POPULAR RESPONSES TO THE “REFORMATION FROM WITHOUT” IN THE
PAYE DE VAUD

by

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Signed: James Joseph Blakeley
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DEDICATION

To Monique, Emma, and Claire
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines religious reform in the Pays de Vaud, Switzerland from 1526-1537. The author focuses on the reactions of rural common men and women who were forced to abandon their Catholic faith and traditions and accept the Reformation and evangelical pastors. The work demonstrates that many rural folk continued to participate in the rituals and celebrations of the “faith of the fathers” (Catholicism) long after the authorities had mandated the Reformation. The rural folk of the Pays de Vaud confronted religious change in a manner that allowed them to preserve their religious identity. It also reveals that people could act and behave in both Catholic and Reformed way.

The dissertation considers how Bern introduced the Reformation in the francophone territories that it controlled. Preaching was the most important vehicle for spreading the new religious teaching. Bern relied on William Farel to give sermons and stir protest throughout the region of Vaud. He left both converts and controversy in his wake. The Bernese religious authorities were short on qualified, francophone pastors, thus they looked outside of Switzerland’s borders to recruit men who were willing to preach the Gospel. New pastors were both strangers to the villages in Vaud and socially and economically removed from their rural parishioners. Bern also confiscated church wealth and punished the recalcitrant to implement the Reformation.
INTRODUCTION

During my Fulbright year abroad I gathered with rural farmers, dairymen, and their families on the top of a hill in the countryside of Fribourg to celebrate the 712\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of the founding of the Swiss Confederation. The August 1 festivities each year commemorate the alliance that the regions of Uri, Schwyz, and Unterwald entered into in 1291 to protect themselves from outside threats. Historians debate the popular account: is it fact, fiction, or fact embroidered with fiction? The Swiss honor the founding of their country with food, drink, and song. They repeat the moral of the medieval story—the Confederation must guard its independence and freedom. Usually they set ablaze a bonfire to top off the modern celebration.

Normally the pyres of other communes dot the horizon, but 2003 was a hot year. The most severe heat wave and drought ever recorded gripped Europe. Newspapers predicted that the Matterhorn would collapse if the snow continued to melt. The mayor announced sadly that the regional fire authorities had deemed that it was too hot and dry for bonfires that night. Global warming that was the result of pollution originating outside of Switzerland’s borders tainted the celebration of independence and insularity. Indeed, that night a regional politician used the heat wave to make a point. In his speech, Councilor Pascal Corminboeuf warned that the harsh weather, the European Union’s
expansion and tough negotiations with the Confederation, and the internal debate over immigration were all warning shots being fired across Switzerland’s bow. The country was vulnerable to the problems of the global community and therefore must engage it. Yet, he urged those gathered to guard their liberties and democracy jealously. The Swiss, he cautioned, must participate locally and globally if they wished to write their own history.

From my vantage point that summer evening, I looked across the Lake of Estavayer into the cantons of Jura, Neuchâtel, Bern, and Vaud. Had I sat at this place in the middle of the sixteenth century, I would have observed a region in the midst of profound religious and social change. Just as modern Switzerland is consumed by problems that come from without, the Reformation was an alien movement in early modern Suisse Romande and the Pays de Vaud. It transformed all spheres of human existence in the region and was no less powerful than the challenges that the Swiss face today.

Brief Historiography

The historical narrative of the Reformation in Pays de Vaud is a slender volume in the corpus of works on the European Reformations. Local historians dominate the field and they tailored their interpretations to fit personal, confessional biases. Most authors

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1 *Suisse Romande* is a popular name for francophone Switzerland
believe that the Reformation liberated Vaud from the superstitions of the Old Church and the rapaciousness of its clergy. They do not argue that it was a popular movement but maintain that Bern was working in the best spiritual interests of the native population. Protestant historians smooth out the bumps on the path from Catholicism to the coming of the Reformation. They write that resistors were motivated by superstition and misguided attachment to tradition. True and enlightened religious sentiment and a dose of common sense resulted in cooperation and compliance.

In the eighteenth century, professor of theology and Evangelical pastor Abraham Ruchat wrote the first in-depth and well-researched history of the Reformation in francophone Switzerland. Ruchat, a native of Vaud, was born in February 1680. He entered the Reformed clergy after completing his university training. He served briefly as a parish pastor in Vaud. Later he became a university professor at the Academy of Lausanne, where future Reformed pastors received their schooling.


He interprets the Reformation as a needed antidote for the ills of a corrupt papal church. Thus, Bern’s faith offered liberation from the tyranny of the papacy to the people. Resistance was evidence that the simpler folk were still mired in superstition. Because of his anti-Catholic stance, Rome condemned Ruchat’s history in January 1732. Histories and readers still consult Ruchat, despite his biases, because he included abundant citations from primary sources, some of which are no longer available.

A century later, Louis Vulliemin attempted to popularize the history of the Swiss Reformation. He envisaged families sitting down before the fireplace after a long day to read the latest release of his history. He hoped that his audience would transport itself mentally back to the time of its forefathers and try to imagine what the events were like.

The society “of friends of the church and the Swiss homeland” (a group that gathered and protected unedited historical documents that pertained to the history of francophone Switzerland) sponsored his work. In 1835-1836, the Reformation’s tercentennial, the

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4 Ibid., 272.

5 “Il est à la fin du jour une heure tranquille, où tout s’assied et se recueille, où la famille, serrée, se rallie autour du foyer . . . . Qui sait? ce sera peut-être l’heure du Chroniqueur. Peut-être le laissera-t-on, avec ses récits du vieil âge, prendre une place auprès du feu; et lui s’y assiéront les ombres de nos pères, figures fortes et naïves; elles apparaîtront rudes, non assouplies, se heurtant violemment, étrangères, comme elles l’étaient, à nos ménagements et à notre culture.” Louis Vulliemin, Le Chroniquer: recueil historique, et journal de l’Helvétique romande renfermant le récit de la réformation de ce pays celui de sa réunion à la Suisse dans les années 1535 et 1536 (Lausanne: Marc Duetloux, 1835-1836), 2.
society published weekly installments of Vulliemin’s history, which was sold at post offices and bookshops.  

Vulliemin writes that the Reformation was one of the greatest events in francophone Switzerland’s history.  Vulliemin also interprets the Reformation as a positive, liberating event.  He writes that the Old Church was weakened by greed and misguided theology.  Like Ruchat, he viewed the religious transformation as an inevitable event after the conquest of 1536.  He spends little time dealing with resistance or the impact of the Reformation at the village level.

Henri Vuilleumier, Reformed pastor, theologian, and historian, authored a number of works on the religious history of early-modern Vaud.  His most famous, the Histoire de l'église réformée du pays de Vaud sous le régime bernois, remains the definitive authority on the topic.  Like Ruchat, Vuilleumier grounds his work on extensive archival material.  He focuses on secular and ecclesiastical political developments after 1536.  Although he is less dismissive of the Catholic faith than his predecessors are, he betrays his anti-Catholic prejudices.  In his short discussion specifically dedicated to the obstacles and hindrances to the Reformation, Vuilleumier concludes that during the years of transition, it would have been abnormal for the population to simply give up the

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid., 1.
traditional religion immediately. He did not believe that villagers resisted Bern because they loved the Catholic faith but because they were angry, religious fanatics.⁸

Vuilleumier never published one of his most valuable works. It resides today in manuscript form in the university library in Lausanne. Over the course of his life, Vuilleumier researched and documented the lives and family histories of the pastors of Vaud from the time of the Reformation until the twentieth century. In this two-volume work, he provides useful data about the origins of the earliest pastors, their tenures, and the parishes where they preached.⁹ He reveals that many of the first men to staff the pulpits in Vaud produced long lines of male heirs who also took up the profession of their ancestor. Vuilleumier demonstrates that the pastoral calling became a family affair that dramatically changed the nature of the clergy after the Reformation permitted marriage and the acknowledgment of male heirs.

Few historians have opposed the confessional, Protestant narratives of Ruchat, Vuilliemin, and Vuilleumier, and none has produced a work that rivals their scope and detail. One Catholic historian, Emmanuel Dupraz, stands at the other end of the spectrum and provides a Catholic counter-narrative. Indeed, Dupraz proclaims that a desire to

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correct the historical record that Protestant historians have distorted motivated him. He wrote,

The visible symbols of [Catholic] worship fell under the axe of the destroyers. The cities and countryside were littered with the debris of pious objects and ruins. The hearts of the people, however, remained attached to the faith of their ancestors . . . . No, the Vaudois people did not kneel like slaves in front of an oppressor of their conscience and liberty. Too often, some have represented and acclaimed the new masters as liberators, lovers and apostles of the Gospel! This is an injury to my country [Vaud] that I cannot accept.  

Like his Protestant counterparts, personal, confessional convictions motivated him to reassess the history of sixteenth-century Vaud. Dupraz was the Catholic curate of Echallens, one of the few towns in the Common Lordships that never voted in favor of banning the Mass and which remains bi-confessional. 

Dupraz maintains that Catholicism in the Pays de Vaud was both beloved and strong before the conquest. He writes that Catholic visitation records from the districts of Aubonne and Rolle in the late-fifteenth century, the large number of confraternities and

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10 Les signes extérieurs du culte tombaient sous la hache des démolisseurs; les villes et les campagnes se couvraient des ces pieux débris et de ruines, mais les coeurs restaient attachés à la foi des ancêtres . . . . Non, le peuple vaudois ne se courba point, comme un esclave, devant ces oppresseurs de sa conscience et de sa liberté. Trop souvent on l’a représenté acclamant ses nouveaux maîtres comme des libérateurs et les bien-amiés apôtres de l’Evangile! C’est là pour mon pays une injure que je n’accepte point.” Emmanuel Dupraz, *Le Catholicisme dans les districts de Rolle et d’Aubonne avant et depuis le XVIe siècle* (Fribourg: Imprimerie Catholique Suisse, 1884), 6.

11 Common Bailiwicks or Common Lordships (Gemeine Herrschaften/commun baillages in German and French respectively) were towns and territories ruled by two members of the Confederation. Echallens was under the control of both Fribourg and Bern. In later chapters, I will explore how Common Lordships became problematic after Bern adopted the Reformation in 1528. For the sake of clarity, I employ the term Common Lordship.
hospitals that were active throughout Vaud, the continuation of Catholic rituals and practices after the Mass was banned, the refusal of most clerics to renounce the faith, the continual release of new Reformation mandates and the slow pace at which the Reformation was adopted in the Common Lordships demonstrate this.\textsuperscript{12}

Dupraz maintains that the Reformation message never appealed to the population, but was imposed by Bern. In the absence of foreign, “Germanic” overlords, the Reformation would have failed, he writes. Dupraz counters Protestant historians assertions that the lack of resistance in Vaud to the Reformation is an indicator of tacit support. Instead, he contends that the people realized the futility of resistance. They conditioned by prior Swiss invasions (1476 and 1521) to submit to Bernese military superiority. With these memories still fresh, the population chose not to resist but surrendered with the understanding that Catholicism would remain. The duplicitous, Bernese overlords broke these agreements.

Until the twentieth century, few Catholic counter-narratives appeared on the Reformation in Vaud. In 1935, Oskar Vasella added his voice to the debate. Vasella, a member of the History Department at the University of Fribourg, edited, transcribed, and

\textsuperscript{12} In addition to his work on Catholicism in Rolle and Aubonne, Dupraz authored the following works that provide evidence for his primary arguments: Emmanuel Dupraz, \textit{La Cathédral de Lausanne: étude historique} (Lausanne: Libraire Th. Sack, 1906); Emmanuel Dupraz, "Introduction de la Réforme par le "Plus" dans le baillage d'Orbe-Echallens," parts 1 and 2, \textit{Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique} 9 (1915): 11-22, 99-118, 192-203, 266-88; 10 (1916): 50-73, 102-18, 209-23.
published the complete text of the *Journal des commissaires bernois/Kreigsjournal* Nägelis in 1935.  His was the first modern, critical edition of this important primary source. The manuscript records the daily events of the invasion (*Kriegsjournal*), the findings of the commissioners whom Bern dispatched to Vaud after the war (*journal des commissaires*), as well as instructions that the commissioners were to carry out as the new government was installed.

Aside from their intrinsic value, the primary documents confirmed Vasella’s interpretive revisions of the dominant Protestant historiography of the conquest and conversion. First, he used the surrender agreements recorded in the *Kriegsjournal* to assert that the town councils in Vaud purposely chose to not fight against the Bernese military. They grasped the futility of resistance and did not want the invaders to follow through with their threats of wanton destruction. Vasella contends that it is misleading to claim, as other historians had, that the invasion met no resistance because the population was prepared to accept Bern as its new overlord or because rural dwellers were unhappy with their local rulers. Second, he notes that many of the surrender

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14 Ibid., 29:245-246.

15 Ibid., 246.
agreements contained the caveat that each place could keep its liberties, franchises, and old religious faith. The military agreed in 1536 to allow its new subjects to keep the “faith of their fathers.” Had it not agreed to these terms, the towns might not have surrendered and the victory might not have come so quickly. Moreover, by allowing Catholicism to continue, the Bernese did not provoke Fribourg to protect their co-religionists.

In the interim, Bern chose what Vasella calls a “middle way:” it allowed its new subjects to remain Catholic as long as pastors could preach throughout the territory as well. Soon enough, Bern realized that preaching alone was incapable of bringing about a Reformation. Bern choose to break its initial promises and ban Catholicism in order to reform the church in Vaud and ensure that all of its territory was united confessionally. Largely the population was not convinced of the truth of the new creed, but accepted it resignedly.16

In 1965, a graduate student at the University of Fribourg, Raymond Berguerand, provided documentary support that some Vaudois continued Catholic practices secretly.17 The novel aspect of his license thesis was the source base. Ruchat and Vuilleumier had

16 Ibid., 251.

included complaints about the laity’s continuing practice of Catholicism, but Berguerand found in the district account books lists of punishments meted out to individuals and groups who attended the Mass in Fribourg’s territory, engaged in secret Masses, carried rosary beads, went on pilgrimages to St. Claude and other holy sites, and obtained Catholic baptisms for their children. He bolstered Dupraz’s conviction that after the conquest the population remained attached to Catholicism.

In the middle of the twentieth century, more historians dealt with the political and social consequences of the Reformation. The Vaudois historian Charles Gilliard, for instance, focused on the military conquest. He asked how the region fell so quickly to the invading Bernese. He discovered that the Estates of Vaud could not muster the men to fend off the superior Bernese army because of their lack of central direction and loose nature. They did not surrender quickly because of their willingness to adopt the new faith. Indeed, Gilliard notes that very few in Vaud supported the new faith. Using sources from Turin, Gilliard proves that people did hear the Reformation message from a variety of sources; nevertheless, they never flocked to the new faith. Instead, he concludes that the conquest forced the region into the Reformed fold. The Bernese magistrates pressed their religion on their francophone lands because they were confident

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of their religious cause after their successes in the Berner Oberland and First Battle of Kappel.\(^1\) Gilliard writes,

> The magistrates’ self-confidence grew. They did not doubt the justice of their cause and that of God. The spirit of propagandizing took over. They believed themselves to be called to install the Gospel not only in their own Bernese territory, but also throughout the region that was under their influence. Bern attempted, therefore, the systematic spiritual conquering of all of Swiss-Romande.\(^2\)

Frank Olivier asked what the role of Bernese invasion played in creating a new religious and regional identity in Vaud.\(^3\) He argues that in the absence of codified civil law, the Reformed church held the region together politically in the early years. The new church expressed Bern’s power and intentions, because no other institution could do so. Unfortunately, Olivier does not support his conclusions with convincing evidence. Instead, he recalls episodes when the people of Vaud assisted or came to the aid of Protestants abroad. Olivier maintains that such expressions of confessional solidarity reveal the depth and strength of the Reformed faith as well as the people’s acceptance of the religion brought to them by the Bernese. By modern historical standards, Olivier’s

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\(^2\) Ibid.

\(^3\) Frank Olivier, "L’église réformée et la formation du pays de Vaud," in *Études et documents inédits sur la Réformation en Suisse Romande* (Lausanne: Imprimerie la Concorde, 1936), 114.
leap from behavior to sentiment is too large; nevertheless, the thesis that he states at the outset of his article is provocative and deserves further exploration.

Historians explored how Bern converted other regions to the Reformed faith. Josef Guntern focuses on the territory of Saanen that the bankrupt Duke of Gruyere relinquished to Bern in the mid-1550’s. Saanen abuts Vaud, and before 1536, the two were essentially the same. Both were Catholic and largely rural. As in Vaud, few people gravitated to the Reformed message, because they wished to maintain the status quo. Bern employed the same strategies of conversion that it had used twenty years earlier in Vaud. The magistrates issued edicts banning the Mass, dismissed Catholic priests who would not convert, and allowed residents who would not convert to leave the territory. Nevertheless, some residents resisted and practiced Catholicism.

Hermann Specker studies the Reformation that occurred in Bern’s rural hinterland, the Bernese Oberland. In the earliest years of the Reformation, the city magistrates allowed the rural communes to vote whether to accept the new creed or not. Interestingly, many embraced Bern’s wishes and accepted new pastors and banned the Mass. However, when the peasantry learned it would continue to pay the same tithes and

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dues under the new church, a number of villagers protested and wished to return to Catholicism. Some threatened to leave Bernese jurisdiction and join the Catholic forest canton of Unterwald. After failed negotiations, the Bernese used military force to suppress the Oberland peasantry. Nevertheless, this experience colored how the magistrates approached converting rural populations in Saanen and Vaud. No longer did Bern give locals the opportunity to vote for their preferred creed except in those areas (Common Lordships) where it was bound by treaty to do so.

Both historians reveal that Bern employed the same tactics in other territories that they used in Vaud: they ordered the population to give up the Catholic faith, they installed new pastors, they assessed and seized ecclesiastical wealth, and they punished the recalcitrant. In Saanen and the Oberland, the Reformation was not a popular movement and was imposed from above. These authors reveal that terrestrial concerns motivated the rural populations to both resist and cooperate with Bern’s spiritual programs.

In the last twenty-five years, few historians have tackled the Reformation in Vaud. Michel Campiche authored _La Réforme en Pays de Vaud_ in 1985. He writes primarily for a popular audience and adds little that is new to the standard Protestant narrative. He does not question the historiographical assumptions of his predecessors.

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24 Michel Campiche, _La réforme en Pays de Vaud_ (Lausanne: L’Aire, 1985).
Despite historians’ recent emphasis on social history, Campiche does not widen his scope to take in the common men and women.

Michael Bruening explores Bern’s relationship with Calvin and his supporters. He proposes that Calvin attempted to influence the course of religious events in Vaud. He sheds light on the struggle between Bern and Calvin’s supporters. In the end, nearly half of the pastors and nearly all of the professors at the Academy of Lausanne left Vaud for Geneva because of the rupture between Bern and Geneva.

Many historians have explored the Reformation in other parts of Switzerland including Basel and Zurich. They have improved our understanding of the Reformation in Vaud, because the authorities in Bern consciously modeled their own spiritual efforts on the actions of their counterparts in Zurich. For example, Bruce Gordon examines the major personalities, most notably Zwingli, and their strategies for creating reformed territories and populations in his book, *The Swiss Reformation*. Gordon notes Zwingli’s ultimate success in Zurich made the Reformation in the rest of the Swiss Confederation possible. Although it would be unsustainable to argue that Zwingli was personally responsible for events in St. Gall, Berne, and Basle, we can assert without injury to local circumstances and figures that none of these cities would have turned to the Reformation without the bastion of Zurich behind them. We have attempted in this survey to convey something of the unique

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characteristics of these states and to examine how their Reformations took shape, but for better or worse they all fell under the shadow of Zurich.\(^{27}\)

The outlines of this broad statement may be correct, but as a generalization, it should not preclude a detailed investigation of the Reformation in Vaud. Bern looked to Zurich for its inspiration; yet, at the same time it adapted its strategies of conversion to fit its own situation and unique vision of reform. More importantly, Gordon does not focus on the other side of the Reformation coin: the reaction of the laity, which differed markedly from that which occurred in Zurich. He does give a short examination of Farel’s efforts in planting the seeds of the new movement in Aigle and concludes that the Reformation became part of Bern’s strategy for holding the territory after the conquest.\(^ {28}\) Gordon also writes that when the Bernese militarily conquered the region there was little doubt that it would be reformed.\(^ {29}\) He does not discuss the fact that many villages had surrendered to the Bernese, not only because of the overwhelming superiority of the Bernese troops, but also because they had reached an agreement with the city-republic that they could maintain the faith of their fathers.

Pastors were the crucial link between the spiritual and territorial authorities in Bern and the rural population in Vaud. Immediately after the conquest and the religious

\(^{27}\) Ibid., 344.

\(^{28}\) Ibid., 152.

\(^{29}\) Ibid.
Disputation of Lausanne, Bern had difficulty accomplishing its mission because it was short of pastors and men who could preach in French. Amy Nelson Burnett examines the role that pastors played in carrying out the Reformation in Basel’s territory. She points out that the clergy became the mouthpiece of the central government and its eyes and ears. She examines the training and oversight of the pastorate in Basel.\(^{30}\) It was their duty to preach “sound doctrine to their parishioners.” She concludes that both their homiletic duty and their cooperation with the territorial authorities played prominent roles in conversion. I will argue that pastors fulfilled the same obligations in Vaud.

No historian can work on the rural Reformation in Switzerland or the Holy Roman Empire without consulting the work of Peter Blickle and his students. He has demonstrated how the Reformation moved from the lecture halls, pulpits, and council chambers to the sites where common men and women gathered. He has coined the theoretical concepts of communalism and the Reformation of the Common Man and shows that before the Peasants’ War of 1525, villagers used the rhetoric of the Reformation to lighten their fiscal burdens, and gain greater control over their own churches and clergy.\(^ {31}\) Communalism does not explain the Reformation in the Pays de


Vaud. Peasants and common folk in this region did not seize upon the new teachings to communalize their churches.

Historians of conversion and the Reformation often cite the confessionalization thesis that Heinz Schilling and Wolfgang Reinhardt have proposed.\textsuperscript{32} They discovered the extent to which confessional Christianity played a role in the development of the early modern state in Protestant, Reformed, and Catholic territories. They conclude that rulers increasingly policed the behavior and religious knowledge of their subjects and that the churches became increasingly more accessible to secular power. The Bernese council’s religious measures confirm the confessionalization paradigm. It seized control of the church in Vaud and directed Guillaume Farel and other early pastors. It also enacted rules to police religious and moral behavior. It would later implement religious organs to educate its subjects and enforce compliance with consistories, schools, and visitations.

Ethan H. Shagan has provided a new paradigm for building on and surpassing the confessional histories of the Reformation in his work \textit{Popular Politics and the English Reformation}.\textsuperscript{33} His conclusions have widened and enriched my view of the Reformation


in Vaud. He maintains that “the whole meta-narrative of conversion which historians have used to conceptualise the Reformation has impeded our ability to ask a different set of questions, to see the Reformation not in globalizing terms but as a more piecemeal process in which politics and spiritual change were irrevocably intertwined.\textsuperscript{34} He notes that the conflicting conclusions of historians about the reception of the Reformation by the English population has obscured the fact that people did not necessarily need to convert or adopt the new teaching wholesale to act in decidedly Protestant ways. Instead, he focuses on what he calls popular politics to discover that some who participated in the destruction of the monasteries, and the dissolution of the chantries, or accepted Henry VIII as the head of the English church were not always “converts” to the new faith. Rather, these people sometimes seized the opportunity to enrich themselves from plundered ecclesiastical property, or used the language and rhetoric of the Reformation to accomplish personal objectives or solve local problems. I will maintain that many of the same factors that Shagan identifies were at work in Vaud, and that previous historians who focused primarily on conversion did not explain the paradoxical nature of the Reformation in Vaud satisfactorily.

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., 7.
The Reformation in Vaud was a complex process that involved many small steps and negotiations that eventually resulted in the dismantlement of the Catholic Church and its religious system. Unlike the Communal Reformation in parts of Switzerland and Germany, the Reformation in Vaud did not originate from below; it was not a popular movement. Regardless of anticlericalism or complaints about the rapacity of the Church, these common manifestations of discontent on the eve of the Reformation were not sufficient to bring about a change as dramatic as the one Bern later imposed.

Nevertheless, some collaborated or at least grudgingly cooperated with Bern. The territory was too vast, the new capital was too far away, and the authorities were too short on pastors and assistants to force compliance. Underscoring this point and highlighting the complexity of the situation are the varied reactions of the rural residents to the imposition of new pastors in their parishes. In some cases, people resisted them vigorously while in others they petitioned Bern to send them pastors. Likewise, in some villages a plurality of males voted to adopt the Reformation, while in other villages they chose to remain in the old church for years. In most cases the documentation does not exist that might inform us of the reasons why some resisted the Reformation, and others adopted it easily.

Vuilleumier, Vulliemin, and Ruchat believed that the population did not resist in any systematic manner. What they observe was sporadic, limited, or motivated by less
than spiritual concerns. It would be a false assumption to conclude that the population
converted to the new faith based on the lack of documented resistance.

Many Vaudois villages were located on or near borders with Catholic territory.
From the perspective of the Bernese authorities, Vaud’s proximity to Catholic territory
and the lengthy border that it shared with Fribourg and Valais were dangerous
impediments to the success of the Reformation in Vaud. Catholic parishes and their
frequent festivities and holidays were sirens that enticed nearby folk in Vaud to disobey
the religious mandates of their reformed masters. They thwarted the reformed
authorities’ efforts to mold an obedient and evangelical population. For the Vaudois
there was less risk when they participated in the Catholic rituals, festivities, and worship
in Catholic Fribourg and Valais. They did not openly defy the mandates because the
Bernese authorities threatened to imprison, exile, or haul them to Bern for punishment.

Outside of Bern’s direct gaze, they worshipped in nearby Catholic territory and
strengthened their bonds to their neighbors in Fribourg and Valais, with whom they
shared a common religious heritage and kinship. When villages surrendered to Bern, the
residents demanded that Bern allow them to continue to worship according to the “faith
of their fathers.” Peasants and rural inhabitants risked punishment and continued to
attend traditional, religious festivities and rituals, because these acts comprised the
essential core of a faith that required the physical presence and participation of its
adherents. They wished to continue familiar and dear religious ceremonies that had knit together social networks and families and revel with their neighbors in the dancing, drinking, and eating.\footnote{Susan Karant-Nunn, \textit{The Reformation of Ritual: An Interpretation of Early-Modern Germany} (New York: Routledge, 1997), 199-200.} They identified less with a set of theological doctrines established by the Roman Catholic Church. Bern would have quickly detected disobedience had the residents celebrated holy days, processed around the fields, or made pilgrimages to local shrines in their own territory. Thus, villagers and rural folk simply crossed the confessional border to maintain their Catholic identity and remain loyal to the faith of their ancestors. Although they may have perceived worshipping outside of their home parishes as less than ideal, they seized the next best opportunity to subvert Bern’s directives while avoiding punishment.

