homo sui amans, non ea natura, qua institutus fuerat praeditusque a deo, sed qua sorte, quam deus dederat, non contentus domi suae voluit boni malique peritus, imo deo aequalis fieri. Amoris ergo suiipsius cum sit reus factus homo, eiusque criminis damnatus, manifestum fit, quod peccati mors, quod ad ingenium adtinet, ea sit, qua se homo perpetuo amat, sibi placet, se fident, sibi omnia fert accepta, videre putat, quid rectum, quid curvum sit; ac quod ipsi probatur, omnibus probari debere pinatur, etiam creatori suo." *De vera et falsa religione commentarius*, reprinted in *Z III (CR 90)*, 657.

³⁷ "Haec est ergo esca, quam adpetivit, quaque captus est: deum esse, ipsummet scire, quid bonum, quid malum. Veruntamen hic adpetitus unde originem potuit, quam ex amore sui? Omnes enim nobis malumus bene esse quam aliis: philautia ergo, id est: amor sui, causa fuit, cur malesuadae obtemperaret uxori Adam" (*Anm.* 36).

Love of self, therefore, is the cause of man's fall; it is the original sin. And in Zwingli's own society, the expression of self-love, or self-interest [eigennutz], was the manifestation of man's fallen nature.

Zwingli's notion of self-love is relatively simple: it is the wish for "things to be better for ourselves than for others"; the placing of oneself above others; the illusion of one's own sufficiency; and the focus on self to the exclusion of God and other. For Zwingli, man's essential flaw consisted of that psychological stance most opposed to all ties of community.³⁸ Human sin lay in the denial of ties not only to God, but to one's neighbor. The origin of sin lay in the lack of brotherly love.

Unrestrained, this self-love would bring plunder, rape, murder, patricide, chaos – destroying all form of social life. To control this self-love, Zwingli argued, the law was necessary, by which, however, he did not mean civic laws or customary laws, but "the eternal will of God."³⁹ For Zwingli, that law was found in Matthew 22:39 and in Matthew 7:12: "All things, therefore, you wish men to do to you, you should do to them." He found it again in Romans 13:9, where Paul said that all laws were gathered in one law: love your neighbor as yourself.⁴⁰ All other laws that did not fall under this one had been made obsolete by Christ: "For 'Christ is the end of the law', Romans 10[:4]." Christ and the new covenant brought a new order in the relationship between man and God, the order of love, according to Zwingli, and "the end of the law is love' 1 Timothy 1[:5]."⁴¹ The love of God that had been made manifest in Christ brought to an end the rule of law that had existed in the Old Testament, and replaced it with a solitary new law. That law was no more and no less than "love your neighbor as yourself." Thus, for Zwingli, love of neighbor constituted the fundamental act of the pious Christian: if one wishes to live in accordance with the law of God, one must love one's neighbor as oneself.⁴² Thus the manifestation of piety within a Christian community is the presence of brotherly love.

Central elements of Zwingli's theology are framed in the language of brotherly love. His definitions of human nature and of human sin – self-love – reflect the preeminent place that he gives Matthew 22:39 in his understanding of man's relationship to God. At the core of his theology is the opposition be-

³⁸ *Alfred Farner, Die Lehre von Kirche und Staat bei Zwingli, Tübingen 1930, 33.*

³⁹ "Lex nihil aliud est, quam aeterna dei voluntas": *De vera et falsa religione, 707 (Anm. 36).*

⁴⁰ *Ibid. 707–708.*

⁴¹ "Finis enim legis Christus' Rom. 10 [:4] et 'finis legis charitas'; 1 Tim. 1 [:5]." *Ibid. 708.*

⁴² "Fragt man nach dem Inhalt der göttlichen Gerechtigkeit als Forderung an den Einzelnen wie an die gesellschaftliche Welt, so kann es letztlich nur eine Antwort geben, nämlich, 'Liebe'." *Arthur Rich, Zwingli als sozialpolitischer Denker, Zwingliana 13 (1969/1), 73.*

tween two kinds of love: love of self, [or *philautia*], and love of other, both neighbor and God.

