

LutherFacts #13



In his struggles against the medieval church, Martin Luther was not alone. He joined forces with a variety of other reformers. Among them was Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531), the most important reformer in the Swiss Protestant Reformation and the only major reformer of the 16th century whose efforts did not result in establishing a separate church organization. Like Martin Luther, he accepted the supreme authority of the Scriptures, but he applied it more rigorously and comprehensively to many doctrines and practices. After completing his university studies in 1504, he became a pastor in Glarus and began to question certain church practices. In the following years, he attacked the selling of indulgences—the sale of divine favors that many church officials argued could be used for forgiveness of or license to sin, or to immediate entrance into heaven upon death. Luther welcomed Zwingli's reform efforts in Switzerland but came to strongly differ with him over the meaning of communion. That difference did not prevent Zwingli from crediting Luther as "that one Hercules ... who slew the Roman boar." In the end, both men needed each other in the fight against Rome.