Peter Sahlins has demonstrated convincingly that people who live in regions where jurisdictional boundaries meet often seize such opportunities. He notes that border dwellers alter apparent religious, political, or social allegiances creatively and contextually when they attempt to increase their own power or achieve certain objectives.\footnote{Peter Sahlins, \textit{Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 107.} Similarly, sociologists have alerted us to the dissonant and contradictory behavior of
laymen and women who identify themselves as adherents of certain religious creeds. In some cases, public behavior and private beliefs are at odds with the strictures and norms established by the faith’s authorities. These concepts are useful for understanding religious behavior in Vaud. Most people refrained open displays of resistance and acted like good subjects of Bern, but others remained loyal to the Old Faith and its rituals long after the conquest.

With these theoretical insights in mind, I seek to uncover how everyday men and women reacted to the religious changes that Bern imposed. How did they cope with the destruction of their faith and places of worship? Why did they so easily bend to the religious changes that Bern forced upon them? What strategies did their new overlords, the magistrates of Bern, employ to convert them? Why did some villages accept the Reformation willingly or passively, while others resisted the new pastors and their teachings? In what ways did the population employ the language and rhetoric of the Reformed authorities to accomplish their own local and individual objectives?

The second overarching objective of this dissertation is to reexamine the strategies that Bern employed to lead its new subjects into the Evangelical fold. When Bern first conquered the territory, it naively believed that the population would naturally

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37 Andrew Greeley, "Fairness for Conservative Christians" (Speech given at the 20th Annual Town and Gown Lecture, Tucson, Arizona, 15 February 2006).
accept and welcome the new church. When that did not occur, it took other steps to convert the population. The city authorities repeated their mantra that they did not intend to convert people at the point of the sword; instead, they enacted religious mandates, staffed the parishes with new pastors, dismantled ecclesiastical wealth, and implemented punishments for those who refused to behave properly. Not only did their program involve reforming strictly religious behavior but it also attempted to improve the people’s morals.

The changes Bern undertook were immense. The city now held a vast, francophone territory and it was short on the manpower needed to carry out its objectives. It looked outside of its territory to find pastors willing to preach in Vaud. It created a new ecclesiastical infrastructure to support and educate pastors and govern the church. It assumed many of the fiscal responsibilities of the Catholic Church and secured the funds to support poor relief, maintain current and former clerics, and maintain church buildings. The city deftly navigated relations with the Confederation and its neighbor Catholic Fribourg that had opposed the conversion. Bern also erected a confessional boundary in an attempt to demarcate the spiritual landscape. Each of the tasks that Bern set for itself could comprise a full-length study, but here I explore them to give a broader overview of Bern’s strategies of reform.
To answer the questions I have returned to the primary sources housed in Switzerland’s archives. The archives of Bern, Vaud, and Fribourg contain vast collections that concern the Reformation. In Bern, the collection of Unnütze Papieren holds correspondence between the magistrates and villages concerning the implementation of the Reformation. I have drawn pertinent information from the volumes of the council minutes. Regularly the members took action to ensure that their subjects attended the sermon, made proper provisions for the new pastors, and avoided popish superstitions and practices. The minutes from the consistory in that city occasionally include entries that pertain to divorces, and moral and religious infractions in Vaud and the city’s francophone territories. Fribourg’s Affaires écclesiastiques/Geistliche Sachen have provided rich descriptions of religious life in villages and the Common Lordships where religion was quickly dividing communities and individuals. These sources are often written from a Catholic perspective and, therefore, lend a view different from Bern’s. The most important primary sources are housed in Vaud. Here reside the account books from various districts into which the magistrates divided Vaud. The accounts document the income derived from religious infractions. Other volumes of accounts provide details about the incomes, housing, and tenures of the new pastorate in the years 1540, 1549, and 1559. These enable me to track the gradual growth of the pastoral corps as well as their standard of living. The archives
cantonales de Vaud also contain volume after volume of edicts that Bern’s magistrates released to address the plague, war, dancing, church attendance, visiting soothsayers, and Catholic practices. The edicts describe the problems Bern perceived were occurring in its subject territories. The earliest records from the consistories do not feature prominently in this dissertation because they derive from the last years of the sixteenth century; it is an untapped historical goldmine of information. Specifically the consistory minutes that were taken in Payerne and Lutry, two rural villages, inform historians about the ongoing religious and moral issues with which pastors and authorities dealt. I hope to return to these sources that I have photographed. Just as important to our understanding of the course of the Reformation as the famous consistory minutes from Geneva, these records shed light on life in villages that abutted confessional borders where access to Catholicism remained easy. The archives of Swiss villages, even the smallest, house nuggets of valuable primary sources. I have incorporated council minutes, land-holding records, and evidence of ecclesiastical income from the village archives of Payerne and Lutry.

Finally, several compendiums of printed, primary sources have provided the foundation for this dissertation. Aimé Louis Herminjard’s nine-volume Correspondance des Réformateurs dans le pays de langue française contain the letters of Farel and his Reformed brothers in Strasbourg, and the correspondence that issued between Bern and
villages in its territory and the Common Lordships.\textsuperscript{38} Likewise Rudolf Steck and Gustav Tobler have edited and published the council minutes, edicts, and letters that the government in Bern produced during the early years of the Reformation, 1523-1532.\textsuperscript{39} The drawback of this invaluable collection is that it ends before the conquest of the pays de Vaud.


\textsuperscript{39} Rudolf Steck and Gustav Tobler, eds., \textit{Aktensammlung zur Geschichte der Berner-Reformation}, 2 vols. (Bern: K.J.Wyss Erben, 1923).
Before 1536, the year when the city republic of Bern militarily seized the Pays de Vaud, the native population there was dispassionate about the Reformation. In Vaud’s urban centers, where Reformation historians would expect the movement to get its first toehold, it did not muster widespread support.\textsuperscript{1} The Pays de Vaud, a part of the duke of Savoy’s territory, was rural. It is unlikely that many common men and women, most of whom were engaged in pursuits related to the agricultural economy, had even heard of the Reformation or the religious conflict that gripped Europe in the early years of the sixteenth century. There was no \textit{Wildwuchs} of the Reformation in this part of Europe.\textsuperscript{2}

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\textsuperscript{1} In his famous statement, the eminent historian of the Reformation, A. G. Dickens, called the Reformation an "urban event." While this holds true for Zurich and Bern, the Reformation in Lausanne never gained much support prior to 1536. It did not become a conduit for Reformation ideas to its hinterlands. A. G. Dickens, \textit{The German Nation and Martin Luther} (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), 182.

\textsuperscript{2} Franz Lau captures the spirit of the religious change that swept Germany in the early years of the Reformation with the German word \textit{Wildwuchs}, or wild growth. From roughly 1519 until the Peasants' War in 1525, the Reformation movement moved quickly across territories. Moreover, in these early years, theology had not been codified so it
Language and geography isolated Vaud from the new religious ideas of Germany and eastern parts of the Confederation. Aside from William Farel, few francophone pastors canvassed the region preaching versions of religious reform. In the Pays de Vaud, there was no great wave of French, cheap, printed Reformation pamphlets flowing from the presses like the one that occurred in German-speaking lands. Without access and exposure to Reformation ideas, it is not surprising that the peasants in the Pays de Vaud did not use Scripture to call for greater communal liberties or the alleviation of burdensome obligations. They did not demand the right to elect their own pastors.


Instead, the rural population was deeply committed to Catholicism, its practices, traditions, and heritage. They converted to the new faith only after the city of Bern invaded the region in 1536, dismantled the Catholic Church, and forced them to adopt the new religion. Bern’s invasion was the culmination of a long history of meddling in the affairs of its western neighbors.

The Burgundian Wars

The invasion in 1536 was not the first time that Bern had entered the Pays de Vaud militarily. Bern, Fribourg, and other Swiss contingents turned Vaudois villages into a battleground during the Burgundian Wars in the fifteenth century. The Hapsburg and Valois dynasties began the Burgundian Wars, but later the Swiss entered the conflict to honor alliances and keep strategic territory out of Burgundian hands.

The conflict started after the duke of Burgundy, Charles the Bold, rejected a Swiss/Austrian agreement that required him to leave Austrian territory in Upper Alsace. The duke of Austria had mortgaged these lands to Charles because he needed money to pay his debts. After the duke of Austria repaid Charles, the Burgundian refused to return the land. He demanded more money to pay unforeseen administrative costs. Essentially, he was searching for ways to keep the territory. The Swiss and French did not want Charles to remain in Upper Alsace because of strategic concerns.
The duke of Savoy, who governed the Pays de Vaud, was Charles’ ally. The Savoyards allowed men and supplies to pass through the Alps that were destined to assist Charles. To stop this active support, the Swiss focused their sights on the duke of Savoy and his Vaudois territory. In 1475, troops from Bern, Fribourg, Solothurn, Biel, Basel, Lucerne, and Zurich invaded. They seized towns that Burgundian nobles protected, including Grandson, Echallens, Orbe, and Jounge. Bern and Fribourg also seized sixteen cities and forty-three castles in Vaud.

The Swiss invasion alarmed France and the Holy Roman Empire. The king and emperor retracted their support of the Swiss. Instead, the emperor made peace with the Burgundians, and the French recognized Burgundy’s claim to disputed territory. The anti-Burgundian coalition had collapsed. Neither France nor the Empire wanted an aggressive and larger Swiss Confederation on their borders. The Burgundians and the Swiss were now the sole combatants in a war that had originally involved other European powers.

In 1476, Charles took his men south to remove the Swiss from the Pays de Vaud. First, he seized the town of Grandson, which the Swiss had conquered earlier. The Swiss sought revenge for the defeat and deployed 18,000 troops to retake Grandson. The Swiss

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surprised the Burgundian army, which panicked.\textsuperscript{6} The confederates achieved a quick victory at Grandson. This battle presaged other Swiss victories.

The Burgundians retreated to Lausanne and regrouped. The two armies met on June 22, 1476, in Morat/Murten.\textsuperscript{7} Twenty-five thousand Swiss soldiers laid waste to the Burgundian army. Eight to ten thousand Burgundian soldiers died. Many drowned in the lake of Morat; others were shot while escaping. The Swiss lost only a few hundred soldiers.\textsuperscript{8}

After the pyric victory at Morat sealed the complete defeat of the Burgundians, the estates of Vaud, the Lower Union, France, Austria, Lorraine, and the Swiss Confederation convened a peace conference in July 1476, in Fribourg. Despite the Swiss victory, the Savoyards regained most of their territory in Vaud because the other participants did want Bern to expand geographically. Nevertheless, the conference did grant Bern and Fribourg some booty. Bern received sole possession of the Four Bailiwicks of Olon, Aigle, Bex, and les Ormonts. Bern and Fribourg received joint jurisdiction over the towns and lands of Orbe, Echallens, Grandson, and Morat (Common Lordships). The territory Bern and Fribourg won in the Burgundian Wars became the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{6} Ibid., 1:322.
\item \textsuperscript{7} From this point, I shall use the French name--Morat.
\item \textsuperscript{8} Schaufelberger, "Spätmittelalter," 1:323.
\end{itemize}
sites where the first Reformation preachers spread their message, and where the most intense confessional conflicts erupted.

The remainder of the Pays de Vaud that was returned to the duke of Savoy was a complex mix of ecclesiastical lands, 14 good towns (bonne villes), and fiefdoms.\(^9\) Together they formed the estates of Vaud whose representatives met infrequently in the town of Moudon to discuss regional concerns and to consider the duke’s requests for military or monetary support, which they frequently denied.\(^10\) Nominally, the duke of Savoy was the overlord, and a bailiff, usually a local nobleman, represented him. The bailiff had final authority in military and judicial matters in the duke’s absence.\(^11\) The estates were a member of the estates of Savoy that met in Milan. The Vaudois were not bound to abide by the decisions of the estates of Savoy.\(^12\)

The two largest and most important cities in the region, Geneva and Lausanne, were not formal members of the estates. The bishops of Geneva and Lausanne ruled their respective cities.\(^13\) Nevertheless, they were connected with the region and the population


\(^10\) Ibid., 51-54.

\(^11\) Ibid., 431.

\(^12\) Ibid., 361-62.

\(^13\) The bishop of Geneva was both the ecclesiastical and secular head of the city. Often the bishop, chosen by the pope, was also a member of the House of Savoy. The
at all levels. Richard Paquier writes, “Lausanne was too closely tied economically, geographically, militarily, and religiously to the rest of the country [Vaud] and it could not allow itself to adopt an attitude of splendid isolation.”\textsuperscript{14} Unfortunately, the extent to which the Lausanne and Geneva actually participated in the meetings of the estates is unknown.\textsuperscript{15}

From the end of the Burgundian Wars until the Conquest of 1536, Fribourg and Bern were involved in internal conflicts in Lausanne, Geneva, and the estates of Vaud. Occasionally the authorities or people in Lausanne and Geneva appealed to the Swiss and the Holy Roman Empire to help them maintain their independence from the duke of Savoy. They also sought Swiss assistance in their struggles with their bishops. Fribourg and Bern were examples of self-governance that some residents of Geneva and Lausanne bourgeois and citizenry comprised a corporation with their own liberties and elected representatives. These men oversaw public works, hospitals, schools, and the maintenance of fortifications among other obligations. Throughout the fifteenth century, tension mounted between the Savoyards and the citizens as the duke of Savoy tried to gain greater control over the city. In 1477, the bishop and city entered the combourgeoisie with Fribourg and Bern. This alliance guaranteed the bishop’s sovereignty over the city and its residents. He promised to keep the markets of the Geneva open to Bern and Fribourg. All parties were obligated to assist one another in case of need. Some historians consider this alliance as one of the most important developments in Geneva’s growing ties to the Confederation. Frédéric Gardy, "Genève au XVe siècle," in \textit{Histoire de Genève: des origines à 1798}, ed. Alexandre Jullien (Geneva: Société d'histoire et d'archéologie de Genève, 1951), 139-69.


\textsuperscript{15} Tapy, \textit{Les états de Vaud}, 90.
wished to emulate in their own cities. This created a complex mix of changing alliances: sometimes Fribourg and Bern supported the bishops of Lausanne and Geneva against the duke of Savoy, and at other times, they supported the people against the bishops.

The duke of Savoy feared the Swiss meddling in the internal affairs of Geneva and Lausanne. It represented the “Swiss” threat to noble rulers in Vaud, Lausanne, and Geneva. Indeed the residents probably approached the Confederates because they realized that this was away of gaining advantage over the dukes and bishops. Thomas A. Brady, Jr. has demonstrated that neighboring noble lords on Confederation’s eastern and northern boundaries feared that their own subjects would join the Swiss Confederation or form "New Switzerlands" and adopt communal forms of government. He writes,

The Swiss Confederacy reproduced itself by example, aided by the agitation of fighting men from the rural federations and money from the cities; and wherever their influence spread, noble power waned . . . . [it] presented two faces to the South German free cities. The oligarchs might see in it a federation of urban oligarchies like themselves, which Zurich, Lucerne, and Bern surely were; whereas peasants might take Uri, Schwyz, and Glarus as proof that ordinary folk needed no lords. To the nobles both faces might appear ugly, though not equally so, for both challenged the division of society into a few lords and many subjects; and both benefited from the enhancement of communal values of peace, unity, and justice through Christian symbols and language.16

Geneva and Lausanne entered treaties with Fribourg and Bern, which alarmed the duke of Savoy. Nobles in the Confederation’s western neighbors and the duke undoubtedly interpreted these alliances as efforts on the part of Bern and Fribourg to entice Geneva

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and Lausanne and their territories to “turn Swiss.” However, there is little evidence that demonstrates that the towns and peasants of Vaud wised to do the same.

In 1519, Fribourg, Bern, Lausanne, and Geneva signed treaties of mutual assistance (combourgeoisie). The treaties stipulated that Bern and Fribourg would protect Lausanne and Geneva from attack. They also obligated Lausanne and Geneva to provide military support to Bern and Fribourg when asked. The alliance created difficult situations for Catholic troops from Lausanne when they fought in Bern’s confessionally motivated wars. For example, they helped to put down rebellious Catholic peasants in the Berner Oberland (1528) and engaged the evangelical cantons alongside Bern in the First Battle of Cappel (1529). However, some Catholic soldiers converted during these campaigns and spread Reformation teachings in Lausanne and Geneva.

Measures Taken by the Estates of Vaud to Halt the Spread of the Reformation

From the perspective of religion, the estates of Vaud actively barred the Reformation from their territory. They first convened to deal with “Lutheran” heresy in May 1525. They declared Martin Luther’s teachings heretical and contrary to the true faith. They ordered no one to speak favorably of Luther or his teachings and promised to burn Luther’s books and punish anyone who possessed them. They threatened to burn

17 Bern had adopted the Reformation in early 1528.
persistent Lutheran heretics, although it is not known whether anyone suffered this fate.\textsuperscript{18}

The May 1525 edict read,

\ldots that no one of any estate or position whatsoever, subjects of our august, sovereign lord, (whether here or abroad) must not possess, buy, or keep any books by the said Martin Luther. And if such books are found, they will be burned. Thus, no person of any estate, degree, or position whatsoever shall speak at all of the said Martin Luther, either favoring or accepting him, or accepting and affirming any of his misguided, damnable opinions and allegations under the pain of being harshly incarcerated for three days and afterwards receiving publicly three whippings with the strap. The guilty will also pay, before leaving prison, the expenses of detention. And if afterwards the guilty one continues to profess the wrong and deceptive ideas mentioned above, either completely or partially, after having received the said whippings, he remains obstinate and stubborn, he will be burned as a misguided and disloyal heretic, along with his book[s] if he has any.\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{18} Tapy, Les états de Vaud, 444.

\textsuperscript{19} "\ldots que nulle personne, de quelque état, ou condition que ce soit, sujets de notre très-redouté seigneur, tant médiats que immédiats, ne doive avoir, acheter ni garder point de livre fait par ledit Martin Luther, et si point s’en trouve, que ledit livre soit brûlé. Item, que nulle personne, de quelque état, degré ou condition que ce soit, ne doit parler en matière quelconque dudit Luther, en le favorisant et maintenant, ou en maintenant et affirmant aucune de ses maudites et damnables opinions et allégations; et ce sous la peine d’être grièvement incarcérée trois jours durant, et au bout de trois jours de recevoir trois estrapades de corde publiquement, et doit payer, avant que de sortir de prison, les dépenses et missions faites à cause de ladite détention. Et si celui qui auroit voulu soutenir et maintenir les fausses et décevables opinions devant dites, en tout ou en partie, après avoir reçu lesdites estrapades, s’y veut être endurci et obstiné, qu’il doit être brûlé comme faux et déloyal hérétique avec son livre, si point en avoit." François-Théodore-Louis Grenus, ed., Documen[f]s relatifs à l’histoire du Pays de Vaud dès 1293 a 1750 (Geneva: Manget and Cherbulliez, 1817), 164.
The edict is the first mention of “Lutheranism” and the new creed in Vaud. The estates had acted to stop its spread from their territory. They were not reacting to supporters already in their region; historical evidence does not reveal a large or organized reformed movement in Vaud or Lausanne. It is possible that the number of evangelical cells was growing in Vaud, but it is more likely that in 1525, the estates were concerned that Luther’s teaching could cause rural unrest as it had in other parts of the Confederation and Empire in 1525. The Peasants’ War caused concern among these rural landholders.

Three years later concerns about Lutheranism surface again in the primary documents from Vaud. The bailiff alerted Fribourg about the measures the estates had taken against heretical “Lutherans” and he warned Fribourg against protecting anyone who violated the estate’s mandates. He did not care from where the heretics came; he vowed to punish them if they expounded their doctrine in Vaud. The bailiff wrote to Fribourg on January 9, 1528,

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20 *Lutheran* is a generic term that referred to all of the teachings of the new church, Zwinglian or Lutheran. It is found throughout the primary documents to refer to people who adopted the new teaching regardless of whether they propounded the specific theological ideas of Zwingli or Luther.


22 Ibid., 30-31.
The governor of Vaud informs you that for the preservation of the Holy Faith, some mandates have been released. If anyone goes against them, we ask that Fribourg will not protect the disobedient. In addition, if some subjects of Fribourg propound Lutheran beliefs in the duke’s territory, they too will be punished.  

This brief correspondence from the bailiff to Fribourg reveals that the estates continued to fear the new religious teaching. Clearly, they believed that “Lutherans” might have been coming from Fribourg or seeking refuge there.

By the time the bailiff penned this letter, 1528, the estates had good reasons to be more concerned about the religious situation. First, the Reformation had triumphed in Bern in the same year. Second, William Farel had been actively preaching in Aigle (in the Four Bailiwicks), a former part of the estates, since 1526. Third, the duke had called on his estates to take action on account of the fact that “. . . some in Geneva and Lausanne were sullied [by the new religious teachings].” Supporting the duke’s conviction, the prior of the chapter in Lausanne referred to Lutherans in his town, and the Fribourg nobleman, Humber de Paroman, noted in December 1529, in a letter to the

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23 "Der gouverneur der Waat bringt an, es seien zur erhaltung des heiligen glaubens etliche mandate ausgegangen; wenn jemand dawider täte, so wünschen sie, dass Freiburg ihn nicht beschütze, und wenn etliche untertanen von Freiburg im gebiet des Herzogs sich lutherisch zeigen wollten, so würden sie (hinwider) bestraft, etc.” Johannes Strickler, ed., Actensammlung zur schweizerischen Reformationsgeschichte in den Jahren 1521-1532 : Im Anschluss an die gleichzeitigen eidgenössischen Abschiede, 5 vols. (1878; reprint, Zurich: Theologische Buchhandlung, 1989), 1:589.


monks of that city, the presence of “Lutherans” there. In August 1530, de Paroman reported that there were Lutherans in Geneva who were traveling around the bishopric eating meat on days when such food was prohibited and encouraging the people to convert and stop paying their tithes.

In addition, in 1528, the estates reconfirmed the edict of 1523 that threatened punishment for “Lutherans.” In a show of their appreciation of Charles III’s resolute stance against the Reformation, the estates of Vaud sent a delegation to thank him for his attempts to quell heresy, but they wanted more. They asked the duke to establish an office dedicated to uncovering and punishing Lutherans and other heretics.

Religious Discontent on the Eve of the Conquest

Despite the fact that there was little attraction for the Reformation in Vaud, anticlerical sentiment abounded there as elsewhere in Europe in the sixteenth century.


28 Tapy, Les états de Vaud, 443.
The population complained about clerical improprieties and money-hungry, upper-level churchmen. Some called for a return to the true calling of the church—\textit{cura animarum}, the care of souls. The residents of Lausanne grumbled about the lazy, womanizing clerics with whom they shared the city. They accused them of neglecting their duties. They claimed that many no longer sang the Mass, but instead roamed the streets at night disguised as soldiers, armed with swords. They complained that churchmen played games, blasphemed, and neglected the sacraments during times of plagues when the laity needed their services. They asserted that they visited the local bordello. They even charged some of molesting girls. In one instance, the urban residents alleged that some men of the church had disguised a girl as a man to spirit her into their residence; when she left the house in the morning dead. The standard claims of monetary improprieties abound as well. Likewise, the laity held that the clerics were abusing their spiritual office, not adhering strictly to the doctrine of the church, and improperly excommunicating some laypeople. Others, it was claimed, married men to women even if the man already had one or two other wives. Finally, the laity claimed that the clerics beat and even injured them with weapons in their own homes.\footnote{Ruchat, \textit{Histoire de la réformation de la Suisse},1:233-34.}

Anticlerical complaints continued up to the eve of the Reformation. In 1533, the residents of Lausanne stated that members of the church harassed and threatened them
with excommunication. They claimed that the bishop had demeaned the people of his dioceses when he allegedly stated, “I will do it [as he pleased] until you and your children and your grandchildren beg on your knees.” Nevertheless, the town resolved with the bishop, the chapter, and clergy that the clerics could no longer keep prostitutes and concubines in their residences.  

**Preaching the Reformation in Vaud before the Conquest**

Interestingly, one preacher with Reformation leanings did gain entrance to Lausanne and even preached reformed ideas before the bishop of Lausanne, Sébastian de Montfalcon, in 1523, the same year that the estates issued their mandate that they hoped would stop the Reformation from entering their territory. Francis Lambert, a teacher and theologian from France, traveled through Lausanne and Zurich on his way to see Luther. He had written to the elector of Saxony and begged him for support. He also asked to be permitted to come to Saxony to learn at the feet of knowledgeable men, especially Luther. It is surprising that Lambert preached the tenets of Evangelical

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30 “Je ferai tant que vous & vos enfans, & les enfans de vos enfans, en ploreres sur vos genoux.” Ibid.

31 Ibid.


33 “Veni igitur Wittembergam, ut Verbum sanctum liberè administrem, saltem scriptis, saltem inter doctos. Aliquid nostri Martini consilio exordiar, vela Oseam prophetam, vel
belief before the bishop. On the other hand, Montfalcon was notoriously unlearned and did not recognize the doctrine as in conflict with official, proper Catholic teaching.

Luther knew about Lambert’s desire to come to Wittenberg from a letter that Georges Spalatin wrote to him on December 15, 1522. Spalatin refers to a Jean de Serres, the pseudonym that Lambert was using at the time, who might teach in Eisenach or in another place. Writing to Spalatin on December 26, 1522, Luther agreed that de Serres should be allowed to live for a time in Eisenach and teach what he could. He also agreed to meet with Lambert.

Later Lambert authored anticlerical pamphlets and treatises that were published in Germany and Switzerland, and might provide clues as to what he preached before the bishop of Lausanne. In his works, he criticized the Catholic clergy for its sins and


34 Herminjard, CRF, 1:106-07.

35 Herminjard, CRF, 1:107-08.

36 See François Lambert, Evangelici in Minoritarum regulam commentarii (Strassbourg: Johan Knobloch the Elder, 1524); idem, Ein evangelische Beschreibung über der Barfüsser Regel (Strassbourg: Johannes Schwan, 1524); idem, Von der gläubigen Menschen Berufung und Erforderung in das Reich Christi (Regensburg: Paul Kohl, 1526).
extravagance. He aimed his polemic at the pope and lower clergy. Indeed, he commented on practically every church office that he had ever heard of and when he did not know their names, he describes them. Interestingly, Susan C. Karant-Nunn has determined that his failure to mention the office of pastor reveals his ideal. She writes, “By the process of elimination, we see that Lambert looked forward to the retention of a reformed—New Testament-oriented and simplified—ecclesiastical hierarchy, in East as in West.”37

Historians have not demonstrated that Lambert’s appearance in Lausanne spread Reformation ideas in that town. There is no evidence that his visit sparked debate or an uproar. Yet, it remains a mystery as to how he gained an audience before the bishop of Lausanne in whose territory were the estates of Vaud, Fribourg, and Bern.

Three years after Lambert preached in Lausanne, William Farel moved to the town of Aigle in the Four Bailiwicks as an agent of the Bernese. Although this was no longer a part of the estates of Vaud, his presence in the region was disturbing. Farel was allowed to preach reformed principles because of Bern’s preaching mandates, which the council had passed before they formally adopted Reformation. Specifically the

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ordinance, *Viti et Modesti*, ordered that all preachers and those who employed them should make sure that sermons adhered to the Scripture alone.  