In some ways the tension Zwingli posed between love of self and love of neighbor mirrors that posed by the guilds, the monasteries, and the confraternities: the demands of community, of multiple others, upon the self. Each of these medieval forms of association sought to enforce the preeminence of others – “neighbors” – over the demands of the individual. They sought to create a relationship between the self and others in which the self was subjugated, through external constraints, to the whole, and, to some extent, trained to willingly, that is, internally, acquiesce to the needs of others. Each represents in some way the effort to bend the single will to the bonds of community.

These were also forms of association of unequal partners. The guilds especially did not seek to restructure patterns of wealth or status. Here, too, Zwingli’s vision of brotherhood reflected the guilds: in the new Christian brotherhood property was not to be redistributed, political and social arrangements were not to be dismantled.⁴³ One was bound to a new brotherhood in which relations of influence and wealth were maintained, and in which one’s own wishes were subsumed under the whole community’s. Members were, moreover, not free to form new associations, sects, which more closely matched their own individual interests and needs.

What bound one to that brotherhood? If we recall Zwingli’s definition of human nature, as self-loving, it becomes clear that we do not yet have all the pieces: how does love of neighbor become possible for man, if, by his very nature, man loves only himself? For Zwingli, man, by his nature, could not love his neighbor, or indeed, God. God was the sole agent. It is through God alone that man becomes able to love an other:

Thus are we made free [of the old law]: He who loves, does all things freely, even the most difficult. God therefore has sent into our hearts the fire, by which he lights love of him in place of love of ourselves; and he desires this fire to burn, Luke 12[:49].⁴⁴

For Zwingli, the sign of grace for each Christian is the experience of God’s love; the experience of that fire is divine love made present in the life of a Christian. It is the love of God lived. And the sign of that experience is Christian brotherly love. Brotherly love is the temporal, human manifestation of that experience of God’s love – and the source of brotherly love is divine love.

In the Latin text of *On True and False Religion*, Zwingli used the word *cari-*

⁴³ Although Zwingli argued this in *Wer Ursach zu Aufruhr gebe*, his fullest expression of this position can be found in *Von göttlicher und menschlicher Gerechtigkeit* (reprinted in ZII (CR 89), 458–525).

⁴⁴ “Sic sumus liberati: Qui amat, libere omnia facit, etiam gravissima. Immisit ergo deus ignem in corda nostra, quo amorem sui pro amore nostri accenderet; et hunc ignem vult ardere, Luc. 12 [:49].”: *De vera et falsa religione* 710 (Anm. 36).

tas to describe the cycle of love between God and man, recalling Augustine's formulation of *caritas* from *agape* and *eros*.⁴⁵ Although his formulation was simpler than Augustine's – love of self opposed love of God and neighbor – he returned to the elements originally encompassed by the terms Augustine had used: God's love, man's love of God, and love of neighbor. Zwingli returned to Augustine, also, in placing God's love, the divine "fire", at the center of his idea of *caritas* – the fire of God's love is the source for all those forms of human love which have as their object God or another.

Thus, for Zwingli, true Christian brotherly love became the sign of God's presence in a Christian. More, collectively expressed, Christian brotherly love signified the presence of God in the whole community. Each individual might effect changes in his or her immediate relations, but collectively, the community could reshape the whole society according to brotherly love:

Briefly: where Christian hearts and the fear of God are, there will one perform all things honorably, piously, and correctly: for love can do all things and fails no one; for God is love. Where love is, there is God. Where God is, there one may not fail. What is begun with God no one may break. What is erected against him must break.⁴⁶

Many scholars have recognized a connection between Zwingli's theology and his vision of a Christian community. *Siegfried Rother* has argued that the two are inseparable: what distinguishes Zwingli's thought from Luther's is his conviction that the commandment to love God and one's neighbor is not only the basis of Christian social ethics, but the origin for any consideration of the nature of man and his relationship to God.⁴⁷ That commandment lies at the very core of Zwingli's theology. Zwingli's theology is defined in terms of love, that Christian ideal which engages a man with his neighbor: the expression of piety for a Christian, according to Zwingli, is the engagement in the human community.