> It reads,

> You and all those who submit to and use preaching [are to] proclaim nothing other than alone the Holy Gospel and the teaching of God, [and to do it] freely, publicly, and unconcealed; similarly, [and you are to] protect, preserve, [and] proclaim what you can and may trust through the true Holy Scripture, such as the four Evangelists, Saint Paul, the prophets; [and you are to] proclaim the Bible, and [sic] the Old and New Testaments; and [you are to] leave completely out all other teaching, debates . . . [that are] not in accord with them, be they written by Luther or other doctors . . .

Other Swiss cities that eventually adopted the Reformation enacted similar ordinances. They were designed to quiet confessional unrest but they also enabled reformed preachers like Farel, to preach legally in Catholic pulpits.

Farel arrived in Switzerland from France when he was in his mid-thirties. He was a few years younger than Zwingli and Luther and older than his future fellow reformer of Geneva, Jean Calvin. He received the Master of Arts from the University of Paris and, like so many other later French reformers; he was a student of the famous Jacques le Fèvre d’Étaples. He left France during the intense period of anti-Evangelicalism in 1524.

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39 “. . . ir und alle die, so sich predigens underziehend und gebruchend, nützid anders, dann allein das heylig evangelium, und die leer gottes frey, öffentlich, und unverborgen: dessglychen, was ir getrüwend können und mögen durch die ware heylige geschriff, als die vier evangelisten, den hyligen Paulum, die propheten, und bybel, ourch das alt und nüw testament beschirmen und bewären, verkünden: und all ander leer disputation . . . ungemäss, sy sygind vom Luther oder anderen doctoribus gschriben oder ussgangen gantz und gar unterwegen lassen . . ." .Steck and Tobler, *Aktensammlung*, 66.
The peripatetic preacher spent time in Basel, Strasbourg, and Montbéliard. He was instrumental in the introduction of the Reformation in francophone Switzerland; he single handedly converted many throughout the region and agitated on behalf of the reformed faith. Although he would not receive the fame and recognition of Luther, Zwingli, or Calvin, his contribution to the course of religious change in Suisse Romande must not be underestimated.

Farel arrived in Aigle under the pseudonym of “Ursinus,” and Bern referred to him as “Ours.” Both words mean bear in Latin or French respectively. This was probably a reference to the symbol of the city of Bern, the bear. The pseudonym illustrated Bern’s support and approval of Farel’s mission in Aigle. He was their man and their religious agent in the Four Bailiwicks.

Other reformers were interested in Farel’s missionizing activities in Aigle. Martin Bucer, in Strasbourg, for instance, asked that Farel keep him appraised about his progress in his new mission. Likewise, Oecolampadius, the reformer of Basel, was pleased to learn about Farel’s new position in Aigle. He wished Farel well and expressed his excitement that the French reformer would be again preaching. He wrote, “What joy I

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40 Herminjard, CRF, 1:216.
feel in knowing that you are again preaching the Word.”  

Yet, at the same time, he warned Farel to proceed cautiously.

Farel maintained contact with reformed Europe through these exchanges. In a letter dated December 13, 1526, Bucer explained what was happening in the church in Basel and the tense relationship between the reformers in Strasbourg and Luther. Farel also learned of the debates and problems between the leaders of the Reformation. Although he was working in the hinterlands on behalf of the Gospel, he kept appraised about the course of events in Strasbourg, Basel, and Zurich.

While he exchanged letters with men in other parts of Europe, Farel had some early success locally. He had attracted a few followers to the new faith and celebrated the first reformed worship service on November 30, 1526. The local Bernese governor, Jacque de Rovéréa, gave Farel permission to preach as long as his message was founded on the true, pure Word of God. Slowly more locals came to his sermons, but Catholic clerics protested his presence. They drowned out his preaching by ringing bells. They declared that Farel was preaching without authorization. Likewise, the bishop of Sion, in whose district Aigle was located, lodged a complaint with the Bernese and ordered that no one should preach in his diocese who had not received his permission to do so. Farel

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41 “Gaudio magno percepi, te iterum annunciandi Verbi locum invenisse.” Herminjard, CRF, 1:468.
had only received permission from the secular governor of the region. This is an early indication of the council of Bern’s intent to manage church affairs, which it would do after it conquered the territory. Eventually Bern superseded the bishop and stated that Farel had its authority to preach in Aigle.

While the population was not attracted to Farel, he was not enamored with them. He found his rural audience in Aigle difficult. In a letter to Zwingli, Farel described what he was encountering as he tried to spread the new message to the rural inhabitants of Vaud. He complained that the people were ignorant and mired in the superstitions of the old faith. He noted that he had tried to enlighten them about the errors of purgatory and the invocation of saints. He had adopted certain strategies for teaching the new faith to these ignoramuses. He writes that he is proceeding slowly because the people were rough and stupid. 42 In a later letter, he calls the people living around Aigle, barbarians. 43

Regardless of resistance and ignorance, Farel continued to preach not only in Aigle but made forays into other regions of Suisse Romande that were under Bern’s influence, and where the right to preach according to the Gospel was guaranteed. The Bernese used Farel to spread the Gospel and thus called him to a new city in 1530. In

42 “Lentius perrexi, ruditatis (ne dixerim stupiditatem) populi hujus ac viciniae habita ratione multa papistica amarissimo perferens animo, rogatus nonnunquam rationem reddens involutam, ne veritati mihi posthac planius aperiendae fraudi sit, aut auditorem profliget, in genere tantum, et ut dicunt, in superficie attingens.” Herminjard, CRF, 2:20.

43 Ibid., n. 10.
that year, Farel became the pastor of the town of Morat. It was located closer to Payerne and the Common Lordships, places where the Gospel could be preached legally.

The Reformation in Bern

A full account of the Reformation in Bern (1528) is not needed to understand the impact this event had on religion in Vaud and the concern it caused in francophone Switzerland, but a brief summary will be useful. The Reformation in Bern was a product of the events that had occurred several years before in Zurich. There was an exchange of ideas and men between the two cities, and Reformation ideas were preached in Bern long before the council officially adopted the new creed.

The debate between the Reformed and Catholic camps in Bern continued although cautiously. The slower approach to reform demonstrated that there was not a clear majority in favor of adopting the Reformation. In 1525, Bern abolished indulgences, seized some land from the church, removed certain clerical privileges, and ruled that clergy must reside in their parishes. Moreover, the faithful were no longer forced to go on pilgrimages, confess, or believe in purgatory. By 1527, Reformation supporters gained a majority on the council. At this point, the council called for a disputation to be held to decide matters of faith in January 1528. In November 1527 they

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issued an invitation to all clergy in the their francophone territories to come to Bern for the disputation. Farel had translated the invitation and the accompanying theses into French.  

From January 6-26, 1528, the participants debated matters of faith and practice. The Bernese pastors Francis Kolb and Berchtold Haller led the reformed camp in the dispute. Haller, who was neither a profound thinker nor an energetic reformer, was a disciple of Zwingli. The debated focused on ten theses, including that the Church of Christ could not make laws that were not founded in the Scriptures, that the Scriptures did not support transubstantiation, that the Mass was an abomination, that images were idols, and that clergy should be allowed to marry.

The council invited the bishops of Constance, Basel, Sion, and Lausanne and their theologians and educated men. The Bernese council threatened to revoke the bishops’ rights and authority in Bern’s territory if they did not attend the disputation. Likewise all clerics were ordered to attend or risk losing their benefices. The invitation states,

We wish and order that all curates, preachers of the Gospel and all of whatever estate they may be, those who have the office of teacher and the office of pastor,

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45 Herminjard, CRF, 2:54-60.

46 Pfister, Kirchengeschichte, 2:72.

47 Herminjard, CRF, 2:55.

if they are in our territory and exercise that office, to come to the disputation and
discuss and debate the Scriptures. Otherwise, they will be deprived of their
benefices.\(^49\)

Although the bishop of Lausanne was invited, he allegedly fell off his horse and injured
himself too severely to attend. Moreover, he lacked the theological experts to participate.

By the end of January, the outcome was clear. The Evangelical camp was far
better prepared and had such luminaries as Zwingli, Oecolampadius, Bucer, Wolfgang
Capito, and Farel to present its case. The Reformation was adopted in a 200 to 48 vote.

On February 2, 1528, the citizens of Bern agreed to accept the council’s decision, and on
February 7, 1528, the Reformation mandate was issued. The churches were cleansed of
their idols. Catholic bishops no longer had authority in Bern. Men and women were not
to attend the Mass, but their “consciences were not to be forced.”

Next, the council turned its attention to enforcing the Reformation in the rural
parishes, many of which were located close to Catholic territory and were reluctant to
adopt the changes. In a move that would foreshadow the Reformation in the Common
Lordships, Bern allowed the men of each parish to vote for the creed that they wished to
prevail in their village or local church. According to the procedure, the residents could
not be forced to adopt the Reformation, yet at the same time the Evangelicals could not

\(^{49\text{ "... Nous volons et commendons, que tous curés, prescheurs de l’Evangile, et tous, de
quelque estat qu’ils soient, qui ont l’office d’enseigner et office de pasture, où qu’il soit,
sur les Nostres, et qui exercent l’office, qu’il viègnent à la présente, bataillent de
l’Escripture et disputent. Autrement ilz seront privés de leur bénéfices." Herminjard,
CRF, 2:57.}}
be forced to return to Catholicism. Once the vote went in favor of the Reformed camp, the churches would be cleansed immediately and the Mass banned completely. Clearly, these rules favored the eventual disappearance of Catholic parishes, and gave the Bernese an advantage that would be apparent again in the Pays de Vaud.

In February 1528, Bern ordered all representatives of the various parishes to assemble in their villages. They used this method to ensure that the communes were not aware of how the others were voting. Many of the pastors who had participated in the disputation and derived from the rural villages agreed to the disputation’s conclusions. Regardless of their support, the inhabitants of the parishes did not support the new faith.

In a letter from Haller to Zwingli and in the Bernese council minutes, it appears that the Huttwil, Lenzburg, Frutigen, and Obersimmental rejected the Bernese Reformation. Hermann Specker concludes that those rural parishes that supported the Reformation did so because of the opportunity to loosen the grip of the ecclesiastical landholders. On the other hand, some peasants of this region were angered by the fact that when they did vote for Reform, their obligations simply transferred from the ecclesiastical landlords to the city of Bern. For these reasons the villages of Frutigen, Adelboden, and Oberhasli returned to the Mass and searched Catholic territory for priests to care for their souls.

50 Pfister, Kirchengeschichte, 2:75.
51 Specker, Die Reformationswrren, 23.
52 Pfister, Kirchengeschichte, 2:76.
In the fall of 1528, war broke out between Bern and some villages in the Oberland.

Nearly one thousand peasants from the Oberland massed to march on the capital. In the end, Bern prevailed in forcing the Oberland to adopt the Reformation, although it required arms and military force to bring the unruly peasants to heel.

The successful introduction of the Reformation in Bern eliminated religion as a shared, unifying characteristic that bound Bern to the Pays de Vaud. Moreover, after Bern mandated the Reformation for its city and land, it was no longer part of the bishopric of Lausanne to which the Pays de Vaud belonged as well. Read against the background of these events, the estate’s actions in the late 1520’s to stop the spread of the Reformation is a reflection of the growing threat brewing outside of their territory rather than an indication that groups of Reformation supporters were growing in the Pays de Vaud. Indeed, they keenly assessed the situation; Bern had already ordered Farel to begin preaching in a number of villages that bordered the estates’ territories.

The Final Conflict before Conquest

In 1526 Bern, Fribourg, and Geneva renewed their alliance. Once again, the specter of Swiss meddling caused concern for the duke and bishop who tried to compel the city of Geneva to renounce.\textsuperscript{53} The duke interpreted this alliance as an affront to his

\textsuperscript{53} Pierrefleur records, "La cause de leur différend était que les dits de Genève avaient fait alliances et bourgeoisie avec les seigneurs de Berne et Fribourg contre le vouloir du
authority in the region. According to historian Henri Naef, the duke and bishop were right in their assessments. Naef writes, “...The combourgeoisie of 1526 virtually transformed the city [of Geneva] into an autonomous power.”

To persuade them of their errors, the duke blockaded Geneva, disrupted its trade, and stole supplies and goods that were headed for the city’s markets. The Genevans retaliated. They attacked surrounding villages that were loyal to the duke and harassed his supporters. They also called on their alliance partners for assistance. Fribourg was eager to help the Genevans; however, Bern was at first reluctant to become involved in another conflict while confessional problems were brewing within the Confederation.

The duke enjoyed the support of some local nobles and the bishop of Geneva. Together these men formed a military league, the Confrérie de la Cullier (Brotherhood of the Spoon), to assist the duke. Members sported a gold spoon on a silk ribbon around prince Charles, duc de Savoie.” Louis Junod, ed., Mémoires de Pierrefleur (Lausanne: Imprimerie la Concorde, 1933), 8.

54 Naef, L’ère de la triple combourgeoisie, 10-11.

55 Gilliard, La cônquete, 24.

56 Ibid., 25.

57 Paquier, Le Pays de Vaud, 240.

58 Members of the Confrérie de la Cullier (Brotherhood of the Spoon) included Michel Mangerot, baron of la Sarraz; Michel, son of the duke of Gruyère; Henri de Cojonnex, lord of Saint-Martin of Chêne; François de Gingis, baron of Châtelard; Claude de Dortans, lord of l’isle and of Bercher; Amédée de Beaufort, baron of Rolle; François de Saint-Saphorin. The nobles of Goumoëns, Gingins, Vufflens, d'Allaman, Mont, Perroy,
their necks as a public display of their membership in the brotherhood. The brotherhood amassed weapons for a planned siege of Geneva. The brotherhood’s pillaged local trade and supplies routes, which provoked Bern and Fribourg, both of which wanted safe trade routes to Geneva. Tension continued mounted between residents of Geneva, the brotherhood, the duke, and the bishop in the late 1520’s and early 30’s. In a final provocation, Genevans killed a noble member of the confrérie. The duke and his supporters assembled nearly four thousand men outside Geneva’s walls and assaulted the city for three days. 

The blockade of Geneva compelled Bern to honor its treaty, take up arms, and aid its ally. Bern sent a contingent of five thousand men who joined thirty-five hundred from Fribourg, five hundred from Solothurn, and additional troops from Payerne and Neuchatel to liberate Geneva. Although there was little open resistance, “les allemands,” as the Swiss were called, pillaged towns and villages that did not welcome


59 Junod, Pierrefleur, 8.

60 Ibid., 7-8.

61 Ibid., 8; Paquier, Le Pays de Vaud, 241.

62 Gilliard, La côrquete, 25; Paquier, Le Pays de Vaud, 241.
and support them. Local noblemen, who were members of the brotherhood or supported Charles III, lost their castles; the Swiss torched noble residences in Vufflens, Allaman, Perroy, Rolle, Vincy, and Bursins.

The Swiss sacked the town of Morges including the Franciscan monastery in the most violent incident of the invasion. Regardless of the fact that nearly half of the Swiss soldiers derived from Catholic Fribourg and Solothurn, the army occupied the convent and stabled its horses in the nave. The soldiers burned art, sculptures, precious documents, and books. They defaced and gouged the eyes of images that did not burn. They stole church property including ornaments, sacred vessels, and chalices. Pierrefleur records that the army remained in Morges and continued its destruction for five days.

Interestingly troops from both Reformed Bern and Catholic Fribourg committed the iconoclasm. Perhaps the bishop of Geneva’s support for the duke meant that the troops regarded religious houses as military targets. By this time, combatants used iconoclasm as a weapon in both religious and non-religious conflict. Certainly, in this

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64 Ibid.

65 Ibid., 242.

case, the religious and terrestrial motives for war blended because the bishop of Geneva supported duke of Savoy in his conflict with Evangelical and Catholic Swiss confederates. That Catholic troops also participated in the destruction, however, reveals their ambiguousness about the differences between Evangelical and Catholic teaching and the meaning of the military action they were taking.

The Swiss allies liberated Geneva on October 10, 1530, after a rapid march across Vaud. They remained in the city for eight days. On October 19, 1530, they negotiated the Treaty of Saint Julien and signed it in December 1530. The duke was ordered to pay an indemnity to Geneva, Bern, and Fribourg. He was also obliged to stop harassing Geneva and mortgage the Pays de Vaud to Bern and Fribourg. According to Paquier, these terms ensured future conflict between the parties. He writes,

This clause [the indemnity] was critical for the fate of our country: it represented no less than a legitimation of Bern’s greed towards the Pays de Vaud. As Bern was resolute about receiving its indemnity one day or the other, and Charles III, for his part was not inclined to leave Geneva alone, the conquest of the Pays de Vaud inevitably came quickly.

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Towns and local nobles were obliged to pay the indemnity agreed to in the treaty. Those that did not pay were imprisoned.\footnote{Ibid., 243-44.}

The duke returned to survey the damage and to convene his estates once the Swiss troops withdrew from Vaud. At the meeting, the estates urged the duke to enter cooperative agreements with both Bern and Fribourg to avoid future conflicts. The estates foresaw the inevitable. They asked the duke for financial assistance to rebuild and improve the military defenses of the region. Finally, the estates dispatched envoys to Bern, Fribourg, and Solothurn to plead with these cities not to invade the region again, and to give the duke more time to pay the restitution.\footnote{Ibid., 244.} According to Paquier, these diplomatic trips, undertaken by local nobles, are evidence that the duke of Savoy was weak and ineffective, and that the fear of renewed conflict gripped the region.\footnote{Ibid.}

Fribourg’s participation in the 1530 liberation of Geneva underscores the complex and interconnected nature of the causes of the conflict between the Confederation members, the duke of Savoy, and the estates of Vaud. By 1530, Bern believed that it needed to protect fellow Evangelicals in Geneva.
Bern referred to the need to protect the co-religionists in Geneva in its official directives. Fribourg’s councilors had to choose between honoring their alliance and assisting Bern achieve its confessional goals. The city of Fribourg was in a difficult situation; it was sandwiched between Bern and Vaud. Much of its territory bordered reformed land. It needed to keep Bern content because of that city’s military strength. Participation with Bern might also result in territorial gains for Fribourg, if it captured part of the duke’s lands. Moreover, Fribourg did not wish to become isolated from the region and leave Bern as the sole member of the Confederation with influence in Vaud. Indeed historians have noted the paradoxical nature of Fribourg’s policies.

Fribourg did not give up its faith to assist Bern, nor did it intend to weaken its confessional stance within the Confederation. It stood resolutely alongside the other Catholic cantons against the Reformation and Zurich when it signed the *Glaubenskonkordat* in 1525. Rather, Fribourg’s cooperation with Bern against the duke of Savoy was intended to further its own expansionist desires, keep its powerful neighbor Bern at bay, and enable it to maintain its own creed within its borders. Fribourg’s alliance with Bern does not hint at religious wavering; however, religious matters alone did not determine its politics, and sometimes it did not adhere strictly to the position of

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the other Catholic cantons. Instead, Fribourg was also motivated by economic considerations. Fribourg, a cloth-manufacturing city, relied on the fairs of Geneva to sell its goods. It was imperative that the blockade and the harassment of the city end. Historians of Fribourg have described the split nature of Fribourg’s positions. They write,

The first priority was to avoid a complete geographic isolation of the city on the Sanne [Fribourg] which explains the peculiar contrast between Fribourg’s rigid and unbending domestic policy with respect to the followers of the new creed and its very moderate, conciliatory foreign policy. Apparently, the authorities of Fribourg did not feel a desire to participate with the Catholic cities which would have thereby necessarily endangered the unity of the Confederation.⁷⁶

At a certain point, Fribourg could no longer maintain its treaty obligations because of confessional differences and it withdrew from the combourgeoisie in 1534.⁷⁷ Bern’s religious authorities had proposed a preaching clause to be included in the Treaty of Saint Julien. They requested that preachers have free access to all of the duke’s territory. They believed that the population should choose which services to attend.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ "In erster Linie gilt es, eine völlige geographische Isolation der Saanestadt zu verhindern, und so lässt sich denn auch der merkwürdige Zwiespalt zwischen einer harten und kompromisslosen Innenpolitik den Neugläubigen gegenüber und einer doch recht gemässigten und konzilianten Aussenpolitik erklären. Anscheinend verspürt die Freiburger Obrigkeit kein allzu grosse Lust, das Spiel der katholischen Orte, das die Einheit der Eidgenossenschaft notwendigerweise gefährden musste, mitzumachen." Ibid.

⁷⁷ Gilliard, La cônquete, 31.
Fribourg’s withdrawal signaled an opportunity to the duke and the bishop of Geneva to renew their efforts to seize control of the city. Realizing the danger, the council of Geneva alerted Lausanne, Fribourg, and Bern about the latest threats. They concluded, “We do not wish to hide from our allies that the Savoyards are attempting again to seize our city . . . .”

In order to avoid another war, a meeting between the duke of Savoy and Bern was slated for November 15, 1534. The points of disagreement centered on religion. The duke proposed that the Genevans should remain in the faith of their fathers and that the powers of the bishop should be restored. Bern countered that faith was a gift from God and could not be forced on others. Bern demanded that Evangelical preachers have free access to Geneva and the rest of the Pays de Vaud. It insisted that all people in Vaud should be free to attend reformed preaching without fear of reprisal or violence. Charles refused to grant such liberal access to his lands. The two sides deadlocked over

78 Grenus, Documents 179.


81 Gilliard, La conquête, 31.
religion. From Pierrefleur’s perspective, the Evangelical preachers were bringing the conflict to the point of war.

What was agreed upon . . . brought hope, that day, for complete peace, but that was not to come to pass due to the fact that the preachers from Geneva would not stop their preaching. 82

Tensions mounted between the duke and Bern throughout 1535 over the situation with Geneva. The residents of Geneva pleaded for Bern’s help in the face of the renewed blockade by men loyal to the duke. Bern was reluctant to become embroiled once again in the situation. Other reformed confederation members informed Bern that they would not support a conflict primarily because they were concerned not to be dragged into a war that would expand Bern’s territory and power. Religion and the desire to protect Evangelicals turned Bern’s reluctance into support for the Genevans. Indeed, Geneva formally adopted the reformed creed in August 1535. This religious conversion encouraged Bern to act more swiftly in looking for a solution, and brought military support from independent mercenaries who were willing to fight for their co-religionists. For instance, Jacques Wildermuth from Biel raised approximately 500-600 troops to assist the Genevans. 83 Bern renounced this move and alerted Geneva that they would no

82 “. . . Ce qui fut ainsi accordé . . . fut remise la journée sus espérance de paix entière, laquelle journée ne put sortir à son effet, à cause que les dits prédicants étant au dit Genève ne voulurent cesser leur prédications.” Junod, Pierrefleur, 81.

83 Gilliard, La côñquete, 37.
longer support the city if it accepted volunteer troops. Regardless, Wildermuth did defeat a contingent of Savoyard troops. Bernese representatives convinced these volunteer soldiers to return to their homes, even though they were unable to rescue Geneva.

Charles III pursued the Catholic cantons of the Confederation for assistance. He cast the matter in a confessional light to motivate his Swiss co-religionists, but in this case, they were reluctant to enter a conflict that would once again pit members of the Confederation against one another. The Catholics had achieved their victory only several years before in the Second Battle of Cappel when they defeated the Protestants.

Religion, the desire to ensure the free preaching of the Gospel by reformed pastors, and the desire to protect its co-religionists in Geneva propelled Bern towards war once again with the duke of Savoy. Bern’s adoption of the Reformation in 1528 injected religion into the equation that its council calculated. By this time, Fribourg was no longer a member of the alliance. For more than a decade, Bern had actively worked towards planting the seeds of the new faith in the parts of the Pays de Vaud that it had controlled since the Burgundian War. Now with war once again looming, Bern was poised to use military conquest for spiritual gain.
CHAPTER 2

EARLY EFFORTS AT PERSUASION IN THE COMMON LORDSHIPS AND FOUR BAILIWICKS

After 1528, the city republic of Bern forced its subjects within and outside its walls to adopt the Reformation and abandon the Mass. This was a top-down Reformation; Bern did not negotiate matters of religion with its population once its council had decided to adopt the new faith. Some on the council and many in the countryside supported Roman Catholicism. Indeed, Bern and the peasants in its rural hinterland nearly went to war over the forced conversion. Nevertheless, the city would not accept religious pluralism within its territory.¹ That would have signaled disunity and weakness to other powers.

Bern also intended for its francophone territories, including the Four Bailiwick. Bern’s sole lordship afforded it greater leeway in converting the population. It banned the Mass, dismissed Catholic clergy, seized ecclesiastical wealth, and issued religious ordinances to correct problems as they arose. It also turned to William Farel to continue preaching the Gospel in the territory and to find other men to assist him. In the years examined here, 1526-1537, the ecclesiastical authorities in Bern had not yet formulated a reformed, French catechism, introduced new church music, outlined the doctrine that even the simplest Christian should know, or instituted consistories to police adherence to the new faith. Each of these tools is familiar to historians who study the process of conversion and indoctrination, but they do not make their appearance in Vaud until much later in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

Even before its adoption of the Reformation, Bern had authorized William Farel to take up residence in the town of Aigle and begin planting the seeds of the Reformation in that rural town. The council had passed the 1523 preaching ordinance that sanctioned his mission as long as he preached according to the Gospel and avoided inflammatory rhetoric.² Farel worked in Aigle in the mid-1520’s under the guise of a school teacher, but he celebrated the first reformed Lord’s Supper as the region’s first Evangelical pastor in 1526.³ Nevertheless, until 1528, the Catholic Church continued as the official church in both Bern and its possessions.

² Steck and Tobler, Aktensammlung, 65-68.

³ Robert Centlivres and Otto Strasser, "La première conquête de la réforme en pays romand: le séjour de Farel à Aigle, de novembre 1526 à janvier 1530," in Guillaume
After that date, Bern proceeded with a full Reformation of the church in the Four Bailiwicks. It demonstrated its seizure of ecclesiastical authority and power when it systematically dismissed Catholic clerics who occupied the local pulpits. It signaled to all, both clerical and lay, that it was serious about introducing the Reformation. Next, it replaced the Catholic clergy with new, reform-minded pastors.

Immediately after the Disputation of Bern, Bern named Farel the new preacher in Aigle. The Catholic priest and vicar lost their positions.\(^4\) A few days later, the Bernese removed the priest from the parish in Les Ormonts without naming a replacement.\(^5\) After it had removed the priest in Bex, Bern ordered the council in that village to accept the new pastor whom Farel had nominated.\(^6\)

Although there were other Catholic parishes in the region, these were the largest and offered the highest visibility for the Reformation. Moreover, Bern had to act strategically; it was desperately short of French speaking pastors. In 1528, there were

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\(^5\) Herminjard, CRF, 2:237.

\(^6\) Herminjard, CRF, 2:234.
only three other men who were working alongside Farel in the francophone territory.\textsuperscript{7}

Even if it had wished to place more pastors in Catholic pulpits, it simply did not have enough men to carry the Gospel to the people.