The communal and the individual, the external and the internal, are linked in each pious Christian through brotherly love, according to Zwingli's theology.

⁴⁵ On the place of *caritas* in Augustine's thought, see *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, 527ff., and *Anders Nygren, Agape and Eros*, trans., Philip S. Watson, Chicago 1982, esp. 449–558. Zwingli's particular formulation is Augustinian. For a study of the many connotations of *caritas*, see *Helene Petre, Caritas, Etude sur le vocabulaire latin de la charité chretienne*, Louvain 1948.

⁴⁶ "Kurtz: Wo christenliche hertzen und gotzforcht sind, da wirt man alle ding erberrlich, frommlich unnd formklich ansehen; dann die liebe kan's alles und välet nienen; denn gott ist die liebe. Wo die liebe ist, da ist gott. Wo gott ist, da mag man nit välen. Was mit gott wirt angehebt, wirt nienman mögen brechen. Was wider inn ufgericht wirt muss brechen": *Wer Ursach gebe zu Aufruhr* 458 (Anm. 28).

⁴⁷ *Siegfried Rother, Die religiösen und geistigen Grundlagen der Politik Huldrych Zwinglis*, Erlangen 1956.

The experience of God's love leads a Christian to form social bonds, communal ties. For the Christian, all relations – social, political, economic – are founded in brotherly love. Love of neighbor leads a Christian into those relations and shapes those relations according to God's law.

For Zwingli there existed no visible distinction between the church, which was “the whole people, the whole multitude gathered together”, and the polity of the town, between the religious and the political communities. The brotherhood of Christians had no divisions, either into smaller sects, or into different facets of collective life:

We discover that there are not, as these men say, a sacerdotal and a lay magistracy, but only one; for the power of the church, by which it keeps the shameless from communion, is not that of the magistracy, ...; for it belongs to the whole church, not to those, who through tyranny have usurped for themselves the chief part of all things.⁴⁸

Zwingli saw religious authority and civic authority as two forms of human authority; both were separate from sacred or absolute authority.⁴⁹ It was unnecessary, he argued, to have two forms of human authority: they both administered to the same Christian community. And that community was knit together by brotherly love. If man by nature loves only himself, then brotherly love is the only way a man can willingly enter into any human community. All other ways are grounded in self-interest and are destructive of true brotherhood. The only effective social bond is brotherly love.

Brotherly love is also the legitimate bond between men. Let us recall the various threads of Zwingli's argument. If men follow the new law Christ states in Matthew 22:39 – love your neighbor as yourself – then all other laws are superfluous. Zwingli also cited Romans 13:9, in which Paul said that all laws were gathered in this one law – the command to love one's neighbor subsumes all laws. Indeed, it makes all laws obsolete (Romans 10:4) for if men love one another, they will need no other law. Any law which is not subsumed under the law of Matthew 22:39, which is not, in other words, made obsolete by it, is not in accord with God's law and has, therefore, no validity.

At first glance, such an argument seems radical indeed. We must not forget, however, the precedence that Zwingli gave the community over the individual, the demands of brotherhood over self, including laws that reinforced that brotherhood, that enforced mutual obligations. Here, too, Zwingli's vision of a Christian community borrows from the lessons of the guilds. For the individual is subsumed under the community, both through the internal constraints of

⁴⁸ “Invenimus autem, non ut isti dicunt, sacerdotalem et laicalem esse magistratum, sed unum tantum; nam ecclesiae potestas, qua impudentem a communicatione abstinere, magistratus non est, ...nam totius ecclesiae est, non quorundam, qui per tyrannidem sibi rerum summan vendicarunt.” *De vera et falsa religione* 877 (Anm. 36).