Moreover, Bern was dependent on one man, William Farel, to locate French-speaking men who were willing and able to begin preaching the Gospel in francophone Switzerland. It relied on his contacts outside of the Confederation, especially in Strasbourg, to locate men willing to toil in Vaud’s rocky spiritual fields. In some cases, Bern ceded control over naming the pastors in the parishes to Farel. For instance in Bex it informed its lieutenants that Farel was completely in charge of clerical appointments.

The local Vaudois authorities did not always act quickly to carry out Bern’s orders and dismiss the Catholic clergy. Many of the Catholic occupants had occupied their parishes for a number of years and were accepted members of the rural communities. As I shall demonstrate in a later chapter, some villagers even protested their removal. In other cases, local administrators were reluctant to remove the old clerics because of familial ties and the power that the clerics commanded. Many regional authorities had obtained their positions of influence because of their family names, history, and prestige in Vaud. Members of elite families often held positions both inside

\textsuperscript{7} I arrive at this number based on my analysis of the primary sources and Vuilleumier, “Ministres du Saint-Evangile”.
and outside of the church. For instance, the bishop of Lausanne himself was often a member of the noble house of Savoy. It complicated matters for Bern when local authorities were not only loyal to the Catholic faith, but bound to the Catholic clergy through social or familial ties. When Bern dismissed Nicolaus de Diesbach to make room for Farel in Aigle, his brother and one of Bern’s lieutenants, Felix de Diesbach, was slow to act. Nicholas was an important man: he was also the prior of the Benedictines in Grandson and co-administrator of the diocese of Basel. He had extensive connections in France, especially with the Benedictine house in Besançon. He was also the curé in both the parishes of Bex and Aigle. Felix tried to hinder Farel from preaching the Gospel and was reluctant to remove his brother. Indeed, the Bernese retired Felix and replaced him with an Evangelical lieutenant, Hans Franz Näegli.

Bern may have kept the current Catholic pastors in their parishes, if they had only accepted the Reformation. None did. Bern used their recalcitrance to justify their removal. It dismissed the pastor in Bex, for example, because he had rejected the ten theses of the Disputation in Bern. Similarly, it recalled that Jean Grandis, the canon of

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9 Ibid.

10 "Davantaige, entendons que Columbi est constituy prescheur à Bex, luy non estant souffisant, ne conforme à nostre mandement et X articles." Herminjard, CRF, 2:135-36.
the church in Lausanne and absent priest in Les Ormonts, had participated on the Catholic side at the Disputation of Bern.\footnote{Herminjard, CRF 2:139; Centlivres, "Les 'Quatre Mandements'," 173.}

Bern not only cited the Catholic priests’ public stance against the Reformation or their participation at the Disputation of Bern, but also defended its orders by drawing on common anticlerical criticisms. Nicholas de Diesbach represented the rapacious and greedy clerics who held multiple benefices \textit{in absentia}.\footnote{"Car avons finalement ordonné et concluz de non plus souffrir que le dict coadjuteur de Diesbach tiène ne possède tieuls bénéfices, par luy ne son vicaires, ains soy contente d'ung bénéfice en nostre pays et rière nous, et que ne nous faisse empaiche quelconque ès collations des bénéfices. Car ainsy l'avons par cy-devant en tous nous pays pourveuz, que ung prestre soy contente d'ung bénéfice, et que toutes pensions des bénéfices soyent cassés et nulles, comme chose contre Dieuz, controuvée par les hommes contre raison et équité, pour assourtir leur avarice. Herminjard, CRF, 2:143.} Similarly, Jean Grandis rarely preached in the village from which he drew his income\footnote{Centlivres, "Les 'Quatre Mandements'," 173.} In each of the four parishes, vicars served in the stead of the absent priests. Bern reminded the people of Les Ormonts that if they accepted the Reformation, then they would take a step away from such greedy priests and protect their own souls.\footnote{"... en acceptant l'Évangile et délaisant les cérémonies des hommes que n'ont point de fundement en la saincte Escription, ains controuvées pour accomplir l'avarice des prestres, à grandes perditions des âmes." Herminjard, CRF, 2:158.} Bern’s decision to include these complaints in their dismissal orders was both motivated by true religious concern about the state of the former clergy, but was also an attempt to rally the population to support its directives.
Once the Reformation was enacted in the Four Bailiwicks, men trickled in from Strasbourg, France, and Zurich. Farel’s relationships with the Strasbourg reformers served him well in this regard. Farel had never met most of the men before they arrived to preach; others were making crucial decisions about the men suited to be pastors. For instance, in 1528, Capito wrote to Farel and explained that he was sending him a young man to assist him in evangelizing. The young man, who is never named in the letter, was probably a former Franciscan friar. He had only recently been released from his vows, and Capito jokes about the young man’s appearance and transformation from Catholic friar to Protestant pastor. He calls him a pious, French-speaking man who wants to spread the Gospel.¹⁵

The men in Strasbourg did not always agree about the suitability of the pastors they were sending to Farel. In some cases, the decision about whom to send was influenced more by interpersonal relations than the candidate’s ability or merit. Bucer,

for instance, disagreed with Capito’s choice. He wrote to warn Farel that the young man Capito was dispatching was untested and weak. He advised Farel to keep his eye on him and to be firm and severe.\textsuperscript{16} At the end of his letter, Bucer notes in a postscript that he is sending another young man to aid him, this one eloquent and virtuous.\textsuperscript{17}

Not all of the early pastors were up to the task. The Parisian Christophe Arbaleste arrived in Vaud by way of Strasburg and Zurich. He was an acquaintance of Bucer and Capito. He may have fled France because of his faith and moved to Zurich where he practiced medicine.\textsuperscript{18} In the late 1520’s, he left Zurich to work as a pastor alongside Farel.\textsuperscript{19} Farel knew that Arbaleste was in Zurich and requested his assistance.\textsuperscript{20}


\textsuperscript{17} "(P.S.) "Mittimus juvenem Aegidium, mire innocentem et optimo judicio praeditum, quem puto et facundiā tibi profuturum." Herminjard, CRF, 2:114.

\textsuperscript{18} Herminjard, CRF, 2:241, n. 1.

\textsuperscript{19} Herminjard, CRF, 2:241, 244.

\textsuperscript{20} "Christophorus Gallus istic agit quantum audio, cui tu adfuisti, ut medicinam profiteretur. Aliō Domīnus, ut spero, virum vocat, curationi animorum ut sit intentus. Simon, qui nuper in ministerium fuit cooptatus, istum non ineptum prorsus ad Verbum judicat, quamvis naevos non inficiet, qui vel facilè in his saxis rescindi possint.; nec potest talis esse, qui multo nobis commodior non sit lupis, quos hīc ferre cogimur, penuriā pastorum." Herminjard, CRF, 2:149.
letter dated at the end of July 1528, Arbaleste wrote to Zwingli to confirm that he would assist Farel once he had received authorization from the chief pastor in Bern, Berchtold Haller. However, Arbaleste did not meet Farel’s expectations. Even if he was short of men, Farel did have standards. He accused Arbaleste of being lazy and although Farel believed that he was an adequate preacher, he feared that the Frenchman’s commitment to the Reformation was waning.  

Some potential pastors themselves feared that they were unfit to assist Farel. These concerns may have derived from inexperience, youth, or other phobias. Boniface Wolfhard, another correspondent of Farel’s from Strasbourg, recommended a young man named Louis as a candidate to go into service in Vaud. Wolfhard knew that Louis was reluctant and fearful, but this mattered little. God works in mysterious ways and could use the young man. Wolfhard wrote to Farel, “For God knows the objects of opportunity and draws them to this ministry. Certainly he produced the proof which is in you and many others.”

Not all of these first missionaries were neophytes. Remarkably, some were well traveled and equally well educated. William du Moulin, for instance, had met Farel in

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21 Herminjard, CRF, 2:174.

22 “Novit enim Dominus, objecta oportunitate, vel extrudere quos ad hoc ministerium sibi delegit, cujus quidem specimen cùm in te, tum plerisque aliis, prodidit.” Herminjard, CRF, 2:171.
1524 in Strasbourg. Du Molin was an ex-monk who had traveled to Wittenberg for the “Word of God.” In fact, Martin Luther had asked the elector of Saxony if he could spare a few florins to support him. Later, du Molin returned to Strasbourg before moving on to Aigle. The council of Bern ordered the bailiff in Aigle to accept du Molin and follow Farel’s orders regarding him. According to Farel, du Molin was a good preacher and may have helped to spread the desire to have Evangelical pastors in regions of Vaud that were not yet under Bern’s command. Indeed, Farel explains to Bucer that their [that of du Molin and Farel] labor had caused their neighbors to desire ministers of God’s word. However, Farel did not wish to cause problems and noted that he could not post men in the duke of Savoy’s territory.

The corps of pastors in Vaud grew slowly before the conquest in 1536. Between 1528 and 1529, only three pastors were preaching in the region. These were Simon Robert, Christophe Arbaleste, and Claude Diendonné. All three were former Catholic clerics and had derived from points outside the Confederation. Later Jacques Camerle, Claude de Glant, Alexandre le Bel, Antoine Marcourt, and du Molin joined them. On the

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23 “Nous avons de plus à vous faire savoir, que les prédicateurs de Strasbourg, sur la demande de maître Guillaume Farel, prédicateur de votre ressort, nous ont expédié le docte personnage que nous vous envoyons . . . Vous seconderez le susdit Farel dans ce qu’il décidera relativement à l’emploi du dit personnage et vous ferez pour le mieux.” Herminjard, CRF, 2:168.

24 Herminjard, CRF, 2:179.
eve of the Reformation, about a dozen pastors were preaching in francophone territory. This was far short of the numbers Bern would need if it hoped to staff the 160-odd parishes that dotted the countryside. By 1536, that number doubled. Nearly forty men fanned out in the “newly won” territory with the hope of bringing it firmly into the Reformation fold. Nevertheless, even after the conquest, Catholic clerics rejected the Reformation; therefore, foreigners continued to carry out the Reformation on the ground. This was, then, not just a Reformation “from above” but also a Reformation “from without.”

Farel, as the principal and first reformer in the region, set the standards by which to judge his assistants. In many of his early letters, Farel uses martial language to describe the task of the pastors. He warns potential pastors that they would work continuously for little reward. He expects them to be steadfast in their conversion and conviction. Above all, he wants them to preach the pure Word of God.

Bern quickly installed its new pastors because it believed in the power of preaching to convert listeners. Moreover, it considered itself bound through religion to spread the new teachings to enlighten as many of God’s people as it could. It demonstrated this confidence in the preached Word when it attempted to include in the Treaty of St. Julien, which ended the first conflict with the duke of Savoy, a clause that allowed for the free preaching of the Gospel in the estates’ territory. Later, the surrender
agreements it concluded after the 1536 invasion contained similar stipulations. Similarly, it dispatched Farel to throughout the region to preach.

Unfortunately no sermons survive that might inform historians about what was preached in the Four Bailiwicks. One can only conclude that the men that Farel was receiving from other points in Reformation Europe knew the rudiments of Evangelical teaching. Given the fact that the sermon became the focal point of the Reformed service, the primary mission of the new pastors was to preach the Word. Bern did not provide the pastors with specific guidelines about how to craft their sermons or what to preach. Instead, pastors were to give sermons that met the spiritual needs of their individual congregations. The divines in the capital explained that pastors should read and study the Scripture and meditate on its meaning. By doing so, they believed that the pastor


26 "C'est pourquoi nous devons et voulons nous exhorter les uns les autres, et nous aider de bon coeur à ce que chacun de nous médite l'Ecriture et se l'applique, comme il a été dit, en vue de son propre perfectionnement. Qu'après cela chacun considère l'état de son Eglise, à laquelle il doit faire part de ce qu'il a compris . . . Ainsi donc, il n'est pas nécessaire de prescrire des règles détaillées; la vérité elle-même a son siège dans les coeurs, et l'amour de Dieu la communique." Le Synode de Berne, Ordonnance sur la conduite que doivent observer les pasteurs et prédicants de la ville et du canton de Berne dans leur doctrine et dans leur vie. Avec un traité sur Christ et sur les sacrements, adopté dans le Synode réuni à Berne, le 9me de janvier de 1532. (1532; reprint, with an introduction by Henri Meylan, Lausanne: Imprimerie Centrale, 1936), 150-51; Lee Palmer Wandel, "Switzerland," in Preachers and the People in the Reformations and Early Modern Period, ed. Larissa Taylor (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 236-37.
would construct a speech that instructed his congregation in the Word and provided solutions to spiritual and worldly problems.

Pastors preached multiple times each week. Weekday sermons could be informal—the authorities did not require the preacher to mount the elevated altar, and the sermon could be only a simple spiritual message. The main purpose of the sermons was to lead the simple to Christ through his Word, the authorities explained.

Some pastors complained to Bern that few people attended the sermons, but the authorities insisted that even if only one or two came, the pastor should preach nonetheless. They reminded the clergy that Christ himself had sometimes spoken to only one person at a time. What person, they asked, would not seize the opportunity to speak about their Savior? They encouraged those motivated and enthusiastic preachers who wished to hold-forth at every opportunity.27

Historians generally recognize that it is nearly impossible to know how audiences reacted to Evangelical sermons. No records exist that allow us to peer into the minds of simple folk in the countryside and shine light on how they reacted to the new pastors’ preaching. Lee Palmer Wandel complicates the situation further when she reminds us that reception was an individual, specific event.28

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27 “Il est vrai qu’il y a beaucoup de nos frères qui ont plaisir à prêcher tous les jours; nous louons leur soin, car c’est la marque d’un vrai zèle.” Le synode de Berne, *Ordonnance sur la conduite*, 155.

would have reacted in the same manner given the wide variety of variables influencing them. Some may have been disposed to the new teachings. Others may have nodded off while the pastor spoke. Still others may have disagreed with their anti-Catholic harangues. Nonetheless, as we shall see shortly, some who resented the spiritual efforts of their new overlords, attempted to disrupt Evangelical sermons and drown out their message by causing a commotion. This was certainly one means of conveying to the authorities and the pastor their disagreement with the program of conversion.

Pastors did more than preach, they also monitored the behavior of their parishioners and reminded them to act morally.\(^{29}\) They served as well as Bern’s eyes and ears in the rural parishes. Pastors were Bern’s direct connection to hinterlands. Thus, preachers read mandates, which Bern had issued, from their pulpits and urged their congregants to obey the civil authorities.\(^{30}\)

To support their new pastors, Bern requisitioned the assets, incomes, and existing goods of the Catholic parishes. In Agile, Farel received the proceeds, house, revenue,


\(^{30}\) Le synode de Berne, *Ordonnance sur la conduite*, 126-29.
rent from nearby fields, vineyards, and other possessions of the Catholic Church.\textsuperscript{31} The Bernese wanted Farel to be properly supported.\textsuperscript{32} They ordered Félix de Diesbach to ensure that Farel had “sufficient food and drink, clothing, and other necessities.”\textsuperscript{33}

The seizure of church wealth was not simply a means of supporting pastors, but a dismantling of Catholicism and a manifestation of Protestant theology. Taking and reallocating church wealth deprived the old faith of a means of control over the population. It was a direct denial of the economics of salvation that was a cornerstone of Catholicism in the region. Based on Bern’s correspondence, it was also a calculated measure meant to resonate with the anticlericalism that was common in Vaud.

Preaching in the Common Lordships

Before the conquest, Bern allowed Farel to preach wherever it had the legal authority to send him. According to the Peace of Steinhausen (June 1529), which had

\textsuperscript{31} “Et voulons que le dict maistre Guillaume Farel soit mis en possession d’icelle cure, et que la tiène et possède, ensemble les fruicts, maisons, obventions [l. revenus], prés, champs, vignies et toutes aultres apartenances d’icelle cure, sans contrediction que soit.” Herminjard, CRF, 2:137-38.

\textsuperscript{32} “. . . sans avoir estre [l. été] pourveuz de salaire compétant, -- ce que cy-après ne veult estre raisonable, que le pasteur ne doive avoir part des fruichts et proventions des berbis.” Herminjard, CRF 2:137.

\textsuperscript{33} “Aussy voulons que tu luy fasse provissions de biens de l’esglise, qu’il ait sa chevance en boire et mangé, acoutrement de son corps et aultres choses nécessaires.” Herminjard, CRF 2:107.
ended the First Battle of Cappel, Evangelical pastors could proselytize in Common Lordships and territories allied with an Evangelical member of the Confederation. This opened the towns of Morat, Orbe, Echallens, Grandson, Payerne, and Lausanne to Evangelical pastors. The first four locations, Fribourg and Bern governed jointly; Lausanne and Payerne were Bern’s allies. A vast swath of francophone territory was accessible to the reformer and his assistants.

Spreading the Gospel in the Common Lordships was more complex than other parts of francophone Switzerland because Catholic Fribourg also governed the region and attempted to thwart Bern’s religious efforts and keep the people safely within the Catholic fold. Fribourg was bound, as a member of the Confederation, to certain rules that governed Common Lordships and which gave the Evangelicals privileges to preach. Thus, Fribourg protested what it considered Farel’s overly aggressive tactics and supported the complaints of local Catholics, but could not keep preachers out of the region.

The Peace of Steinhausen also specified that male residents in the Common Lordships could vote to reform their parishes and reject the Catholic faith. The system favored the Reformed cause; if a majority of the people supported the new creed, the Mass was abolished. If a majority supported the Catholic faith, Evangelical preaching

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34 Muralt, "Renaissance und Reformation," 500.
continued. With the prospect of towns voting to convert, much was at stake for Bern as they sent their pastors into the Common Lordships. A pastor’s success could be measured if villages heard the message and then banned the Mass.

Bern’s offensive strategy of sending Farel to these solidly Catholic regions to preach the Evangelical Gospel provoked the local Catholic residents as well as the council in Fribourg. The presence of preachers also caused innumerable conflicts between Catholics and Evangelicals who lived in the Common Lordships. Just as much as Bern wanted to exercise its right to send pastors to the Common Lordships, Fribourg did not want to expose rural residents to inflammatory preaching or risk losing towns and villages to the new faith.

On January 22, 1530, Bern ordered Farel to leave Aigle and take the post of pastor in the town of Morat. Morat embraced the Reformation in December 1529, and it needed Farel’s strong presence to encourage it and keep itself solidly in the Evangelical camp in the face of harassment from nearby Catholics. From this vantage point, Farel also had easier access to cities in the Common Lordships, as well as Lausanne, Payerne, Avenches, Neuchâtel, and Jura. He was also much closer to his authorities in Bern than he had been in Aigle.

Indeed, Farel may have played a major role in converting the town and other villages in the region; while on one of his evangelization tours, he stopped to preach against the Mass in Morat. Only a few weeks later, Morat’s council called for a religious votation to be held.\textsuperscript{37} On that occasion, the male residents of town officially embraced the Reformation and banned the Mass.

The success of the Evangelicals in Morat may have emboldened their spirits. Fribourg accused some from the town of smashing images in a nearby village, Meyriez.\textsuperscript{38} Despite the fact that the male residents of Meyriez had rejected the new faith, local Evangelicals asked Bern to send them a preacher anyway. Never shying away from battle, Farel himself went to preach in Meyriez.

Farel’s repertoire for converting Catholics would rarely change. He confronted local clerics directly and employed divisive language and mockery to cast doubt on the Old Church. Thus, true to form he affronted and berated the local curate – he called him a \textit{Seelmörder}, or murderer of souls, a trickster, and a thief. He denounced the Mass.\textsuperscript{39}

Even more insulting to the Catholics, Farel entered the church in Meyriez, seized the


\textsuperscript{38} Meylan, "Farel pasteur de Morat," 261-62.

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid.
consecrated host, and tread upon it. In response, Fribourg demanded that Farel suffer the punishment of both cities, but Bern declined, stating that Farel had acted on his own without their orders.

Nevertheless, Farel’s conversion tactics yielded results. On April 24, 1530, the residents of Meyriez requested a vote to be taken to determine whether there was still a majority that supported the Catholic Church. On May 22, 1530, the male residents accepted the Reformation.

Farel also preached in the other towns of the Common Lordships: Orbe, Grandson, and Echallens. Although the first two eventually accepted the Reformation, Echallens remains a bi-confessional town. They are unique venues to view the interaction of the two faiths. One sees how residents rallied to one side or another in the religious debate. More importantly, we can witness how both Bern and Fribourg negotiated the Treaty of Steinhausen in order to support their co-religionists without sparking a military conflict.

Grandson is situated in the western-most region of the Confederation and sits in the foothills at the base of the Jura Mountains. Nearby is the Lake of Neuchâtel, which connected the town to Estavayer and other places in Fribourg. It was tied to France and Savoy through trade and commerce, and socially through the intermarriage of the upper

\[40\] Ibid., 262.
classis. The Reformation had little support in Grandson. It was home to Benedictine and Franciscan monasteries. The Franciscan house maintained close relations to a sister house in Besançon, France.

In the late spring of 1531, Farel entered Grandson. He had already finished preaching in Orbe, where his presence stirred conflict and violence and created support for the new creed. Although Bern could not legally dismiss the priests in Grandson, it did have the power to insist that Farel preach. Thus, on the day when he arrived, he marched straight to the Benedictine house and demanded entrance. He was denied. Later the same day, he arrived at the Franciscan house to preach, where he met a more forceful rejection. Guy Régis, a friar, stopped Farel at the door, blocked his way, and challenged him to go to France where a real disputation could take place under the watchful eye of either the French king, the Holy Roman Emperor, or the duke of Savoy. Régis held the doctorate in theology and believed he could defeat Farel in a disputation if it were judged fairly. He stated to Farel, “I am the prelate, the house is mine. I will protect it and you will not enter if you know what is good for you. I preach the Gospel, but what you preach is of the devil, is improper, and is meant only to lead the people astray.”

41 "'Je suis prélat, la maison est à moy; je la te deffens que tu n'y entres points, si tu es sage. Je presche l'Évangile; vous ne preschés que le diablerie et toute abusion, pour mètre erreur au peuple. Je tiens l'estat apostolique et m'offre au feu de maintenir nostre Ordre et que nous fa[i]sons, qu'il est selon Dieu, et t'offre, si tu veux venir à Besançon, à Dolle, Paris, ou autre part, devant le roy, l'empereur, le duc de Savoye. Je te monstreray que ce que tu dis n'est point vray." Herminjard, CRF, 2:486.
Régis’ words highlight that both men believed that they were preaching according to the Gospel. Both men accused the other of disseminating lies and leading the people astray. Both men claimed the right to preach from the pulpit of the churches in the town. Both used virtually the same divisive language to label and describe the other. Régis realized that to allow Farel entrance was to weaken his position as a top member of the clergy and to reveal that he did not have an exclusive hold on the pulpit in his order’s monastery. The legal ground had shifted beneath his feet. The situation forced the clerics in Grandson to admit that theirs was no longer the sole religion in the bi-confessional Confederation. Not surprisingly, when faced with this reality tempers flared.

Farel’s insistence that he preach from one of the religious houses demonstrates his awareness of the importance of sacred space in the mind-frame of the population. Certainly, he could have preached on street corners and in taverns as he had in the past. However, his message was legitimated when it was delivered from a church pulpit and at the site where the most sacrilegious Catholic practice, the Mass, was conducted. Preaching from a pulpit also signaled to the population that he had overcome the initial Catholic resistance, and that Catholic clerics had been forced to follow the treaties governing the Common Lordships.
This first foray into Grandson did spark a war of words between Fribourg and Bern. Both cities claimed that they wanted to maintain peace and unity while protecting their co-religionists. In order to keep the peace, agreements were reached whereby Evangelical pastors and Catholic clerics shared the city’s pulpits. Farel was dissatisfied and complained to Zwingli that if the Bernese only supported the reformed cause as vigorously as Fribourg did the Catholic, the conversion of the region would be occurring much faster.\textsuperscript{42} His interpretation of the situation is of course exaggerated. Guy Règis could have felt the same way about Fribourg’s muted support for Catholics. However, Bern and Fribourg hoped to maintain peaceful relations between their cities and did not want problems in their Common Lordships to get out of hand.

Farel simply disregarded the agreements--he preached longer than he was supposed to and would not vacate the pulpit for his Catholic counterparts. As soon as he had preached, another reformed pastor would take over the pulpit. After that one was finished, another would begin.\textsuperscript{43} Although the reformers could not legally remove the

\textsuperscript{42} Herminjard, CRF, 2:365.

\textsuperscript{43} “Mais le dit maistre Guillaume, prédicateur, pour donner empeschement et retardacion à l'office, a casi toujours anticipé et prolongué outre mesure l'heure en ses dites prédications, voyre tenir, tant en sonant qu'en preschant le matin, despues cinq et six jusques à neuf et dix heures; et, avoir presché luy-mesme bien longuement, faire remonter et prescher ung aultre après luy, et puis oncors ung aultre, qu'estoit trop procédir et plus par afflection [l. passion] que aultrement.” Herminjard, CRF, 2:369.
priests in Grandson or ban the Mass, they could keep the Catholic clergy silent by denying them their houses of worship.

Farel and his fellow Evangelical pastors ridiculed Catholic clerics and shouted at them in the church. When a priest arrived from Lausanne to preach on June 25, 1531, Farel and Claude de Glantis interrupted his message and insulted him. The crowd of Catholics that had gathered to hear the Catholic preacher attacked them. Later Farel and Glantis were imprisoned, and Fribourg accused them of “hindering a cleric from preaching.” Fribourg demanded that Bern rein in its preachers. It was not the first time that Farel had ridiculed and demeaned Catholic clerics and it would not be his last. Such tactics became commonplace and were used by both sides to disrupt the religious services of the other.

Occasionally Bern did stop Farel from preaching in villages where he was unwelcome. In this instance, they asked him to simply move on and shake the dust off his shoes from those places where he was not wanted. In the countryside, Farel also overstepped his authority when he proposed that communal votes be taken. In the small town of Fiez, he called for the vote that favored the Evangelicals. Fribourg immediately complained that the procedure was illegal since its observers were not present. Bern

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44 Herminjard, CRF, 2:351, n. 5.

45 “Quod si secūs accidat, volumus te Moreti contineas, exemplum Apostolorum qui Christi iussu pulveres pedibus excutiebant imitatus.” Herminjard, CRF, 2:235.
reprimanded Farel and ordered him to content himself with preaching, indeed Farel was infringing on Bern’s civil authority.  Calling votes without the proper representation from both cities was a step that even Bern was not willing to sanction.

Bern also respected the territorial boundaries of its Catholic neighbors and advised its pastors not to preach in the towns that were not in its domain. In February 1532, Bern wrote to its “good friend,” the pastor of Court, to remind him not to preach in villages that were not affiliated with Bern. It appears that he had preached in the villages of Vix and Courrendelin, which had angered the bishop of Basel since these towns were a part of his territory. Although Bern did not accuse the pastor of intentional wrongdoing, it ordered him to stop preaching where he was not wanted; it reminded him of the danger that could befall him if he continued.

At the same time that Bern was dispatching Farel throughout the Four Bailiwicks and the Common Lordships, Fribourg continued to urge these places to reject the Reformation and Farel. In June 1530, the Fribourg Council wrote to their counterparts in Lausanne asking them to keep Farel away from their city and to stop him from preaching inside their walls. Fribourg realized the power Farel had to draw converts to his faith.