⁴⁹ Zwingli presented this position most fully in *Von göttlicher und menschlicher Gerechtigkeit* (Anm. 43).

brotherly love, and through the external constraints of collective life. The Christian community – which was created through brotherly love – would serve to reinforce the demands of brotherly love:

The polity demands that you care for the public weal, not the private; that dangers be shared in common, as well as fortunes, if practice demands it; that no one be sensible of himself; that no one be extolled; that no one excite divisions.⁵⁰

Zwingli, and many south German reformers, drew upon an ancient familial bond to develop a language for describing relations among the members of the renewed Christian communities. Their preaching resonated familiar values and institutions. Each incorporated specific characteristics that had come to be associated with the notion of brotherhood within his own local community. For Zwingli, the most influential local form of association which defined itself as a brotherhood was the guild. From that form he drew characteristics that are central to an understanding of his use of the language of brotherly love. First, the notion of mutual obligation: one owes certain material debts to the brotherhood; one has responsibilities which are as compelling and fundamental as one's benefits. Second, the needs of the individual were to be subjugated to the community; the collectivity had precedence over individual members. Third, the collectivity, the true Christian brotherhood, had far more power and influence than the sum of its individual members.

In the context of his theology, however, Zwingli transformed the definition of neighbor, of brother, of the object of that love of other. Love of neighbor was no longer to be directed solely to the members of a narrowly defined group – a confraternity, a guild. It was not to be restricted to those with whom one had consented to form a community. Its boundaries were not to be determined by man, according to external and therefore artificial standards, but by God. In anchoring it in his theology, he removed a central characteristic of earlier fraternities: their voluntarism. Guilds, confraternities, and monasteries were all founded on the notion of the consent of their members – members chose to enter those forms of fraternity. For Zwingli, fraternal relations were possible only through God's grace: man alone could never enter into a Christian brotherhood – he was not capable of loving his neighbor as much as himself. That shift in the nature of brotherhood realigned the boundaries of the Christian community. Love of neighbor was no longer restricted to those with whom one had consented to form a community. Its boundaries were not to be determined by man, according to external and therefore artificial standards, but by God. Man, moreover, could not fully know whom God had chosen for the Christian brotherhood. For Zwingli, and others, therefore, the boundaries of the Christian brotherhood

⁵⁰ "Requirat civitas, ut rem publicam colas, non privatam; ut communia habeantur pericula, etiam fortunae, si usus postulet; ut nemo sibi sapiat; ut nemo extollatur; ut nemo factiones excitet." *De vera et falsa religione* 867 (Anm. 36).

were to coincide with the boundaries of each community – the physical extent of each congregation, its farthest reach – determined the boundaries of each Christian community: political, social, and economic boundaries coincided with religious ones. Zwingli erased the lines drawn by those brotherhoods he called false: the confraternities and the monasteries. Their boundaries were drawn too narrowly – they reflected man’s choice of membership, rather than God’s. Zwingli’s vision of the reformed Christian brotherhood also smoothed some of the stratification that the civic brotherhoods of the guilds had created. Although Zwingli never challenged directly the kind of brotherhood proposed by the guilds, his reformed Christian community was open to all the people of Zurich.

And here we reach the compelling force of Zwingli’s language of Christian brotherhood. This new brotherhood was open to anyone in Zurich, including those who were too poor, too unskilled, handicapped, to belong to any guild, those to whom the right to form a guild had been denied, those who had been excluded from the formally recognized brotherhoods of late medieval Zurich. Love of neighbor, according to Zwingli, extended to those who were not brothers through kinship, through craft, or through rituals and oaths, but solely through fellowship in Christ.

As we have seen, all were not to participate equally in the wealth and political authority of the community. Yet all were equally bound to the new Christian community through Christian brotherly love. All could know the fire of God’s love. All who acknowledged the mutual obligations of a Christian brotherhood, who subjugated their individual needs to the needs of the community, also received benefits, benefits that were compelling. Collectively, Zwingli’s new brotherhood made manifest Christian love, even if individual members might still be subject to self-interest. And such a community was very powerful indeed, for “where love is, there is God; where God is, there one may not fail”.

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