46 Herminjard, CRF, 2:350.

47 Herminjard, CRF, 2:406.
They informed the Lausannois that they knew that Farel was seeking to “plant the seed which he had planted elsewhere.”\textsuperscript{48} The Fribourg council wrote,

Nobles, etc. We have heard that Farel will come to your city. We have ascertained that he spoke against the Sacraments. The priest of Neuville opposed him and informed you of the proper teaching. [This is] why the case was put before our very high lord of Lausanne. Therefore we think that Farel stayed in your town, with the intent to sow the seeds [of improper teaching] just as he did elsewhere. We do not doubt that he presumes to do [harm in your city] as he has done in other places, perhaps even more harm if people come to hear him.\textsuperscript{49}

For the Fribourg, Farel was a potential threat to peace in Lausanne.\textsuperscript{50} Fribourg’s council stated that it was therefore obligated to warn their friends in Lausanne against preaching that could become dangerous. Twice the authorities in Lausanne heeded the warning and prohibited Farel from preaching.

Fribourg also attempted to keep the Reformation from spreading to another alliance member, Payerne—a town that shared a border with Fribourg. Payerne was becoming a hotspot of reformed religious activity before the conquest. Payerne was a

\textsuperscript{48} Herminjard, CRF, 2:254-55.

\textsuperscript{49} “Nobles, etc. Nous entendons comment Farellus doibt venir en vostre ville, et, ainsin que nous vient à notice, pour ce qu’il a parlé à l’encontre des Sacrements, le curé de Neuveville s’est opposée et vous ditt du contraire; [c’est] pourquoi le cas s’es[t] mys par devant nostre très-haut Seigneur Monseigneur de Lausanne. Dont pouvons considérer coment par ci-devant le dit Farellus a esté en vostre ville, pensant semer de la semence ainsin qu’il a fait allieurs. Et ne doubtons poynt qu’il ne présume de y faire autant coment il a fait auxx autres, ou plus s’il a oreilliez [l. si on lui prête l’oreille] . . . .” Herminjard, CRF, 2:255.

\textsuperscript{50} Herminjard, CRF, 2:254-55.
member of the estates of Vaud and one of the fourteen “bonne villes.” It was also the home to a Cluniac monastery that later became a point of controversy between Fribourg, Bern, and the local authorities. Before the forced introduction of the Reformation, the town had its local cells of Evangelicals. The Evangelicals in Payerne were also active proselytizers. Even without a pastor, they convened and tried to recruit others.

Bern dispatched Farel to preach in Payerne and his appearance sparked protests in June 1530. The town council denied him access to the local churches; nonetheless, he preached in the cemetery. The banneret and the secretary of the city came to arrest Farel, but the residents took matters into their own hands. They harassed Farel and threw him into the Broye River in an unmistakable demonstration of their contempt.

Politically Payerne’s situation was complex. Although it was party to an alliance with Bern and Fribourg, it remained a member of the estates of Vaud. The edicts, which that body had passed to halt the Reformation’s spread, were in effect in Payerne. Indeed, several days after Farel was assaulted by the population, the Savoyard authorities convened a meeting of the estates at which they reaffirmed the first anti-Evangelical ordinances and condemned the “Lutheran preacher” Farel.

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51 Vuilleumier, Histoire de l'église réformée, 95.

52 Meylan, "Farel pasteur de Morat," 264.

53 Herminjard, CRF, 2:344.
As early as 1524, Fribourg’s council had ordered all of its subjects to accept Catholic teaching; however, in response to the Reformation preaching occurring on the edges of its territory, Fribourg hardened its confessional stance.\textsuperscript{54} It drafted a confession of faith that it demanded that its subjects accept. The confession was approved by the council in 1527, and reaffirmed the seven sacraments, the Mass, the intercession of the Virgin Mary, the prohibition against eating meat during lent, and other holy days including Friday and Saturdays. Likewise, the Ave Maria, the ringing of bells on Friday to commemorate Christ’s death, and other traditional rituals and activities of the Catholic faith were upheld. Fribourg forbade the preaching of Zwinglian and Lutheran doctrines and condemned heretical books.\textsuperscript{55} It also guarded itself against newcomers who could spread new teachings; thus, to rent a room in Fribourg, one needed the permission of the council.\textsuperscript{56} In 1528, the profession of faith was renewed and expanded. In 1561, a similar oath was required of all residents of Fribourg over the age of fifteen.\textsuperscript{57} Aside from taking these measures for its own territory, Fribourg was powerless to stop Bern from preaching

\textsuperscript{54} Pfister, \textit{Kirchengeschichte}, 260.

\textsuperscript{55} Charles Holder, \textit{Les Professions de foi à Fribourg au XVI siècle: Étude sur l'histoire de la réforme et de la restauration religieuse} (Fribourg: Fragnière, 1897), 12-13.

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., 14.

\textsuperscript{57} Archives d'Etat de Fribourg (AEF), Geistliche Sachen (GS), Nr. 262.
the new faith in the parts of the Pays de Vaud that it governed alone or in the Common Lordships where it shared jurisdiction with the Catholic city.

**Conclusions**

Once the Reformation was adopted in its own city, Bern enforced the conversion of its rural territories as well. It set its sites not only on bringing its Germanophone countryside into the Reformation fold, but its francophone hinterlands as well. In brief, the first steps towards reforming the Four Bailiwicks consisted primarily of introducing new men to preach the Gospel, banning the Mass, ridding the region of Catholic clerics, and seizing church wealth. These changes wrought a profound religious transformation for a region that was decidedly loyal to the faith of their fathers and had never demonstrated any interest in the Reformation. It stripped parishes of priests who were known members of local communities and some who were connected by family ties to the local elites and regional authorities. Many of these men remained in the villages and region and took up other professions. It dismantled the means through which people gave alms to the poor, supported the church, and secured the safety of their souls in the afterlife and those of their dearly departed. Moreover, it installed foreign, unknown men who preached throughout the week a strange and unknown religion. Less important, at this point, were the interior results that religious leaders would later expect to see in the
people. The Bernese did not send visitors into the fields to assess the religious understandings of the population. Indeed at this point, it was mostly concerned to simply begin the process of conversion.

However, the path of conversion was not without obstacles for Bern. It did not have enough trained and able French-speaking pastors to dispatch to every parish. It found itself relying on the international contacts that Farel had made in Reformed territories. He asked other Reformed notables such as Bucer in Strasbourg, to send him men. Their abilities ranged the spectrum, but many were untested. It also had to overcome the resistance of the population to the new faith. Although their protests were never sustained or systematic, Bern did attempt to subdue the most vociferous individuals and communes that refused to accept the new teaching.
CHAPTER 3
RESISTING THE REFORMATION IN RURAL COMMUNITIES BEFORE THE CONQUEST

This chapter uncovers the strategies of resistance that local populations employed to preserve their beliefs and practices and undermine Bern’s efforts to convert them. It is important to state at the outset that the rural population was not a monolithic block of Catholics. Religious divisions existed not only in the urban areas but in the countryside and small towns as well. Some in the region willingly accepted the reformed faith or at least did not express their feelings openly. Nevertheless, I will focus predominately on the behavior of those who did not wish to convert.

Assessing how the people reacted to the forced conversion is not an easy task: it is plagued by problems familiar to historians who wish to capture the voices of the largely illiterate peasants. It is much easier to turn back to the historical sources left by the reformers William Farel, John Calvin, Pierre Viret, or the copious city council records of Bern and Fribourg than to discover how their theology and mandates affected the local population. ¹ It is, however, at the level of the local population where the social history of

ideas is found. To ignore the simple folk on account of a lack of sources skews our understanding of the Reformation in the Pays de Vaud.

Without a doubt our access to the majority of the population, the rural, uneducated folk is limited. Historians never hear the peasantry speak in the Pays de Vaud during the Reformation. As Robert Scribner has so often reminded historians, the vast majority of the sixteenth-century population comprised an oral and visual community whose behavior historians and anthropologists must interpret to gain entrance into their world and mentality. Even when the historian thinks that he or she finally hears the simple folk speaking, it is really the voices of the Bernese authorities and their representatives that are perceived. This is not to doubt the veracity of the reports that issued from various sites of resistance. Rather it is to admit that popular behavior was mediated by the men that Bern charged with carrying out or enforcing the Reformation. Unfortunately, this has led to the illusion that resistance to the Reformation in the Pays de Vaud was rare, short-lived, and the result of ignorance and attachment to superstitions that were salves for day-to-day problems. Indeed this was how Bern interpreted peasant resistance. A truer picture admits that religious discontent in the Pays de Vaud was

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manifested in multiple ways, which were contingent on location and governmental structure, focused directly at the strategies of conversion the Bernese employed, and were motivated by true religious sentiments as well as economic and social concerns.

The populace in the Four Bailiwicks and the Common Lordships reacted quickly to the religious changes Bern was pressing upon them. In Aigle, local Catholics took to the streets and protested in front of the Evangelicals’ temple. They beat drums and mocked Farel. Bern blamed local authorities and the city council of Aigle for stirring up the residents. The mayors of Bex, Ollon, and Aigle had allowed the people to harass Farel and other preachers of the “truth,” Farel complained.³

Some rejected the new pastors that Bern had dispatched and aimed their anger at the Reformed pastors and the sermon. In Les Ormonts, reformed pastor, Jacques Camerol, complained to Farel that the people had drowned out a fine sermon preached by Claude [Dieudonne?] by shouting. On June 27, 1529, the people rang the church bells when Camerol tried to preach.⁴ Camerol blamed Satan for motivating the people to act

³ “Aussi ont-ils fait tous leurs efforts pour obtenir l'expulsion d'un prédicant qui, comme moi, ne leur annonce que la vérité de Dieu. Parmi eux se font surtout remarquer les trois Syndics, qui ne tenant aucun compte des ordres de leurs supérieurs et des lois du pays sollicitent de ceux qu'on appelle les jurés du Gouverneur mon renvoi et l'interdiction de me laisser prêcher.” Aimé Louis Herminjard, ed., Correspondance des réformateurs dans le pays de langue française. Recueillie et publiée avec d'autres lettres relatives a la Réforme et des notes historiques et biographiques, 9 vols. (1866; reprint, Nieuwkoop: B. de Graaf, 1966), 2:25. Hereafter cited as CRF.

⁴ "G. P. Claudius frater noster die Jovis habuit concionem coram populo, quae, meo juditio et aliorum piorum, digna fuit auditu; sed Sathan, qui semper nititur vineam
in such a disrespectful manner, but the residents, on the other hand, believed that they were acting to keep renegade clerics from spreading a heretical doctrine and depriving them of their Catholic beliefs. Occasionally Catholic pastors refused to vacate their parishes, such as Jacques Colombi in Bex. The Bernese accused him of turning the people against the Reformation and prohibiting the new pastor, Simon Robert, from assuming his post.

William Jajod tried to keep Farel from preaching in Ollon and struck him. Jajod was summoned to Bern for punishment. The authorities imprisoned him until he could pay his fine. In Bex, a man called the “son of Vellion” harassed the pastor and publicly proclaimed in the market that the articles of Bern’s faith were false. He was ordered to appear in the capital too, if the authorities uncovered sufficient reason. If he did not go willingly, he was to be arrested and taken by force. In referring to Veillon’s case, the council added that they did not intend to “suffer such rebelliousness and disobedience.”

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Domini sabbaoth ac ejus sepes dissipare, per ejus servos voluit aures auditorum sono cimbali implere.” Herminjard, CRF 2:181.


6 "Car nullement voulons cy-après souffrir tieulles rebellions et désobéissances." Herminjard, CRF, 2:136.
Others refused to attend the preaching or went to Mass in nearby Catholic villages. Bern warned that the people were not to cross the border to attend Catholic services. They also ordered the rural residents to be present at the sermon.

The situation in the Common Lordships was different. Here the population was not forced to attend Evangelical preaching, as folks in the Four Bailiwicks were. Nonetheless, many protested and harassed Farel and other pastors. Their protests can be read not only as a rejection of the new teaching, but also as defensive measure meant to keep out Bern and its evangelical pastors.

They also feared that Evangelicals and their local and foreign supporters would destroy their churches and holy places. The idea that foreign evangelicals were responsible for acts of iconoclasm was real. Evangelicals from Yverdon stole into Grandson and destroyed altars and church art. Two monks, Jean Tissot and Blaise Gondoz, stopped Farel and a local nobleman from entering the Franciscan church. The nobleman’s servant saw that one of the monks was armed with a hatchet. Both clerics were later imprisoned and tortured. They explained that they were only trying to protect their church because they had heard rumors that Farel had arrived with iconoclastic goals. They also stated that they were on the watch for foreign Evangelicals who would assist Farel in carrying out the destruction of their church.  

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Throughout the Common Lordships, many resorted to violence to keep Bern and its new message out of their towns. Some attacked Farel, and punched and kicked him and Claude de Glant. Women threw ashes in Farel’s eyes and mouth. Such eruptions were rare, and when they did occur, the Bernese usually sent assessors to report on the situation and punish the offenders.

Women were frequently the most vociferous supporters of the Catholic cause and were often involved in acts of violence against pastors. More often than groups of men, women physically attacked the Evangelical pastors. In one incident, when they tore Farel’s clothes off his back and scratched his face, he was so badly injured that one Bernese governor commented that it looked as if cats had attacked Farel. Violent protest was a way that women could express their anger about the introduction of the Reformation. Other avenues of expression were closed to them: they could not participate in the communal votations for the faith; they were not able to occupy seats on the city council or hold positions of authority. Moreover, when women were punished, their sentences were one half as heavy as men’s. Anthropologist and historian James C.

8 Herminjard, CRF, 2:351, n. 5.

9 Herminjard, CRF, 2:426.

10 Herminjard, CRF, 2:362, n. 1.

11 Susan C. Karant-Nunn has discovered a similar situation in Zwickau. She reports, “In theory it would have been permissible for men and women to be treated differently
Scott has found similar evidence in peasant protests in other cultures across both time and space. He writes that women are able, in some cases, to exploit their apolitical position in patriarchal orders and avoid the worst forms of retributive punishments.  

Outside of Bernese territory and the Common Lordships, in nearby villages, residents attacked suspected Protestant pastors. Lutry, a village in the domain of the bishop of Lausanne is located on the Lake Geneva. After the conquest, it became the site of some of the most intense anti-Reformation protests. In 1535, the monks of the town accosted and beat a Reformed pastor. The pastor of Les Ormonts, Michel Doubté, was traveling to Geneva and stopped in the town of Lutry to have a drink at the hotel of the White Cross. Inside there was a group of monks and priests who asked him who he was and why he was there. Doubté replied that he was a subject and servant of the Bernese.

The mayor of the town intervened and also questioned Doubté outside the hotel. He

[before the law]. The title page of the Schultheiss’s *Gerichtsbuch* for 1486 – 91 bears the following statement:

‘A man to another man, a whole penalty.
A man to a woman, a half penalty.
A woman to a man, a whole penalty.
A woman to another woman, a half penalty.’” She notes however that penalties did not always “conform to this tidy formula.” *Zwickau in Transition, 1500 - 1547: The Reformation as an Agent of Change* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1987), 227-28.


realized that the situation could turn violent and asked Doubté to leave Lutry. He
provided the pastor with his own servant to ensure his safety. Once outside the gates,
however, monks and priests attacked him and chased him through the vineyards shouting,
“After the scoundrel! After the scoundrel!” Doubté could not outrun this clerical mob,
which seized him, stoned him, and threatened to cut off his head. They also stole his bag,
which contained two volumes of the New Testament, which were burned back in the
town. Doubté’s life was spared in this case, but he was mistreated again between the
towns of Cullier and Granvaul. Here he was called a Lutheran and stabbed with a sword.
The wound required five stitches.

Later, when Doubté arrived in Vevey, he was interrogated about who he was and
whether he had preached in Geneva. He answered that he had not preached there. Some
believed that Doubté was Froment, another pastor, which he denied. The people told him
that it was a good thing, because if he were Froment, Farel, or Viret, they would kill him.
As he left town, they continued to harass him. The notary attacked the doctor who had
tended Doubté’s wounds, caused him to bleed from his mouth, and called him an evil
man.

Because of the attacks on pastors, Bern was concerned for their safety. Many
times, they urged their lieutenants to ensure the physical safety of Farel and others. On
April 25, 1528, the council wrote to Félix de Diesbach, “Therefore it is our utmost wish
that the pastors whom Master William Farel has chosen should be protected and treated properly. . . .”

Given the fact that some were threatening pastors and those who were destroying altars and images with death, the situation remained volatile if not always dangerous.

Other forms of misbehavior were less openly hostile to Bern and instead demonstrate a continued attachment to Catholicism and its practices. These include continuing to attend Mass in neighboring Catholic villages, venerating images, praying the rosary, or carrying rosary beads. They represent a conscious decision on the part of some peasants and other rural inhabitants to continue their Catholic traditions well after such practices had been repeatedly banned.

At first glance, the resistance in Four Bailiwicks and the Common Lordships appears negligible. There were several moments of heated protest, but largely the population eventually accepted the reality that the old church was being replaced or that they had to live peacefully with a new creed. Measuring sentiment with the captured remnants of resistance skews our perspective. Historians make judgments about popular peasant resistance based on what the authorities wrote. Yet, as James C. Scott notes

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14 “Item est entièrement nostre vouloir que les prescheurs que Maistre Guillaume Farel ordonnera, soyent en seurté et bien tractiéz . . . .” Herminjard, CRF, 2:130.
about peasant protest, those in power often try to downplay resistance movements because the appearance of disunity weakens the authorities’ hold on subordinates.\(^\text{15}\)

When people did disrupt church services, protest in front of Evangelical temples, or physically attack pastors, that behavior was premeditated. When Jean Tissot and Blaise Gondoz acted to stop Farel in Grandson, they were part of a larger group of clerics who had banded together to thwart his preaching. They also stated during their trial that they had assisted the women who threw ashes in Farel’s face.

Catholic villagers in Aigle protested as a group in front of the Evangelical temple. There is safety in numbers for the rebellious. It is more difficult to spot individual offenders to punish, and crowds often make a more forceful and powerful statement than individuals do. Their protests were the result of planning, gathering support from like-minded people, as well as mentally rejecting the domination of Bern. Without these pre-event steps, only the most sporadic and spontaneous uprisings would have occurred. To use a popular cliché, what historians now see was only the “tip of the iceberg” of discontent. As Scott writes, "The point is that neither everyday forms of resistance nor the occasional insurrection can be understood without reference to the sequestered social sites at which such resistance can be nurtured and given meaning."\(^\text{16}\) Moreover, rural

\(^{15}\) Scott, *Domination*, 56.

\(^{16}\) Ibid., 20.
inhabitants demonstrated forethought and a deep understanding of Bern’s strategy of conversion when they tried to stop the installation of new pastors or disrupted sermons. These were two of the most visible and symbolic actions that Bern deployed against the new faith and thus rural residents contested them.

The less visible forms of protest, such as carrying rosary beads or sneaking across the border to attend the Mass, were calculated to enable the offender to partake in the Catholic faith while running a low risk of being caught. Bern repeatedly threatened to punish those who broke their religious dictates. Thus although the majority of the people in the Four Bailiwicks and the Common Lordships did not disobey Bern openly, this cannot be interpreted as a signal of support for the Evangelical creed. Subordinate groups are usually unwilling to risk punishment if there are opportunities to keep their true sentiments hidden.

Interestingly, the most vociferous protest derived from the Common Lordships. This is a result of the fact that both Fribourg and Bern governed the region. Catholics were emboldened by the fact that they could rely on support from Fribourg. In the Four Bailiwicks, resistors did not have this external support for their cause and therefore were more likely to incur punishment.

In response to disobedience, Bern took punitive and preventive action. Although their stated desire was to lead their subjects on the path to true salvation, they intended to
do so by force and coercion if necessary. The path of true salvation was a euphemism that cloaked Bern’s desire for obedient and docile Christian subjects. Outspoken critics of its religious program weakened Bern’s grip on power and its prestige within the Confederation. In order to stop public protest, Bern targeted individuals either who were ringleaders in fomenting violence or who had publicly denounced Bern. In Aigle, for example it threatened to punish anyone, male or female, cleric or lay, young or old, who continued to celebrate Catholic feasts, said Masses for the dead, and rejected Bernese authority by tearing down the posted mandates.\textsuperscript{17} The authorities were most concerned that some residents were advocating pledging allegiance to a new overlord in order to avoid converting. Because of the serious nature of this offense, Bern ordered the authorities to gather the evidence secretly and to inform Bern of whatever they learned.

It is important to keep in mind that these events were only three years removed from the violence of the peasants’ rebellion in Eastern Switzerland and Germany.\textsuperscript{18} The

\textsuperscript{17} “Ils [les récalcitrants] veulent continuer à chômer les fêtes supprimées par nos seigneurs et faire dire les messes pour les morts selon la coutume reçue. Quand on parle du Mandat de mes seigneurs, quelques gens disent que c'est une affaire qui n'est pas du ressort de mes seigneurs, mais de celui des IV Mandements. Ils ont déchiré le Mandat qui avait été affiché aux portes des églises et qui ordonnait qu'on prêchât l'Évangile. D'autres se vantent que dans les choses où ils ont le droit pour eux, ils sauront bien se faire justice.” Herminjard, CRF, 2:108, n. 14.

\textsuperscript{18} “Item, nous est par incertes novelles venuz à notice, comme aulcuns d'Ormont debvent avoir dict 'devant que prennent la foy que nous avons, plutost prendrent-ilz [l. prendront-ils] ung aultre seignieur.' Les quelles parolles, s'elles sont vrays, sont très-maulvaises. Dont vous commandons de vous en informer secrètement, et, selonn que les trouverés, nous en advertir.” Herminjard, CRF, 2:137.
specter of a full-fledged revolt in Four Bailiwicks was a possibility that Bern wanted to avoid. If the local authorities could not enforce the new ordinances, then they should send the recalcitrant to Bern.\(^{19}\)

To improve their surveillance of the region, Bern sent a group of representatives from the capital to punish those who continued to resist. The authorities undoubtedly wanted to see first-hand what was occurring since they often referred to the “rumors” that they were hearing. On July 1, they gave Jean-Rodolphe Nägueli, J. J. de Watteville, and Jacques Wagner their instructions to punish those who continued to be disobedient, slanderous, or who are taking action against adherents of the Reformation.\(^{20}\)

It is true that some peasants and rural communes voted to accept the Reformation. Others wrote letters to Bern asking for pastors to fill their pulpits. Taking these behaviors as indicators of popular support for the new faith may overstate their actual religious meaning. Scott warns that subordinates often appear to obey the dominant classis out of

\(^{19}\) "... pour mettre en effect ceste nostre ordonance, et tous ceulx que prétendrons de faire à l'encontre châtoier selon le démérite, ou les nous envoyer, pour les traictés selon que nécessité et le cas requira. Car certes [il] nous semble déraisonable (comme ilz est) que nous soubjextz des quatre mandaments, prestres et layes, homes et femes, petis et grand[s], soy doyent oposer à nous et nous ordonances et estre sy présumptueulx de nous governer, ce que nullement souffriron." Herminjard, CRF, 2:108.

\(^{20}\) "Le surplus qu'est à ordonner commanderons à nous ambassadeurs qu'envoyerons en brief par delà, cella soit pour punir les désobéissans et usans [de] parolles infâmes contre nous, que ceulx que ouvrent [l. travaillent] de faict contre ceulx que sont d'apart [l. de la part de] l'Évangile. Car nullement voulons souffrir que tieulle rebellion et désobéissance soit entre nous soubjектz..." Herminjard, CRF, 2:141.
fear of retribution. In cases where villages went along with the Reformation, it may have been a step made to appease Bern and avoid that city’s wrath or sanctions rather than to support a religion about which rural people had very little knowledge in the early years.

In some cases, though, the local reaction was mixed and demonstrates that villages were far from united in their acceptance of the Reformation, even after they asked Bern to send an evangelical pastors. The inhabitants of Provence, a village in the Common Lordship, were divided over religious matters. In response to the preaching of the pastor of St. Aubin, a nearby village, the people in Provence spontaneously cleansed their parish in the manner of the Reformed. However, when the pastor returned to preach, he was physically kept out of the town.\textsuperscript{21}

\textbf{Dividing Communities}

In the short time, that Farel preached from the pulpits of Grandson, Orbe, or Payerne it would have been impossible for many to have completely understood the full message of the Reformation and accepted it. Instead his mission was to begin the process, little by little, of dividing communities along confessional lines by feeding the flames pre-existing resentment with the Catholic Church. In this respect, he was successful.

\textsuperscript{21} Herminjard, CRF 2:407.
Reformed preaching against the Catholics and Catholicism instilled the language of division into the vocabulary and mental framework of the local populations. Catholic pastors responded with their own insults. In Orbe, for example, the Catholic preacher, Michel Juliani, preached against the reformed and talked about the priests and nuns who wanted simply to renounce their vows in order to give in to their base and carnal desires. It was not long before both sides were hurling insults at one another that had originally been uttered by the men of the cloth. Local residents began to ridicule Catholics for worshiping blocks of wood, while Catholics painted all “Lutherans” and those “who followed their laws” as evil.

Throughout the territory, the more boisterous supporters of the Evangelical and Catholic camps aimed their rhetorical venom and assault at one another. In some cases, their anger took the form of verbal ridicule in other cases their protests became more violent and disruptive. In Grandson, the churches became the sites of conflict when Reformed pastors refused to quit preaching and allow the Catholics to begin their services. Catholics complained that Evangelicals had carried out unauthorized acts of iconoclasm. In a letter to Bern, the Catholics of Grandson complained that the Evangelicals, whom they noted were in the minority, had destroyed altars and harassed the Catholic clergy. They prevented them from singing the Mass by interrupting the service and crashing rocks together.
Farel responded to these allegations, but did not deny that his followers in Grandson had committed the acts. Instead, he justified their behavior and claimed that if the Catholics would simply found their beliefs on Scriptures, the Evangelicals would stop and even agree to punishment for their actions.  

Yet, at the same time he accused the Catholics of preventing Pierre Viret from preaching in the Franciscan Church. He complained that Catholics rang the church bells, made noise, knocked on the doors, and mocked those who preached. He claimed that they paraded around the church with crosses and rosaries. Others, he stated, made faces at the door during the sermon. He accused Catholic priests of blasphemy and preaching against the truth and the Reformation of the Lords of Bern.  

The introduction of the Reformation was a disruptive and confusing process as a homogeneously Catholic society took on a new, bi-confessional identity. Not only did this identity alienate the region from its Vaudois neighbors, but it put it in conflict with Bern and Fribourg who were steadfastly Evangelical and Catholic respectively. Thus to  

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22 Herminjard, CRF, 2:370-376.  

23 Et après cecy jamais n'ont cessé de faire trouble a[u] sermon, tant dedans l'église comme d[e]hors, tant par sonementz de cloches, crieries, murmures, frapementz des portes, moqueries et irrisions de ceux qui preschoient, ou qui aliont et veniont d'ouyr la prédicacion de l'Évangile -- les ungs venant a tout [l'avec] grandes croix davant le prescheurs et gros chappelletz, les faisantz sonner autrement tant que le sermon ce faisait, les autres faisantz la moue à la porte, -- et surtout en maintenant leurs faux prescheurs que ouvertement preschiont contre la vérité . . . ." Herminjard, CRF, 2:373.
adopt one faith or the other was not only a religious decision, but also a political one that carried with it economic and social consequences for individuals. Remaining a Catholic exposed oneself to physical as well as monetary punishment. For some, whose extended families and kin lived in Fribourg’s territory, adopting the reformed faith meant erecting religious walls between themselves and the rest of their social network. Rural residents in Vaud were forbidden from celebrating religious holidays or partaking in Catholic religious rituals and rites of passage that traditionally united communities and families.

In rural villages, the confessional fault lines appeared whenever a vote was held. The balloting provides the evidence that even the smallest rural villages were split because of faith, a reality that may have been unthinkable only a few years before.24 The prospect of voting caused pastors, priests, and the laity to lobby on behalf of their own creed. Occasionally the authorities uncovered schemes that used bribes to buy votes. Neither Catholics nor Protestants were above reproach.25

On a larger scale, the divisions between Bern’s reformed territory and the surrounding Catholic lands of the duke of Savoy, Fribourg, and Valais came into sharper relief and were invested with religious meaning. Boundaries kept out those spreading

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24 Archives d'État de Fribourg (AEF), Geistliche Sachen (GS), Nr. 288.

25 AEF, GS, Nr. 281.
heretical beliefs. In 1528, Bern wrote to its lieutenant in Aigle that no foreign preachers should gain entrance except those approved of by Farel. The Bernese council did not attribute the same magical properties to borders and boundaries that the Scribner describes; nevertheless, it did use boundaries to distinguish Catholic from Reformed territory, good from evil, and as guides that indicated where it had the legal right to force the population to convert.

The meaning of the territorial divisions was not lost on the population. The proximity of Catholic territory and porosity of the borders meant that they could easily continue the celebration of the old faith. Thus, Bern complained that some were continuing to attend Mass in the nearby Catholic villages of St. Maurice in Valais. Bern redirected them and ordered them to remain within their territory. “We order you to tell them that they may no longer attend the Mass in the said church [in St. Maurice] and that they must go to Bex to hear the preaching of the Word of God, to baptize their children,

26 Robert Scribner draws our attention to the multiple functions and meanings of boundaries in everyday life in the early modern period. He notes that boundaries served apotropaic functions. From the thresholds of family dwellings to the walls of communes, these imaginary and real structures served to keep evil spirits, the ghosts of the departed, and magical forces at bay. He also writes that with the advent of the early-modern territorial state, borders replaced frontier zones with more “firm and sharply drawn” lines. Robert Scribner, "Symbolising Boundaries: Defining Social Space in the Daily Life of Early Modern Germany," in Symbole des Alltags, Alltag der Symbole: Festschrift für Harry Kühnel zum 65. Geburtstag, ed. Gertud Blaschitz et al. (Graz: Akademischer Druck, 1992), 823.

27 "et aussy que aultres prêcheurs estrainges ne soyent admis, sinon icleux que maistre Guillaume Farel, soub nostre comission, ordonnera." Herminjard, CRF, 2:126.
and to receive the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper.” 28 They backed up their order with the threat of punishing violators with a monetary fine of one *couronne.* 29 Regardless of the penalties that Bern wanted to impose, the proximity of borders remained a continual problem well into the late sixteenth century.

The division of regions and communities affected not only the peace and social fabric within villages and towns but threatened to endanger economic and social relations that some towns maintained with neighboring Catholic territory in Burgundy and Savoy. After the violence in Grandson occasioned by Farel’s preaching, the city council in that town wrote to its counterpart in Bern and complained that foreign pastors were tearing their community apart. The elders in Grandson did not contest the fact that since they lived in a Common Lordship, pastors should be allowed to preach; however the accused Farel of breaking the agreements and causing “great offense against your lordships, our sovereign lords, in view of the ordinances and acts that govern these matters, and also against our good, legal, and honorable Catholic and ancient customs.” 30 They continued,

28 “Nous vous enjoignons par conséquent de leur ordonner qu’ils aient à s’abstenir de fréquenter la dite église et qu’ils aillent à Bex pour entendre prêcher la Parole de Dieu, faire baptiser leurs enfants et recevoir le sacrement de la Cène.” Herminjard, CRF 2:168.

29 “Si l'un d'entre eux enfreignait cet ordre, vous luis feriez payer chaque fois une amende d'une couronne.” Ibid.

30 “[ce] qu'estoit grandement offence contre la Seigneurie de nos dits sauverains Seigneurs, veu les ordonnances et deffences sur ce faictes, aussi contre nostre bonne, louable, devote, catholicque et anciene coustume.” Herminjard, CRF, 2:367.
“We respect and support our ancient laws, liberties, and franchises and do not hinder anyone from following his conscience, because each should be allowed to protect his own soul.”\textsuperscript{31}

However, the violence was getting out of hand as altars, images, and crosses were being destroyed by armed men. The council wrote, “Ask yourselves, very honorable lords, is all of this done in the name of the Gospel?”\textsuperscript{32} They lamented that not only had the churches become the physical sites of violence, but they were about to be totally destroyed in the process of conversion. “It seems to be the case, that they [the activists] have made up their minds to ridicule and destroy everything until the churches are completely gone. This is done notwithstanding the agreements that have been reached between our Lord’s ambassadors.”\textsuperscript{33}

The city of Grandson believed that the unrest would affect the town financially. It was keenly aware that its major trading partners in Burgundy, France, and Savoy

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\textsuperscript{31} "Pareillement, nous laisser et entretenir en noz anciennes loys, libertés et franchises, et que contraincte ne soit faicte à nully de nous contre sa propre conscience; car à ung chacun particulier appartient penser du salut de son âme." Herminjard, CRF, 2:368.

\textsuperscript{32} "Pensés, très-honnorés Seigneurs, si toutes ses matières sont faictes selon l'Évangile!" Herminjard, CRF, 2:370.

\textsuperscript{33} "Et semblable cas [ils] promeectent et jurent de faire en toute dérision, jusques à la totale destruction de toutes les eglises de la dite vostre Seigneurie, nonobstant l'arrest et ordonnance (comme dessus est dit) faicte par les dits Seigneurs ambassadeurs . . . ." Herminjard, CRF, 2:390.
\end{flushright}
remained Catholic and that religious change could become a barrier to the established relationships. They wrote, “Also there are the areas of Savoy and Burgundy on our borders. Daily we do business with these people, interact, and live with them. If we adopt a new way of life, one that is different from theirs, they will abandon us, and we will be left without our necessities with nowhere to turn.”  

More than economic commerce united Grandson, one of the westernmost towns of the common territory, with the Catholic territories outside of the Confederation. The council of Grandson wrote that their people were united through alliances of families and marriage and that the Reformation was threatening to make enemies of friends.

Vuilleumier interprets these concerns as more evidence that Catholics were concerned with economics and alliances and not necessarily with spiritual matters. The subtext of his analysis, it appears, is sympathetic to the Evangelical arguments. In this less confessional age, when personal affiliations are less evident in the writing of history, one could also conclude that the city council was in a position to view the larger ramifications that religious conflict could create within their walls. They were charged

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34 "Aussi ilz sont ès frontières et marches de Sabvoye et Bourgoigne, avec lezquelz leur convient journelment converser, marchander et practiquer par ensemble, et si[ils] preignoyent aultre mode de vivre qu'eux, d'iceulx seront habandonnés, mesprisés et délai[s]sés en plusieurs neccessités, sans leur fayre aulcune courtoisie." Herminjard, CRF, 2:392.

with not only governing the town, but maintaining and strengthening their city and preserving the peaceful and necessary alliances that supported it economically. Their concerns are a further demonstration of the impact of the Reformation outside of the strictly religious sphere. Contrary to what Vuilleumier might assert, their concerns do not demonstrate a lack of concern over spiritual matters, but the fact that spiritual conflict affected relationships on the levels of the territory, the community, and even the family. Norman Jones remarks concerning the English Reformation that most people, except for the most ardent, realized that “it benefited no one to draw the religious lines so rigidly that they interfered with business.”

The modes of conversion and resistance worked in tandem to create a situation that threatened to become general disorder and unrest.

Bern too put a premium on unity and peace—as long as its subjects abided by the new reformed order. When the citizens of Les Ormonts, in the Four Bailiwicks, continued to resist the Reformation and some refused to take the “accustomed oath,” Bern expressed its anger at the public displays of division and disobedience. “Consider” its officers wrote, “that all of our subjects are of one accord regarding the Word of God and that it will be a strange thing if you continue in your disobedience . . . you have become rebels first against God, but also against us your superiors.”

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37 “Veilliés [l. veuillez] aussy avoir regard sur tous aultres nous soubjectz, que soy sont unis et accordés en la Parolle de Dieu, et que seroit chose bien estrange se vous deussiés
town refused to accept the Gospel peacefully. Exasperated by the episode, Bern
reminded the town council that even its brothers in other towns of the Four Bailiwicks
were growing weary of Les Ormonts’ obstreperous attitude.\(^{38}\)

In the midst of sending warning letters to the council, Bern mobilized the citizens
in the other towns of the Four Bailiwicks who had accepted the Reformation. Bern
believed that local people might be best suited to convince Les Ormonts to obey. It
hoped that in sending fellow residents of the Four Bailiwicks it could persuade the people
of Les Ormonts to follow their example. The authorities used the ties that bound the
villages to accomplish its objectives. Les Ormonts was one of the last holdouts of
Catholicism before the conquest and the most obstinate village in the region. Les
Ormonts was causing disunity, and who was better suited to remind them of what they
were risking than their neighbors who could not only humanize the new faith but shroud
the fact that it was a religious change that had been imposed by a foreign power?

Bern was serious about not allowing some villages to continue to threaten the
religious unity of the region, and it did not rely only on the good offices of local peasants
to carry out its wishes; it dispatched Nägeli to warn Les Ormonts of the drastic


\(^{38}\) "... sur la requeste de vous bons frères des trois Mandements, desmoure en obstination!" Herminjard, CRF, 2:148.
consequences if this village did not change its rebellious ways. The council gave sweeping powers to its lieutenant and authorized him to “employ all the means at his disposal to convert and to show them [the residents] the true path to glory and eternal life.” Moreover we desire the salvation of their souls just as we do our own.” The magistrates concluded the letter by telling their representative to make a note of the town’s response and to inform them.

Conclusions

Implementing the Reformation in the Four Bailiwicks and the Common Lordships was a process that reordered families, communities, and entire regions according to confession. It was a disruptive change that threatened the peace within parishes and towns alike and also placed economic relationships in jeopardy. Despite the fact that some communities resisted the Reformation or did not wish to hear Farel preach, others embraced the new faith and asked Bern to send them pastors immediately. The situation was constantly

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39 "En ce vous veilliês employer en bonne sourte et sercher tous moyans de les convertir." Herminjard, CRF, 2:147.

40 “Toutteffôys, sy ne veulent laisser la messe pour le présent, que ausmoings y souffrent que la Saincte Parolle de Dieu leur soit prégée jusque atant que Dieu par sa grâce les illuminez. Et nous les pourvoirons dez bons prescheurs, que leur montreront les vrais chemins de la gloire et vie éternelle. Car autant désirrons le salut de leurs âmes comme des noustres." Ibid.

41 "Après leur avoir tenuz cestuy propost, voulons que [ils] nous rescripvent leur responce." Ibid.
changing as pastors made their way to new villages. At the same time, both Catholics and Protestant were exposed to new teachings that challenged their beliefs and self-identities and threatened to undo or remake their communes.
CHAPTER 4

THE CONQUEST OF THE PAYS DE VAUD IN 1536

The political and religious constellations of the Swiss Confederation changed between the 1520’s and Bern’s invasion of the Pays de Vaud in 1536: Bern, Basel, and Zurich adopted the Reformation and banned the Mass. The Catholic members stood shoulder to shoulder when they signed the first statement of belief in 1525 in Lucerne. The confessional differences tested the Confederation and sparked two civil wars: the First and Second Battles of Cappel. The Catholics defeated the Evangelical cantons and killed Zwingli (1531) in the Second Battle.

In the western parts of the Confederation, Bern and Fribourg could easily have gone to war against one another because of their long, shared border and their confessional differences. Moreover, the two cities governed jointly the Common Lordships where Catholics and Evangelicals were skirmishing. Nevertheless, the respective councils navigated the confessional shoals to avoid military conflict. Most often Fribourg cooperated with Bern’s demands. Although Fribourg refused to
participate in Bern’s invasion of Vaud, it accommodated Bernese troops as they crossed its territory and ordered its dependent towns and villages to do likewise. Fribourg’s councilors realized that they could not stop Bern’s military plans. Indeed some councilors wanted Fribourg to assist Bern militarily. At the same time, the council maintained friendly relations with the duke of Savoy, to whom they were bound through religion. The council did not abandon their Catholic neighbors, but rather negotiated with Bern to protect some Catholic institutions. Moreover, Fribourg hoped to receive land from the duke’s territory after the invasion.

Fribourg’s negotiations and cooperation with Bern does not mean that its Catholic faith was wavering. Indeed, after the Second Battle of Cappel both cities defined their confessions of faith that all subjects must honor, and increased surveillance and punishment of religious misbehavior. Both cities had to contend with the fact that much of their population lived along borders and were exposed to competing religious traditions.

Despite their religious differences, both Bern and Fribourg were concerned with the duke of Savoy’s ongoing harassment of Geneva, five years after they had rescued that city. This was not only a religious concern but also an economic and political matter for the councils as well. The Bernese proposed a new treaty with the duke on December 12,
1535, to relieve the city of Geneva.\(^1\) Bern wanted to settle the matter peacefully. The duke refused. This was a foolish strategic decision since Bern was preparing to invade once again. His men were outnumbered, he was short of money, and Catholic powers in the region were not coming forward to assist him. On December 27, 1535, Bern abandoned its treaty with the duke and began its preparations for war. Shortly thereafter, the council of Bern notified the duke that it planned to invade his territory to rescue Geneva.\(^2\)

Bern explained its military plans to its people. First, it accused the duke of breaking the Treaty of Saint Julien that had ended hostilities only five years before. He had allowed his supporters to detain and murder residents of the city. He had shut down the city’s market. Because of looting, Bern’s merchants had to find alternative routes into Geneva. However, Bern was also taking action because of religion. Geneva had adopted the Reformation in 1535; a common creed united the cities. The Bernese authorities took their duty to their religious brethren seriously. They explained,

> Our cherished allies of Geneva have received the holy Gospel and pure Word of God and have completely renounced the papal Church. Not only the duke but the bishop of Geneva are extremely embittered. They besiege them as they would

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\(^1\) Gilliard, *La cônquete*, 44.

\(^2\) Staatsarchiv des Kantons Bern (SAB), AII, Bd. 254, fols. 70-71.
declared enemies, and they forbid commerce and the coming and going of the people more rigorously than ever before.³

They continued,

It is for both the honor and glory of God and our own, and if we abandon our very dear co-religionists in Geneva in such extreme circumstances of war and famine then we and our successors will be reproached in perpetuity.⁴

In the last lines of their statement to their subjects, the authorities justified moving quickly. They wrote,

But the greatest reason, it seemed to us [to pull out of the treaty of St. Julien] is that our co-religionists in Geneva are oppressed and because they have embraced the Holy Gospel and the pure Word of God, as we have. . . . ⁵

The councilors did not cite religious concerns when they wrote to the Catholic city of Lausanne and the duke of Savoy informing them of the imminent invasion.

Instead, they accused him of breaking the terms of their peace agreement and imprisoning, killing, robbing, and harming the Genevan population. Bern noted that it

³ "... nos très chers combourgeois de Genève ayant reçu le saint Evangile et la pure Parole de Dieu, et ayant renoncé complètement au papisme, non seulement le Duc, mais aussi l’évêque de Genève, ont été de plus fort aigris contr’eux, les ont assiégés comme ennemis déclarés et ont interdit le commerce et l’entrée des vivres plus rigoureusement que jamais." Vulliemin, Le Chroniquer, 213.

⁴ "... il y va de l’honneur et de la gloire de Dieu, puis des nôtres; et que si nous abandonnions ceux de Genève, nos très chers combourgeois, dans ces extrêmes oppressions de guerre et de famine, cela nous serait reproché et à nos successeurs à perpétuite." Ibid.

⁵ "Mais une raison plus forte nous a paru devoir l’emporter sur ces considerations. C’est que ceux de Genève se trouvent opprimés, parce qu’ils ont comme nous embrassé le saint Evangile et la pure Parole de Dieu ..." Ibid.
had tried to end the problems peacefully but the duke was unwilling to comply. Thus, Bern was forced to act.⁶

Both councils deployed the rhetoric of religion strategically. Fribourg eventually sought spoils from Bern’s invasion. It achieved this goal by assisting Bern militarily but by remaining out of the conflict. At first it appears as if Fribourg abandoned its Catholic neighbors, but later it asked Bern for certain villages and religious establishments, which Bern granted. Bern, on the other hand, did not emphasize religion or its concern for Evangelicals in Geneva when it notified the duke of its military plans. However, it did rally its own population by appealing people’s shared religious identity with their brethren in Geneva. To its own people, the council cast the conflict as a religious war.

Taking the Land with the Sword, Holding it by the Grace of God

On January 19, 1536, the council of Bern ordered the invasion of Vaud.⁷ On January 22, 1536, the Bernese army of six thousand men marched to the town Morat, the site of the famous defeat of the duke of Burgundy sixty years before. From Morat, the army

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⁶"Anstatt dessen aber haben der Herzog und seine Anhänger den Genfern den Proviant abgeschlagen, Bürger und Einwohner der Stadt Genf in den savoyischen Landen gefangen, geschlagen und getödtet, si ihrer Güter beraubt, häuser und Scheunen verwüstet und verbrannt, insbesondere durch die Strassenräuber von Peney und Andere." Amtliche Sammlung der ältern eidgenössischen, 4, 1 c:608.

⁷SAB, AII, Bd. 254, fol. 80.
notified the nearby village of Cudrefin that its envoys should come to the Bernese camp and take an oath of loyalty to the new authorities.\(^8\) Accepting the reality of the situation, the envoys arrived and duly transferred their oaths of loyalty and homage from the duke of Savoy to the Bernese. They also affixed the symbols of Bern to their walls.\(^9\) Bern was poised to vastly expand its territory quickly.

This alarmed the other members of Swiss Confederation. During the weeks immediately preceding the conquest of Vaud, envoys from the other Confederation members and European powers urged Bern not to invade. On January 19, 1536, at the Diet of Lucerne, representatives from Zurich, Lucerne, Uri, Schwytz, Unterwald, Zug, and Solothurn requested that Bern refrain from military action.\(^10\) Zurich joined the Catholic cantons in opposing Bern because peace between members was more important

\(^8\) Historians are well informed about the events of the conquest by contemporary sources and the work of modern historians. Perhaps the most comprehensive account is *Journal of the Commissioners*. In 1935, Vasella transcribed this archival source in an article that explored the conquest in 1936. The account provides a nearly day-by-day rendering of the events of the Bernese march towards Geneva and the liberation of that town. The second source is purportedly from the pen of the Bernese commander, Franz Naegli, Bern’s commander in the field. Vasella, "Der Krieg Berns." Hanz Franz Nägeli, "Waadtländische Kriegsberichte des Hans Franz Nägeli," in *Archiv des historischen Vereins des Kantons Bern*, ed. Wolfgang Friedrich von Mülinen (Bern: Stämfflische Buchdruckerei, 1889).

\(^9\) “hannd Inenn ouch daruff v. g. wappen an die tor der murenn ze schachenn gebenn, der hoffnung sy werdennt hiemit anrennens der uvwern vberhebt sin. . . .”Nägeli, "Kriegsberichte," 254.

\(^10\) Gaston Castella, "L’intervention de Fribourg lors de la conquête du Pays de Vaud (janvier-février 1536)," *Annales Fribourgeoises* 7, no. 3 (1919): 94.
than engaging in confessionally motivated wars. Moreover, the Confederation members feared that Bern’s territorial acquisition would cause it to become disproportional powerful.

The army marched unopposed across the Vaudois countryside. Villages capitulated swiftly; they realized resistance was futile. The army camped in Payerne on January 23, and notified nearby towns and villages that they had twenty-four hours to submit to Bern. Moudon, Romont, and Rue balked and were given extra time. They pleaded with Bern that they did not have the authority to submit and needed to consult with others. Actually, these three cities were seeking Fribourg’s support to maintain their Catholicism by joining that canton. This was a successful bid for Romont and Rue, both of which eventually became a part of Fribourg.\footnote{Ruffieux, \textit{Geschichte des Kantons Freiburg}, 363-64.}

The Moudonnois, on the other hand, called their council together to discuss the matter. The council of Moudon understood the situation clearly. It was impossible to stop Bern militarily. Moudon could not match the superior force, and any attempt to resist could result in the total destruction of the town. The town fathers also realized that the duke of Savoy was unable to mount an effective campaign against the invaders. Moreover, his vassals were adrift; he had not sent word as to how they should proceed. Therefore, without their sovereign at the helm, the council of Moudon agreed that their
best course was to follow the example of the other villages and pledge their oath to Bern. They decided to surrender to Bern rather than fight.

The town fathers announced their decision to their people. The local nobles, council, members of the community, and nearby villages gathered at the hospital of Moudon as Pierre Cerjat and Jean Phillipon explained the situation. Moudon was to submit immediately and follow the example of other local villages including Cudrefin, Grandcourt, and Payerne. The authorities stated, “Given the power of the aforementioned army [Bern’s], against which it would be impossible to resist, and considering that we have no rescue waiting, remedy, mandate, authority, or command from the duke,” we submit.12

The council made it clear, however, that they intended to maintain the old faith. They did not rule out later conversion, but that would happen according to their own timing. On January 25, both Moudon and Rue swore their loyalty to Bern on the condition that their rights, privileges, and religion would be respected.13 (Shortly thereafter Rue became a part of Fribourg)

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12 “. . . que attendu la grande puissance de la susdite armée, à laquelle faisant leur devoir n’est possible résister, considérant aussi non avoir aucun secours ni remède, mandement, certification ni commandement apparaissant de mondit S.r le duc . . . .” Grenus, *Documents*, 195-96.

13 “Am zinstag 25. januarj sind wir gan Tscherle khon. Hie zwüschen jn eim dorf sind die von Müllden und Rouw khon, sich an m. h. ergen, jnen glpt und geschworn mit aller gerechtigkeit des herzogen zughorsamen, vorbehalten jr rechtsame und fryheit, och des globens halb, das man sy darvon nit trennge. Jst jnen zugseit, sy wellent den das
On Thursday, January 27, 1536, two days after the representatives had taken their oaths of loyalty, the population gathered at the local church of the Blessed Virgin Mary. They watched as town officials of Moudon, on bended knees, took the oath of loyalty to Bern. They pledged that the Moudonnois would be good, faithful, and loyal subjects and would work to Bern’s advantage with all of their power. Bern, on the other hand, promised to observe the traditional liberties and franchises, written and unwritten, as well as usages and customs of the town.¹⁴ They promised to allow the people of Moudon to live according to their free laws and past way of life.

These surrender terms set a precedent Bern would repeat in the other villages it conquered. Modern historians, however, debate Bern’s sincerity when it agreed to allow the people it conquered to remain Catholic. Bern’s authorities often repeated that they did not intend to use the sword to convert the people. Rather, they believed that the power of the Word as preached would work on the hearts and minds of the people to bring them to the true religion. Perhaps Bern made the agreements to keep religion from motivating the Vaudois to resist. On the other hand, Bern might have truly believed that

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¹⁴ "... de procurer de tout son pouvoir leur avantage, honneur et utilité; d’éviter de même ce qui pourroit leur être dommageable et désavantageux, d’observer les libertés et franchises écrites et non écrites de la ville de Moudon ..." Grenus, Document[s], 196.
the preaching of the pure Word of God, which was also guaranteed in the surrender agreements, would convert the people. Regardless, Bern would later renege on its early agreements.

Although Lausanne was not a member of the estates of Vaud, Bern set its military sights on that city as well. There four thousand Italian troops were set to oppose the invaders. As the head of the city, the bishop of Lausanne returned from his residence to organize the defense of his territory. He intended to defend the Catholic faith and his bishopric, but the Italian troops fled before they could engage the Bernese.\(^\text{15}\)

According to Gilliard, the bishop was unable to raise many troops. The villages of Lutry, Saint Saphorin, Villete, and Vevey supported the bishop and prepared to send troops to his aid. Their contributions were meager and could never have made a difference in the military success of the Bernese army. Lutry sent twenty-five men to the bishop, for example. They guarded his residence in Lausanne.\(^\text{16}\) These towns’ determination to oppose the invaders demonstrated their opposition to Bern, which would later be manifest in their opposition to the Evangelical faith as well.

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\(^\text{15}\) “Je vous veux bien adver tir comme aujourd’hui je suis arrivé pour venir voir mes sujets et pour les faire mettre en ordre tant pour la manutention de la foi, que de mon siège et pais . . . .” Vulliemin, *Le Chroniquer*, 230.

\(^\text{16}\) Gilliard, *La cônquete*, 89.
Interestingly, the city of Lausanne was divided between the supporters of duke and bishop and those of Bern. In the end, the city honored its alliance terms and provided Bern with 103 troops to liberate Geneva. This was not the first time that troops from Lausanne had supported Bern’s military expeditions. Catholic troops had fought alongside Bern in confessionally motivated wars. These relationships complicated the political and religious situation in Lausanne.

With towns and villages surrendering quickly and resistance nonexistent, Bern’s troops arrived in Geneva only a few weeks after they left Bern. At the end of January 1536, the siege was lifted. The Bernese army marched triumphantly into the city to the cheers of the local population. For the duke of Savoy, this was a major defeat. He had lost his Vaudois territory, and his vassals had not rallied to support him. For the local nobles and population, the change was slight. Aside from replacing the duke with the city of Bern, little else seemed to change.

Converting Catholic Communities

At least nothing changed immediately in terms of religion except that Bern demanded its pastors to be allowed to preach. As has been noted above, Bern disavowed using force to convert the people of Vaud. Noteworthy are the terms negotiated with the city of Morges. The Bernese authorities wrote, “First, faith will not be compelled. But where
there is one person or anyone who desires God’s Word, they are free to hear it and no one may punish them or trouble them [for their beliefs].”\textsuperscript{17} However, based on historical hindsight, the authorities in that city, either purposely concealed their plans or they truly believed that the preaching of the Word of God alone might convert the Catholic population. Catholic historians have interpreted Bern’s later drive to convert the region through edicts as evidence of its duplicity.\textsuperscript{18} From this perspective, one could argue that Bern realized that it did not have enough Evangelical pastors to methodically canvass the entire territory spreading the Gospel and needed to wait until it was ready to staff a new church.

Instead, Bern used the religion and the specter of conversion as both a carrot and a stick to motivate villages to surrender and to punish those that resisted. Bern allowed villages to keep the “faith of our fathers” to entice the Vaudois population to surrender. The council understood the political reality that the estates formed a loose confederation and that their allegiance to the duke was weak. He had not protected them during the invasion and he rarely appeared in his territory. The Catholic faith however, did form a

\textsuperscript{17} “Erstlich des gloubens halb sy nitt zwengen. Wo sy aber eins oder iemand des gotsworts begarte, das fry lassen, niemands darumb straffen noch vechen.” Vasella, "Der Krieg Berns," 272.

\textsuperscript{18} Dupraz, "Introduction de la Réforme."
tie that bound the region and gave the population a common heritage with both predecessors and contemporaries.

Certainly few of the rural residents grasped the theological principles of the faith that they practiced, but the rituals and worship were age-old traditions that provided continuity and stability and that reflected the wisdom of their ancestors. Historians of the sixteenth century have observed that the notion that the Reformation was novel was a hurdle that the Reformers had to overcome, if they wished to legitimate their beliefs in the eyes of the people.\textsuperscript{19} Catholicism was a more deeply ingrained aspect of regional identity than the status of “subjects of the duke of Savoy.” Bern realized this and therefore took the religious question out of the equation thereby ensuring that villages surrendered without a fight. The examples of Vevey and Yverdon demonstrate Bern’s deliberate use of religion for military purposes.

Vevey, a town of approximately one thousand, was not a member of the estates of Vaud, but it was about to be seized by Bern nonetheless. The town bordered Valais and Fribourg and was situated within the diocese of the bishop of Sion. It was also strategically placed on Lake Geneva; Fribourg and Bern vied for this port town. Because

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of its fear that it would be forced to convert, Vevey began negotiations with Fribourg with the hope of joining that Catholic canton.

Fribourg agreed to the plan and sent word to Bern that it would take possession of Vevey along with a few other villages. Bern refused to allow Fribourg to take Vevey and sent forces to back up their decision. Realizing the futility of resistance, Vevey gave its oath to Bern on February 19, 1536.

Fribourg protested Bern’s actions. According to historian Jeanne Niquille, Vevey wanted to become a dependency of Fribourg to preserve its Catholicism, but at the same time, it did not wish to risk destruction by Bern’s army. Fribourg believed that it was entitled to Vevey because of the agreement that it had made with that city. Bern relented and for a time agreed that Fribourg could take Vevey. They wrote to Fribourg, “These locations, added by the magistrates, have already given themselves to our soldiers. We free them of their oaths, but we ask that you hold them by force of arms so that our allies, who fought by our sides during the conflict will not accuse us of unjustly favoring a neighbor [Fribourg] who did not lend military support during the conflict.” Bern did not want other powers making claims on the land it had won through conquest.

20 Jeanne Niquille, "Quand Fribourg voulait un port sur le Léman (1536)," in Mélanges d'histoire et de littérature offerts a Monsieur Charles Gilliard à l'occasion de son soixante-cinquième anniversaire, ed. Louis Junod (Lausanne: F. Rouge, 1944), 338.

21 Ibid.
Nonetheless, by the time Fribourg’s representatives arrived in Vevey to take that town’s oath, they learned that that town had submitted to Bern and affixed its symbols on their walls. What had caused this curious about-face? Originally, Vevey sought the protection of Fribourg, but in the end, it sided with Bern. The answer can be found in the agreements that the Bernese military commander had made regarding the Catholic faith.

First, the people in Vevey yearned to maintain the faith of their fathers. According to Niquille,

The attitude of the residents of Vevey is not inexplicable. They loved peace above all and they certainly did not wish to become the prize at stake in a conflict, even one that was not certain to occur. The religious factor did not play a role in their sudden change; the majority did not suddenly move from the Catholic camp to the reformed. Most residents of Vevey wanted to keep the religion of their fathers [Catholicism].

Thus, when Bern agreed to allow the town to remain Catholic it switched its allegiance quickly and broke its understanding with Fribourg. Vevey’s authorities explained their decision to the Bernese authorities whom they met at Morges. They stated,

What a great pleasure it is that you lords have allowed us to keep our faith [Catholicism] and law in full. [The same faith and law] that we and our ancestors have maintained both in the past and in the present. Because we desire to live and die, helping God, who gives us grace. In addition, we ask that you do not send us your pastors.

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22 Ibid.

23 "Que le bon plaisir de vos seigneuries soit que nos dégions totalement rester et être maintenus dans notre foi et loi, ainsi que nous et nos ancêtres avons été tant par les passé que du présent; car en icelle désironns vivre et mourir, aidant Dieu, qui nous en doint la
Bern allowed the Veveysans to remain steadfast in their faith as long as the residents did not punish others who wished to hear Evangelical preaching. The town’s negotiators even stipulated that without the acceptance of the council and a majority of the people, pastors would not be sent through the territory. They wrote, “Concerning faith, it will not be compelled, likewise no preacher will come [to our town] without the consent and permission of the council and majority. Nevertheless no one who speaks of God’s word shall be harassed or punished.”

When one considers the post-conquest situation in Yverdon, the theory that Bern purposely manipulated religion and the prospect of conversion for military purposes is more convincing. In this case, Bern punished Yverdon for its resistance with an immediate and forced introduction of the reformed faith. Yverdon was one of the few places in the Pays de Vaud where resistance to Bern was organized. This town was outside of the path that the Bernese took to reach Geneva and Lausanne. The Bernese dispatched a messenger to Yverdon and ordered it to submit immediately. The
glace. Et vous prions que ne nous donnez nul prédicant des vôtres.” Vulliemin, Le Chroniquer, 242.

messenger learned that local nobles and authorities had gathered four hundred men, mostly Swiss, in preparation to fight Bern’s troops.\textsuperscript{25}

The commander of Bern’s forces headed for Yverdon and quickly conquered it. As part of the surrender agreement, Yverdon gave up the Catholic faith immediately. The Mass was banned and the churches were cleansed of their Catholic iconography and symbols. Yverdon became a warning to would-be rebels that any resistance could jeopardize their continuing practice of the Catholic faith.

Bern provided the towns, villages, and cities in the Pays de Vaud both an incentive to surrender and punishment for resistance. If they surrendered quickly, they could keep the faith of fathers. If they resisted they would be forced to reform their churches immediately and give up an aspect of their identity that was prized. Their actions in Yverdon reveal that the Bernese authorities believed that total submission meant more than recognizing them as the region’s new overlord—it also meant adopting their Evangelical faith. Based on the example of Yverdon, one can conclude that the Bernese viewed the surrender agreements that were made in the rest of Vaud as half-measures that were meant to gain the regions political loyalty before its total absorption.

\textsuperscript{25} “Denne hatt man den trumeter gan Yuerden geschikt, denen zusagen, wie m. h. uf syent und sich das land an sy ergeben, was sy thun, ob sy ouch des willes syent. Het der trummeter den herren von Lassarra da funden mit 400 zesammen gelessen knechten. Jst ji antwurt gsin, sy wellens dem fürsten jrem g. h., des diener sy syennt, anzöugen.” Ibid., 265.
into Bern could be secured by abolishing the Mass and filling the pulpits with reformed preachers. Bern was unprepared to accomplish this task in 1536. As Vasella concludes, “What was realized politically [the conquest] must also be realized religiously. The political realm needed to correspond to the realm of church governance.”

Fribourg’s Response

Fribourg’s council based its reaction to Bern’s invasion of Vaud on a number of factors. It was incapable of stopping Bern militarily, and wished to share in the spoils of the duke’s territory. At the same time, it was not pleased to see its neighbors forced to convert to the Evangelical faith that would have posed a threat on its own borders. Thus, it walked a middle road to appease Bern, protect Catholic establishments with which it had alliances, and expand its own territory.

On January 7, 1536, Bern notified Fribourg that it planned to use military force to liberate Geneva. According to the sixteenth-century Fribourgois chronicler, François Rudella, some members of the council wanted Fribourg to assist Bern in the liberation of Geneva, while others believed it was better to stay out of the conflict. Interestingly

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26 Ibid., 29:244.

27 Castella, "L'intervention de Fribourg," 92.

28 "... und wie wol man in dem rhat zu Friburg zwyspaltung dann die einen mit denen von Bern ze ziehen, die andern aber darwieder rietend, angesehen die statt Genf, diese statt Friburg nach vorgermelter ufgebung des burgrechts nit mer angieng. Dennoch
Rudella states that many of the common people supported the duke of Savoy and wanted Fribourg to take the field against the Bernese.\textsuperscript{29} Their sentiment could have been the result of their common religious ties and the fact that Bern put down rural insurrections by Catholic peasants in its own territory.

On January 20, 1536, Fribourg requested that Bern spare certain towns and villages from attack. These included locations with which Fribourg was allied. Fribourg wrote,

With this request, we wish each place, which we and they are bound to Fribourg through alliances, rights, or other obligations. In this case we name: Avenches, Constantine, Pfauen, the church and cloister of Payerne, the noble domains of Cugy, Estavayer, Font Chiere, St. Aubin, the village Marnand, the duke of Gruyere and his territory, Rolle, Zurlfue, Wippingen, Vaulion, the Bishop of Lausanne and his Capital . . . Alongwith the one wishes all villages lying on the roads and noble domains that are likewise called from Fribourg. So that it is apparent, we have attached the insignia of Fribourg in these places and have ordered them to furnish you free food and drink graciously.\textsuperscript{30}

dahin kam daz man nit anders vermeint dann mit inen zereisen; und was (c'est-à-dire war) alle kriegsrüstung gwaltig geordnet, das geschütz schon harfür gethan und etliche underthanen (als Murten, Schw. [c'est-à-dire Schwarzenbourg] und anderen) schon in die statt kommen mit dem paner darvon ze ziehen. Ward aber alles treffenlichen gewendert und sonderlich us herten anhalten des herrn von Beuregard.' [sic pour Boisrigault]" Ibid., 98.

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., 99.

\textsuperscript{30} "Auf die Forderung, jene bezeichnen zu wollen, welche Freiburg mit Bünden, Burgrechten und andern Pflichten sich verwandt glaube, benenne man diesfalls den Platz Wiflisburg mit Pfauen, Gotteshaus und Kloster Peterlingen, die Herrlichkeiten Cugy, Stäffis, Font, Chiere, St. Aubin, das Dorf Marnand, den herrn von Greierz und dessen Graffschaft, die herrschaften Rolle, Zurflue, Wippingen Vaulion, den Bischof zu Lausanne und dessen Capitel . . . Hiemit wolle man alle an der Strasse liegenden Dörfer und Herrlichkeiten derer von Freiburg ebenfalls genannt haben. Zu ‘gutem schyn der dingen’ habe man an einigen der obgenannten Plätze das Wappen derer von Freiburg
The next day they added Grandcourt and the cloister of Romainmôtier, the latter was affiliated with the Cathedral of St. Nicolas in Fribourg.31

Fribourg did try to absorb several Vaudois towns including Vevey. Fribourg did not state its full designs on Vevey in the language of territorial expansion, but claimed that it was coming to the rescue of its co-religionists. Religious solidarity it claimed, motivated it. Although it did not win its bid to take Vevey, Bern conceded to Fribourg the nearby towns of Romont, Rue, Châtel-Saint Denis, and Estavayer, a port city on the Lake Neuchâtel.

Fribourg also cited religion and alliances when it came to the aid of the Cluniac monastery in Payerne. Once again however, Fribourg was acting to protect economically and strategically important sites. Payerne was located directly on Fribourg’s border. Moreover, it sat between Fribourg and several of its villages in the rural region of Broye. The monastery possessed land and money that Fribourg sought to keep out Bern’s coffers. Fribourg complained to Bern that it had allowed the destruction of altars in a chapel that belonged to the monks and had installed a Protestant pastor there. They also

accused the population of Payerne of entering the monks’ sanctuary and destroying the altars. To support its relationship with the monastery, Fribourg cited alliances that had kept with it since 1225.

Bern and Fribourg tangled over the who held the right to the monastery’s land and whether Fribourg’s protection extended to other villages. On December 28, 1536, the matter was decided between Bern and Fribourg. Bern allowed the monks, their goods, rights, and revenues to go to Fribourg. If the monks went to Fribourg, they would continue to receive their income from rents. Once they died, those possessions in Fribourg would go to Fribourg; those in Bern would go to the Bernese.

Although Fribourg wanted to protect the Cluniacs and their monastery in Payerne, Jeanne Niquille notes that there was never any consideration of the monks simply moving their house to Fribourg’s territory. Instead, she writes, “One had in mind only a refuge where the exiled monks could end their lives in peace.” Indeed, not all of the monks from Payerne wished to finish their days in Fribourg. Of the eleven monks that remained after the conquest, three reformed, and eight remained Catholic. The superior of the

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33 Ibid., 98.

34 Ibid., 104.

35 Ibid., 104-05.
house moved to Fribourg and lived near the cathedral. Several of the monks also moved to Fribourg. Two others moved to Cluniac houses in Alsace.\footnote{Ibid., 105.}

Fribourg explained its apparent disloyalty to the duke in a letter dated February 19, 1536. The council wrote that it still considered itself his ally and that it had only seized his territory in order to keep it out of the Evangelical clutches of Bern. It promised to return the spoils if Bern did so as well.\footnote{Castella, "L'intervention de Fribourg," 104.} In making this promise, Fribourg followed the example set by Valais, which had also seized towns from the Pays de Vaud during the conflict. Valais explained its land seizures based on confessional obligations and also promised to return the land if Bern and Fribourg did so. Bern returned a small section of formerly Savoyard territory to the duke in the 1560’s. Fribourg and Valais kept their portions. They maintained that since Bern had not returned the majority of the land it had seized in 1536, they were not obligated to give back their what they had taken. In reality, by the time that Bern had restored this territory to Savoy, the towns in Fribourg’s possession had become an integral parts of that territory.

The Reformation created divides within the Confederation and Europe that enabled local authorities to purposefully and skillfully manipulate religion, religious solidarity, and the fears surrounding conversion to further economic and territorial

\footnote{Ibid., 105.}

\footnote{Castella, "L'intervention de Fribourg," 104.}
expansion and to create obedient and supportive subjects. The Reformation had split the Confederation and the region into two opposing confessional camps; Fribourg and Bern deployed religion and the threat that territory might be lost to an enemy of their faith at critical junctures to conceal their less than terrestrial designs on strategic lands and wealth. This is not a reductionist argument that denies that true spiritual concerns motivated both Bern and Fribourg to act on behalf of other members of their faiths. Instead, it demonstrates that both councils could now exploit a variety of explanations that had not been available before the Reformation, to expand their power and protect their interests, which included maintaining their respective creeds.

Bern and Fribourg acted in ways that make it difficult to accept Brad Gregory’s critique of what he calls a "hermeneutics of suspicion." According to Gregory, these historians habitually downplay "self-professed religious sentiment" as covers for the "exercise of power and the assertion of self-interest." He continues his critique,

In general, the sermons, the missionary efforts, the regulation and surveillance, the state's support of churches, the emphasis on obedience, should be understood [according to these historians’ analysis] as means by which authorities sought incrementally to discipline and control a relatively unruly late medieval population through confessionalization. In this crypto-Foucauldian narrative of religion as social control, wherever human interactions can be interpreted as the exercise of power, they should be with 'faith' and the entire discourse of Christianity construed as means of domination. Only where religion was adopted

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as the language of protest or resistance—in the early Evangelical movements or the Peasants' War of 1525, for instance, or among vulnerable Anabaptists—might it merit interpretation as a premodern aspiration to some form of social progress, political autonomy, or cultural self-determination.³⁹

Certainly, the religious sentiment of the councilors in Fribourg and Bern cannot be doubted; nevertheless, they were multifaceted individuals with a variety of objectives. They turned to religion to defend many of their economic and political objectives.

**Consequences of the Conquest**

According to the reports of the commanders in the field at the end of February 1536, the troops were restless and wanted to return to their homes. Its army had nearly doubled the size of Bern’s territory in only a few weeks and liberated Geneva. They had not lost a man. The conquest was a success. Now the lords of Bern faced the formidable task of governing a territory that was very different from its own. In a statement from the council, they wrote, that they were prepared to hold the land that they had been given by the grace of God with the sword.⁴⁰ Although they had allowed the people in the Pays de Vaud to remain loyal to the faith of their fathers, that was only a military necessity that ensured the quick collapse of the territory. In reality, the invasion was the first step on the road to religious conversion. The military could not lead the people to the new faith;

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ SAB, AII, Bd 259, fol. 76.
instead, Bern would turn again to William Farel and his international contacts to begin spreading the new faith throughout the region.
CHAPTER 5

THE REFORMATION FROM WITHOUT: IMPORTING “FOREIGN” CLERGY

The army quickly won the military conquest and installed Bern as the new supreme jurisdictional authority in the Pays de Vaud, it would require reformed clerical troops if the city were to be successful in the converting its “newly-won” territory. No matter how many villages Farel visited, no matter how fiery his preaching was, he alone could not convince the population to turn away from the Catholic faith and embrace the Reformation. Without pastors, the Reformation in Vaud would fail, but finding competent and willing preachers of the Gospel was one of the greatest hurdles that Bern faced. In other European and Swiss territories, ex-Catholic clerics filled the ranks of Evangelical pastors. In Vaud, this did not occur because Bern allowed Catholic priests to remain in the territory and continue to receive their benefices as long as they abjured the old faith. Had they denied them an income, perhaps more former priests would have become pastors. Thus, in order to put

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1 Burnett, "Basel’s Rural Pastors," 69-70; Karant-Nunn, "Preaching the Word," 201-03.
Reformed pastors’ boots on the ground in Vaud after 1536, the authorities continued to rely on Farel and his foreign contacts.

Pastors formed the crucial link between the religious authorities and city magistrates in Bern and the outlying parishes, some which were far removed from the capital. They were responsible for carrying the new theological teachings to the people, educating the young in the rudiments of the new faith, supervising morals, and reporting bad behavior. They were Bern’s mouthpieces, eyes, and ears at the local level: their intermediary position exposed them to local hostility toward the Reformation. Many historians of the early modern period have described pastors as agents of confessionalization who labored to create obedient, docile, Evangelical, pious subjects on behalf of the state: this was true in Switzerland as well.²

² "Tout d'abord, comme les sujets sont, par nature, rebelles, désobéissants et mal disposés envers l'autorité dont ils dépendent, et que les pauvres le sont de même envers les riches, comme, d'autre part, la discorde est directement contraire à la charité chrétienne, charité qui est la livrée des chrétiens, leur marque et ce qui les distingue du monde corrompu, -- il faut bien veiller à ce que l'autorité temporelle soit maintenue dans sa dignité, telle que Dieu l'a établie, et à ce que l'on mette dans l'esprit du peuple ignorant qu'il faut la craindre, comme étant de droit divin, et lui obéir par motif même de conscience (Rom XIII). Car, bien que le chrétien soit humble et soumis à toute créature, il se glissa néanmoins une erreur dans l'Eglise des apôtres : de pieuses gens s'imaginèrent que les décrets de l'autorité temporelle ne les concernaient en rien et qu'ils n'avaient rien à faire avec elle, puisque leur patrie était céleste, et qu'ils n'avaient pas, sur terre, de cité permanente, mais attendaient impatiemment celle qui était à venir. Or, c'est là renverser l'ordre établi par Dieu, qui régit les hommes selon deux gouvernements." Berne, Le synode de Berne de 1532, 126-27.
This chapter is guided by a set of interrelated questions about the course of the Reformation in Vaud as it concerns the conversion, development, and function of the Reformed clergy. It will look more closely at the pastorate in the Pays de Vaud after the conquest. Who were the first pastors in the territory? It will examine the Disputation of Lausanne as a means by which the Bernese tried to convert the Catholic clergy and legitimate the Reformation. It will also explore how pastors physical needs were met–how they were paid, housed, fed and their growing families accommodated. Finally it will ask what was expected of pastors in terms of preaching and caring for souls and it will study the ecclesiastical infrastructure Bern created to educate and police its men in the rural parishes.

The Catholic Clergy on the Eve of the Conquest

Christine Lyon estimates that before the conquest, between 322-470 secular clerics lived in Vaud. Some staffed the approximately 161 parishes.3 Lausanne, the largest urban area and seat of the bishop, was home to approximately 70 secular clergy who worked in the town’s 20 parishes, 13 chapels, and 29 altars.4

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3 Christine Lyon, "Le sort du clerge vaudois au lendemain de la Réforme" (Mémoire de licence en histoire moderne, Université de Lausanne, 1998), 41-42.

4 Ibid., 36.
Eleven religious orders occupied 43 monastic houses. All of the establishments were affiliated with motherhouses outside of the territory. For instance, the Cluniacs had two sister houses: one in Romainmôtier and the other in Payerne. There were ten Augustinian monasteries, four Franciscan friaries, two Cistercian abbeys, as well as establishments of Dominicans, Premonstratensians (Norbertine), Carthusians, and others. Three of the houses were for women, including the two convents of Poor Clares (Clarisses), and one Cistercian house for women. Approximately 200 regular clergy lived in Vaud in 1536. In total, 677 religious men and women called the Pays de Vaud home in 1536.

The numbers alone do not convey the full extent of the power that the Catholic Church wielded at the local level. The bishop governed Lausanne. He not only exercised religious control but secular control as well, and vast tracts of land and parishes were under his authority. Indeed, the position of bishop itself had become a hereditary

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5 Ibid., 43.

6 Ibid., 43-44.

7 Ibid., 43-51.

8 Ibid., 44.

9 For extensive information on the bishopric of Lausanne, see Christine Santschi, Les évêques de Lausanne et leurs historiens des origines au XVIII siècle: Erudition et société, Société d'histoire de la suisse romande (Lausanne: Société d'histoire de la suisse romande, 1975).
prize, as Sébastian Montfalcon, the bishop at the time of the conquest, was the nephew of the previous occupant.

Individual monastic houses held rights to certain territories and parishes. These religious establishments could nominate or chose the vicar or pastor in these instances. The Cluniacs in Payerne had the right to nominate priests in up to twenty parishes, some of which remained in Catholic territory. In other cases, they were entitled to a portion of the rents and tithes generated from the land that they held. Monasteries and religious claimed portions of peasant surpluses. After the Reformation, Bern would consolidate and seize the ecclesiastical rights, privileges, and customs.

In the days and weeks after the conquest, the religious situation was in flux. Bern had concluded a number of agreements with individual villages and towns that enabled them to remain Catholic. Given that there was very little clamor for the Reformation, Catholic priests went about fulfilling their duties, at least until the Disputation of Lausanne and the issuance of mandates banning the Mass. Even after Bern banned the Catholic faith, some priests continued to sing the Mass and offer the sacraments both to noble patrons and simple folk.

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10 Lyon, "Le sort du clerge vaudois", 43-44.
The Disputation of Lausanne

Ten months after the conquest, very few Vaudois had adopted the new faith and most Catholic clergy remained in the territory and carried out their lives and duties as they had done before. This was not acceptable to the authorities in Bern who had idealistically believed that more would have converted willingly. While preaching the Gospel throughout the territory was its strategy for converting the people, Bern ordered that the Disputation of Lausanne should be convened during the first week of October 1536 primarily to convert the Catholic clergy. Bern favored converting the Catholic clergy with reason and intellectual persuasion.

Cities commonly held disputations before enacting the Reformation. This device was a ritual of persuasion. We can also see in retrospect that it was a rite of self-justification for those who favored the Reformation. There was no doubt that reformed side would win; but the process of arguing and debating in front of an audience of Catholics and Evangelicals gave the procedure the appearance of fairness. It was no different in Lausanne. The authorities hoped that people and their priests and other religious would embrace the Reformation voluntarily after intellectual and rhetorical

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11 Staatsarchiv des Kantons Bern (SAB), AII, Bd. 256, fol.118, fol. 165, fol. 203.

12 By 1536, the model of the urban disputation was a recognized and well-used strategy for legitimizing the Reformation. Zurich (1523), Bern (1528), Basel (1529), and Geneva (1535) had preceded Lausanne in the holding of a disputation before authorizing the Reformation.
masters like Calvin and Farel had spelled out the differences between the creeds and highlighted Catholicism’s errors. The disputation would settle remaining religious disagreements.  

In the summer of 1536, the council ordered all of the clergy as well as representatives from the communes in its “newly conquered” territory to appear in Lausanne on October 1, 1536. The council knew that its new subjects were raising questions about the fact that some continued to practice Catholicism while others were attracted to the faith of their new overlords. The council was displeased that Catholics were harassing Evangelicals because of their reformed faith. It reminded its subjects that by its orders, Evangelicals were to be allowed to worship as they chose. Unfortunately, the council wrote, Evangelical preachers and laymen and women were suffering. The council omitted the exact nature of the harassment except to note that it was as much in

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13 SAB, AII, Bd 256, fol. 165.


15 “Comme ainsy soit que, en noz terres, que justement par la grace de Dieu avons conquestees, grandz differentz et questions se soient levees entre noz subjectz a cause de la foy, pource que les uns veuillent vivre selon le sainct evangile de Jesus, et les autres a la maniere accoustumee . . . .” Arthur Piaget, ed., Les actes de la dispute de Lausanne: 1536 publiés intégralement d'après le manuscript de Berne (Neuchâtel: Secrétariat de l'Université, 1928), 3.
words as in deed. The religious tolerance that Bern and the Vaudois had negotiated was fast becoming unsustainable.

Eric Junod interprets the disputation as a step toward bringing religious unity to the Pays de Vaud. He writes that in the sixteenth century it was untenable for Bern to allow such a vast section of its territory to remain Catholic. He explains that the Bernese believed themselves obligated to spread the new teaching to Vaud. Indeed, he uses the word “mission” to describe Bern’s religious zeal. He concludes that the Bernese were of the belief that on Judgment Day they would stand accountable before God for their administration. They must create the conditions that enabled their subjects to live according to God’s wishes. They had to secure the free preaching of the Gospel and abolition of the Mass. Although the terms of the surrender agreement allowed the Vaudois to continue to practice Catholicism, the council had envisioned this co-existence as temporary. The disputation then was also the first step towards dismantling the surrender agreements that had been made during the military invasion during the previous January.

16 "... ains grosses injures ont esté faictes, tant de faict que de parolles, et a ceux qui ont voulu parler de l'evangile comme aux prescheurs, et aussi a ceux qui l'ont voulu suivre et ouyr." Ibid.

Surely the Bernese could have bypassed a disputation altogether and issued its Reformation edicts to ban the Mass and the Catholic clergy. Holding a disputation legitimated the process and lent the Reformation an air of legality and due process that it would not have had otherwise. The Bernese were not only deciding the religious fate of the Pays de Vaud, but they were reneging on the agreements which they had made with multiple villages and towns that enabled them to maintain the “faith of their fathers.” Before the rest of the Confederation, Bern could claim that it had followed the same procedures as other cities before authorizing the dismantlement of the Church. Furthermore, it provided the hope of increasing the numbers of evangelical pastors if Catholic clergy converted during the disputation and agreed to preach.

The edict was clear about the rules of the disputation. The participants could draw their evidence only from the Scriptures: both the Old and New Testaments. This restriction gave an advantage to the Evangelical camp since the Catholics were barred from using traditional and authoritative sources outside of the Scriptures. Both sides could demonstrate the logic and correctness of their position and point out the flaws in the position of the other party, but they had to do so based on the Scriptures.¹⁸

¹⁸ “. . . ung chacun avance les raisons et auctoritez de la saincte escripture, tant pour prouver ce qu’il croit, fait et tient, que pour impugner ce qu’il pourra monstrer de la partie adverse estre repugnant a la saincte escripture, et pour respondre aussy par la saincte escripture aux raisons et objections de la partie adverse, et cel liberalement et franchement.” Piaget, Les actes de la dispute de Lausanne, 4.
The disputation focused on ten conclusions that the reformers had designed. Briefly, they included the primacy and role of Scriptures, the sufficiency of Christ’s sacrifice for salvation, the role of the church and its members, the role of the magistrate, the meaning of marriage, and adiaphora. The debaters argued the merits of each point and moved on to the next. Embedded within the discussions were arguments over other theological points. Therefore, the formal repartee between the Catholic and Evangelical camps on the first point, that the Scriptures teach nothing other than justification through faith in Christ, strayed away from the point at hand. Instead the disputants debated the preaching of individual Catholic pastors whom Farel accused of impropriety, the merits of the saints, the definition of the Holy Scriptures, the form of baptism, and more theological discussions concerning the ages of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Farel opened the dispute with a speech delivered from scaffolding that had been erected especially for the event. According to the records of the debate, his speech was delivered before the arrival of the officials, ambassadors, and other VIP’s and was intended to prepare the audience or spectators for what was about to occur. His opening monologue highlights that one purpose of the debate was to put the new faith on display for the people of Lausanne and Vaud. The disputation was a public spectacle.

Farel stressed the importance of unity in the Christian faith. He reminded his audience that Christ had suffered to unite his followers and demanded that they remain
one body.\textsuperscript{19} He warned the audience that Satan preyed on falsities and that only through the truth could union and concord exist. For him, the conquest was God’s will, as demonstrated by the fact that no blood had been spilled, and was the opportunity to spread the new teachings. He hoped as well that the reach the Gospel would expand as a result of the disputation and would extend past the borders of Bern’s territories and even the Swiss Confederation itself and include other nations and lands, undoubtedly and most importantly France and Fribourg.\textsuperscript{20}

Like a well-trained rhetorician and preacher, Farel heightened the importance of the proceedings. The matters at hand were not just crucial for the here and now, for the improvement of spiritual and civic life in Lausanne, but they concerned the safety of the souls involved.\textsuperscript{21} Thus, he urged that the disputation proceed without rancor or ill will among the attendees. He urged the pastors and preachers in the assembly to look to

\textsuperscript{19} “Puis donc que nostre bon saulveur a pris tant de peine pour nous unir, et demande que nous soions tous ung, il ne fault repugner a sa saincte volunté, mais que chacun s'employe pour y venir.” Ibid., 7.

\textsuperscript{20} “. . . pour mainctenir son cas et ce qu'elle tient, et destruire et purger ce que l'adverse partie soubstient franchement et librement non seulement a ceux de leurs pays, mais a toutes gens de quelques pays et nation qu'ilz soient, donnant saufconduict et asseurance a tous pour aller, venir, parler, ouyr, comme bon leur semblera.” Ibid., 8.

\textsuperscript{21} “L'affaire, mes freres, n'est point de petite importance, car en cecy ne gist un petit bien ou un petit mal, mais un gros bien perpetuel, la vie non seulement du corps, mais de l'ame a perpetuité, la mort aussi et perte des biens eternalz . . . .” Ibid.
Christ as their example and to remember that their primary duty was to feed and look after his sheep, namely the simple and poor folk.\textsuperscript{22}

In the same oration, Farel provided his own explanation of the behavior of a good Christian citizen. Not only did such a one obey father and mother, but princes and lords as well. Christians were to avoid sin and pray for all, including their enemies. They were not to lust after women or to have sex out of wedlock. Moreover, they were to avoid all excess and remain sober in food and drink. He ended this exhortation with a prayer that the entire territory would know the holy teaching and that the one holy law and faith would be preached. This was the only means for the achievement of peace and union in Christ. Like reformers elsewhere, he envisioned a pious, orderly, and obedient citizenry. One might agree with Bernd Moeller that Farel aspired to a “new monasticism.”\textsuperscript{23} Later Bern ordered this behavior their religious and moral mandates. They dealt with all aspects of life not only the strictly religious.\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{22} “... aiant pitié des povres brebis de Jesus si mal nourries et tant esgarees, ne tachans a aultre chose fors que en verité elles servent a Dieu et viennent plainement a Jesus, le seul bon pasteur . . . .” Ibid., 9.


\textsuperscript{24} Against singing and dancing see Archives cantonales vaudoises (ACV), BA 21/1, fol 1, fol. 49; against soothsayers, ACV, BA 21/1, fol. 9; against lewd music, ACV, BA 21/1, fol. 19; against games of chance, ACV, BA 21/1, fol. 23; on the general improvement of morals, ACV, BA 21/1, fols. 99-102; on proper behavior on Sunday, ACV BA 25/1, fol. 7 v.
At 7:00 a.m. the following day, October 2, 1536, the Bernese officials arrived at the cathedral of Lausanne and ascended the stage that had been erected. Four men acted as the presidents of the debate. Two were from Bern and two were from Lausanne. In the middle sat the debaters themselves: Viret, Calvin, Farel, Pierre Caroli, and minor representatives of the Catholic faith. The public attended and sat in the gallery that had been constructed for the purpose.

Officially, the Catholics had declined the invitation to attend the debate and intended to wait for a council of the church to be called to settle the religious problems besetting the empire. Charles V wrote to the people of Lausanne to encourage them not to participate in the dispute. Indeed, the emperor ordered the city of Lausanne to reject the dispute and to not allow it to be held in their town. He wrote,

We order you to reject and stop this disputation along with every other change in religious matters. We also order that you reestablish all things to their original state and to avoid being presumptuous and to suffer nothing that violates this edict. We hope that you will wait in peace for the next council and that you will conduct yourselves in a manner that proves your deference to the royal person and your obedience to the Holy Roman Empire.”

The chapter of Lausanne took aim at Farel and his first thesis in their opening argument. They criticized the use of the Scriptures alone as proof for the disputation.

25 “Nous vous requérons conséquemment et vous ordonnons de rejeter et d'arrêter cette dispute, comme tout autre changement dans les choses qui sont de la foi; de rétablir toutes choses dans leur premier état et de ne faire présomptueusement ni souffrir rien qui soit contre la teneur de nos édits. Nous espérons que vous attendrez en paix le prochain concile, et vous conduirez de manière à nous prouver votre déférence à notre personne et votre obéissance au saint Empire Romain.” Vulliemin, Le Chroniquer, 303.
Moreover, they held that even the disputation itself was contrary to the spirit of Christianity. They reminded the Evangelicals that God was a god of peace, not unrest, and that such an exercise would only sow discord and discontent in the body of Christ. They pointed to the words of the Apostle Paul as evidence that such debates were dangerous and subversive. They stated,

. . . thus, Saint Paul exhorts us to leave the works of darkness and to wear the armor of light, without dissention or competitiveness. Certainly, a disputation cannot take place without disagreement, competition, and discord. Disputations do not foster peace. Instead, the debaters use contentious words against to achieve victory.²⁶

Like the emperor, they questioned why the disputation should be held at all. They asked why they should not wait for a general council to convene under the guidance of the church and out of the view of the people where it would not harm their faith and preserve peace and union in the church. The chapter lodged this sole protest in the name of the local religious. It vowed not to participate until a true council of the church was called. It stated,

Therefore we, the prevost, canons, and chapter of this Holy Church, for ourselves and for the clergy of this places and all others who stand by us, publicly lodge this protest rather than engage in the debate or respond. Instead, we call for a General Council of the Church.²⁷


²⁷ Ibid., 26.
With the chapter staying out of the debate, most of the theological heavy lifting was left to the medical doctor Claude Blanchrose from France, who was unskilled when compared to his Evangelical opponents and throughout the proceedings, he made note of it. At other times, he decried the fact that he alone was facing the challenges of the Evangelical camp. He was not able to keep up with the theological and debating skills of the combined team of William Farel, Pierre Viret, Jean Calvin, and Pierre Caroli, each of whom was a trained theologian and skilled debater. At points, the attacks on his credibility and religious knowledge were scathing. Viret reprimanded him repeatedly for returning to points already discussed. Occasionally his fitness to speak was questioned. Bravely, he continued to counter the Evangelical team from the beginning until the end of the debate. His appearance must have lent credit to the Catholic position that this was not a true debate but only an exposition of improper Evangelical teaching. On the other hand, the meager Catholic performance may have caused some to side with the Evangelicals.

Others from the Catholic camp joined in occasionally to assist Blanchrose or to elucidate certain points. Their disagreements were usually simplistic and designed to maintain Catholic teaching. The Evangelicals easily mocked them and turned their questions around either to demonstrate that those points had already been dealt with, or to point out the flaws in the Catholic teaching. Yet, the disputation was a chance to teach;
still, the Catholic camp was free to pose as many questions as it liked and to challenge the Evangelicals.

Farel and Viret were the leaders and delivered the longest expositions on theological points. Both had formal educations in theology, unlike Blanchrose. Peter Carolus, a converted Catholic cleric, was also well educated and later became the first leader of the reformed Church in Lausanne before he reconverted to Catholicism. Calvin was present, but his participation at this early date was minimal.

Repeatedly the Evangelicals stated that the disputation was held for the sake of the poor, simple folk. They hoped to point them in the direction of the true faith and to warn them of the errors of the old. Throughout the proceedings, the Evangelicals argued on behalf of common men and women by stating that the vulgar tongues should be the language of the church, that pastors should preach the pure Word of God for their sake, and that no longer should the church fleece them for its services. In essence, the disputation was held with the common men and women in mind. It became a chance to teach and to convince. At one point Viret noted this, “But because the majority do not understand any of it [Latin], and we are here for them, not for ourselves, so that they will understand the truth finally and be able to hear who is right and who is wrong, I will
respond to you in French and tell the laity your argument since you do not know how to
debate in French.” 28

At the same time, the Evangelicals reaffirmed the authority of secular power.
They had no intention of sparking a violent overthrow of the social order as had nearly
occurred during the Peasants’ War of 1525. Farel and Viret both reaffirmed that the
secular government was to be obeyed and that God used that government for his
inscrutable purposes. The eighth article of the dispute stated that just as humans had both
a spiritual and physical nature, so the government had a spiritual and secular
administration. God had ordained that the secular government rule and that to disobey it
would be to disobey God. According to Viret, the difference was easily summed up: The
religious authority disciplines the heart with words; the prince disciplines the body with
the sword. 29 Both Viret and Farel argued that good secular government worked to ensure
peace and harmony and protect its subjects. This revolutionary teaching was also
reflected in The Acts of Bern from 1532. 30 It established that although the spiritual

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28 “Si tous ceux qui sont presens entendoient latin, ce nous seroit tout ung de disputer
avec vous en latin, mais a cause que la plus part n’y entend rien, et nous sommez icy pour
eux, non pas pour nous, affin qu’ilz entendent la verité, et qui a tort ou droict, je vous
respondray en françoys, et leur declareray vostre argument, puisque vous ne sçavez pas
disputer en françoys.” Piaget, Les actes de la dispute de Lausanne, 131.

29 “Voila donc la difference: le ministre frappe de la parolle les cueurs, et le prince du
glaive les corps.” Ibid., 322.

30 “Car, bien que le chrétien soit humble et soumis à toute créature, il se glissa néanmoins
une erreur dans l’Eglise des apôtres : de pieuses gens s’imaginèrent que les décrets de
government was superior to the secular, subjects were to obey their terrestrial rulers.

Moreover, the Bernese enlisted their pastors to reinforce through their sermons. Bern had seized complete control over the affairs of both the church and the secular government in the Pays de Vaud and to disobey their authority was to disobey God.

Although the debate lasted several days and may have lost most of the audience in the heady theological language and wrangling, one event certainly caught the attention of the public and clergy. The first public conversion occurred on the stage of the disputation on October 5, 1536, when Jean Tandy, a Franciscan, took the floor for the first and only
Up until this point, Tandy had kept his “mouth shut.” Tandy began his speech by accusing the people of Lausanne of offending the Holy Spirit by denying the truth of the Reformation. He states, “There are those who, on account of unbelief, would rather battle against the clear and known truth. They prefer to act against God and his word to avoid being humiliated and acting obediently.” The disputation had convinced Tandy intellectually and it was time to act. Perhaps he realized or at least believed that some Catholics in attendance were reluctant to convert out of the fear of what others would think of them. Others may have been skeptical of the Reformers’ claims. On the floor of the debate, Tandy threw off his cowl. He no longer wished to offend God or break his laws, he stated. He asked the audience to forgive him for the bad example he had provided them in the past. He states,

I demand to be reconciled to all of you people. Please forgive me for my preaching and past way of life. Forgive me for whatever else I may have done or

31 For a condensed account see: Vulliemin, Le Chroniquer, 328-30.

32 “Et frere Jehan Tandy, de l'ordre des Cordeliers, avoyr ouy le commencement des disputes, jusques a ce jour, voyant la bouche férme a tous qui ont disputé, a dict ainsi: . . . .” Piaget, Les actes de la dispute de Lausanne, 231.

33 “. . . que le peché contre le sainct esprit n’a point de remission qui est de ceux qui veulent par incredulité batailler contre la verité toute claire et ouverte, aymans myeux s’eslever contre Dieu et sa parolle que soy humilier et obeyr a icelle . . . .” Ibid.

34 He refers to the Pharisees' skepticism with regard to Christ's ability to heal the sick.
taught you. Forgive me if I was a bad example or if I caused offense to God or acted against his commandments. For all of this I beg for mercy.\textsuperscript{35}

Tandy’s conversion, although it may have been long in coming, was suddenly and spectacularly demonstrated to the audience. For Tandy this was a momentous occasion fraught with consequences about his religious future.\textsuperscript{36} He had crossed the threshold from Catholic priest to Reformed pastor—he would immediately begin preaching in the village of Cressier. The suddenness of his conversion is significant. The path from one belief to another conversion is often portrayed as occurring suddenly.\textsuperscript{37} In Tandy’s case, we do not know whether he had been wavering in his Catholic faith before the debate.

The timing of Tandy’s announcement was not coincidental and again demonstrates a close adherence to the model conversion his reformed predecessors had forged. Tandy was either moved by the spirit or purposely chose to announce his conversion at the end of the discussion on the third thesis of the ten proposed. It reads,

\begin{quote}
"Et a vous tous et a tout le peuple, demandant estre reconcilié au prochain, en ce que, par predication et vie et comment que ce soit, je vous aye enseigné, montré et donné mauvais exemple, et aye esté cause qu'avez offensé Dieu et faict contre ses commandemens, je vous crie mercy . . . ." Piaget, \textit{Les actes de la dispute de Lausanne}, 231.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{35} “Et a vous tous et a tout le peuple, demandant estre reconcilié au prochain, en ce que, par predication et vie et comment que ce soit, je vous aye enseigné, montré et donné mauvais exemple, et aye esté cause qu'avez offensé Dieu et faict contre ses commandemens, je vous crie mercy . . . .” Piaget, \textit{Les actes de la dispute de Lausanne}, 231.


The Holy Scriptures identify the church of God as all those who believe that they are saved only through the blood of Christ Jesus and who resolutely, without vacillation, believe in and base their lives on the words of Christ. His bodily presence was taken from us, but his Holy Spirit fills, supports, governs, and gives life to all things.\(^{38}\)

This was exactly the moment at which one would have expected a conversion to take place. This thesis was the key that had unlocked the chains that had bound the hearts of Luther and Farel alike. This was, in a capsule comment, the Reformation message. Tandy elaborated on this point and reminded the audience that salvation came only through faith in Christ Jesus.\(^{39}\) He contrasted the two creeds on trial and declared that he wanted to follow the rules of Christ rather than those of the Franciscans. He was giving up the superstitions of the Catholic faith and urged others to do the same. He explains to the audience as he gives up his life in the Franciscan order and lays aside the cowl, “[I do this] because, for me, I wish and desire to live as a Christian, and not as a Franciscan, and

\(^{38}\) “La saincte escripture appelle l'eglise de Dieu tous ceux qui croient qu'ilz sont rachtepez du seul sang de Jesuchrist et qui, constamment sans vaciller, croient et du tout se fondent et s'appuient en la parolle d'icelluy seul. Lequel, estant retiré de nous par sa presence corporelle, remplit, par la vertu du sainct esprit, soubstient, gouverne et vivifie toutes choses.” Piaget, *Les actes de la dispute de Lausanne*, 147.

\(^{39}\) “... sans prendre aultre regle ne ordonnance que celle de Jesus, n'ayant autre chief ne conducteur et sauver de noz ames que luy seul qui est nostre justice, sanctification et redemption, et qu'il n'y a point de satisfaction ne purgation pour la remission des pechez que luy qui par son sacrifice nous a faict aggreable au pere, estant a la dextre d'icelluy, dont il viendra juger les vifz et les mortz, ainsi confesse de vouloir vivre et mourir en suyvant sa saincte parolle et selon l'evangile, demandant mercy a Dieu de tout ce que j'ay faict, dict et enseigné contre son honneur et sa parolle.” Ibid., 231.
according to Christ’s Gospel and not according to the Franciscan rule, in the true and living faith of Jesus, united with other true Christians who are the Church . . . .”\textsuperscript{40}

One could imagine that if Tandy’s performance had been prearranged, this was the ideal moment. The whole episode hews closely to the model conversions described by the Reformers.

Farel rose to speak and seized the opportunity to praise God. “Oh, how great, good, and wise God is!”\textsuperscript{41} The conversion was a demonstration of the divine’s mercy and power. Very few were able to escape the lure and seduction of tricks and abuses that the devil had wreaked in the Church, but Tandy had.\textsuperscript{42} He asks, “What superstitions are greater on this earth than those of the Franciscans and especially the Observant [Franciscans]?”\textsuperscript{43}

Francis Higman believes that Tandy’s conversion was a turning point in the dispute. He writes,

\textsuperscript{40} “Car, de moy, je veux jet desire vivre chrestien, et non Cordelier, en l’evangile de Jesus et non en la règle des Cordeliers, en la vraye et vive foy de Jesus, uny avec les vrays chrestiens qui sont l’eglise, de Jesus . . . .” Ibid., 231-32.

\textsuperscript{41} “O que Dieu est grand, bon et saige!” Ibid., 232.

\textsuperscript{42} “Ou l’ennemy a tant coloré son cas que mesmes les esleuz y sont trompez et seduictz . . . .” Ibid.

\textsuperscript{43} “Quelle superstition y a il si grande sur la terre en estat que soit que celle des Cordeliers, et singulierement des Observantins?” Ibid.
After this point [the conversion] the resistance of the opposition became less energetic. The supporters of Reform received a boost that could not be denied. The moment dramatized and distilled the entire meaning of the disputation, the belief and witness of the faith. It was a triumph, a moment that enabled all of the attendants to see and grasp this new vision of human beings and of God. 

Higman credits Calvin’s speech for provoking Tandy’s conversion. It was the 26-year-old Calvin’s clarity concerning the teachings of the church fathers and their relation to reformed theology that may have caused Tandy to convert, according to Higman. Up until Calvin’s monologue, Higman states that the disputation had gone in circles.

After several days and much discussion, the disputation closed on October 8, 1536. Farel gave another lengthy speech that summarized the points discussed and reaffirmed the superiority of the Evangelical faith. In this last speech, he was far more critical of the errors of the Catholic faith than he had been in his opening address. He accused the Catholics of diminishing the importance of Christ and instead looking to the pope as the leader of the Church. He compared the Catholics to the Jews who had also rejected Christ.

He reminded the audience that it was Christ who had died for the sins of humans and not the pope. Farel then pleaded with them to abandon the pope, the priests, and all

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44 "A partir d'ici la résistance des 'opposants' devient moins énergique, les représentants de la Réforme obtiennent gain de cause preque sans contradiction. Ce moment dramatise, et distille, le sens entier de la Dispute: la croyance, le témoignage de la foi, c'est un éclair, une illumination qui permet aux assistants de voir, de saisir cette nouvelle vision de l'homme et de Dieu." Francis Higman, "Carrefour de la Réformation française," in La Dispute de Lausanne 1536: La théologie réformée après Zwingli et avant Calvin, ed. Eric Junod (Lausanne: Presses Centrales Lausanne, 1988), 34.
of their man-made rules. Instead, they should follow the pure and simple Gospel of Jesus Christ. His final sermon was filled as well with the anticlerical criticism of the day that appealed to the simple and common. Farel deliberately refers to the poor laborers who must pay the priests for their services to illustrate the injustice of the Catholic Church. In the same breath, he notes that the priests are well rested and at ease. He calls on the audience to stop submitting to their abuse. He states, “Why stop, poor priests, who until now have been abused and also abused others, to teach that without confession, absolution, penitence, and satisfaction done in this world or in the next, one cannot go to heaven?”  

Farel pleaded with Catholic clerics to leave the Church. He asked them to stop abusing the simple folk and flock of Christ Jesus. He assured them that they would not face punishment for their past sins. Instead, he believed that they could become powerful examples to the rest of the Church in Vaud.

The disputation generated little fervor for the Reformation. Although Jean Tandy had publicly embraced the Reformation and converted during the proceedings, no other Catholic clerics proclaimed themselves supporters so publicly. Perhaps many accepted because they were facing the Reformation as a fait accompli. They understood that resistance to Bern’s decisions would prove futile. Moreover, later legislation would ban

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45 “Parquoy desistez, pouvres prestre, qui jusques a present avez esté abusez, et avez aussy abusé les aultres, d’enseigner que, sans vostre confession et voz absolutions, penitences et satisfactions faictes icy ou en l’autre monde, l’on ne peult aller en paradis.” Piaget, *Les actes de la dispute de Lausanne*, 409.
Catholic clergy who would not accept the Reformation. A more reliable gauge of true sentiment is the number of Catholic clergy who became Evangelical pastors. In this regard, the disputation did not yield results. Only three Catholic clerics, including Tandy, are known to have become reformed ministers immediately after the disputation. Unlike other parts of Europe where the Catholic clergy formed the foundation of the new reformed pastoral corps after the Reformation, in Vaud the vast majority either took up new professions or left the territory. One explanation for the discrepancy is the legislation concerning the Catholic clergy that Bern passed. Displaced men and women of the Church could remain in the region and continue to receive their income until their deaths if they accepted the new faith. Undoubtedly many accepted the new faith because of the economic incentives. Therefore, at the close of the proceedings Bern managed to gather fourteen new men to preach in the parishes.\textsuperscript{46}

The Bernese did not force Catholic clergy to accept the Reformation or leave the territory in the first Reformation edict; they did forbid them to carry out “all Catholic ceremonies, sacrifices, offices, institutions, and papal traditions,” to avoid their wrath and punishment.\textsuperscript{47} They concluded the first edict by requesting that both Catholic and

\textsuperscript{46} Staatsarchiv des Kantons Bern (SAB), Welsche Missiven Buch A, fol. 480.

\textsuperscript{47} "... de notre part fassiez exprès commandement de soy incontinent dépourter de toutes cérémonies, sacrifices, offices, institutions et traditions papistiques, et de toutellement cesser d'ycelles, entant qu'ils désireront d'éviter notre male grace et griefve punition . . . ." Vulliemin, \textit{Le Chroniquer}, 341.
Evangelical clergy “live together peacefully, and in fraternal tranquility, Christian love and union.”\[48\] However, the first Reformation edict was only a stopgap; it was surpassed by the second Reformation edict that Bern issued on December 24, 1536.

This edict tackled the problem of the resident Catholic clergy far more thoroughly. Bern gave the Catholic religious a choice; they could convert and continue to receive their income or they must leave the territory.\[49\] According to Lyon, approximately fifty percent of the Catholic clergy (between 244-250) individuals nominally accepted the Reformation.\[50\] However, as previously stated, evidence reveals that only four former Catholic clergymen, or 1.6% of those who nominally converted, became Reformed pastors.\[51\] Compared to the total group of Catholic clergy that lived in Vaud before the Reformation, less than one percent demonstrated a profound attraction to the Reformed Church. The other 98.4% of the former clerics remained quietly in the region. Some worked as notaries while others worked as government officials.

\[48\] "... et que très tous vivent ensemble en bonne paix, tranquililité fraternelle et chrestienne dilection, amour et union ..." Ibid.

\[49\] "Concernant les gens qu'on appelle gens d'église avons ordonné que tous ceux d'icelle qui voudront vivre selon Dieu et la forme de notre réformation, leur vie durant puissent et doivent gaudir de leurs bénéfices et prébendes, toutefois les pensions et absences deneguetes." Ibid., 348-49.

\[50\] Lyon, "Le sort du clerge vaudois", 62.

\[51\] Ibid., 65-66.
Numerous factors, primarily economic, combined to force Catholic clergy to give up their faith and accept the Reformation. For the vast majority simply leaving the region was not possible. Many of the men who worked as parish priests were tied to their particular village as members of the local agricultural community and relied on their land, benefices, and tithes. Some had concubines and children who needed their support as well. Few possessed private income or lands that generated additional revenue. Lyon has determined that the median income of the priests in town of Moudon was 264 florins, and 354 florins in Lausanne. This was a sizeable amount that the former priest risked should they reject the ecclesiastical ordinances of their new lords. The path of least resistance for many of these men was to accept the inevitable and openly profess their allegiance to their secular and religious lords. Moving to Catholic territory and continuing in the Church was not an option for all. Moreover, Fribourg did not want displaced priests coming into their territories with “empty hands.”

Clerical Resistance to the Reformation Mandates

Not all clerics left or renounced their faith; some remained as thorns in the sides of the reformed authorities. A few circulated throughout the region performing secret

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52 Ibid., 70-71.

53 Niquille, "Fribourg au secours du convent de Payerne (1536)," 104.
Masses and Catholic baptisms. Bern was aware of these disobedient clerics and it wrote to the Council of Lausanne demanding that it stop them. The city council of Lausanne was slow to enforce Bern’s directives and Bern ordered it again to either force Catholic priests to accept the Reformation or leave the city.\(^{54}\) A few weeks later, the authorities in Lausanne defended themselves and stated that they were enforcing Bern’s orders throughout the city. The city council in Lausanne pleaded that it had searched throughout the city looking for disobedient priests, but had found only very old or infirm clerics who remained Catholics. These men hardly posed a threat and they were too old to simply leave the region. The authorities’ response shows sympathy for the old, Catholic clergy; yet, the council promised to punish the remaining recalcitrant priests severely.\(^{55}\)

Bern continued to believe that Catholic priests lived in Lausanne and that the city had not done enough to rid itself of them, regardless of Lausanne’s messages to the contrary. On October 8, 1537, the Council of Bern wrote to its counterpart in Lausanne

\(^{54}\) "Nobles prudans, chiers, et féaulx! . . . Endtendons comme soubtenés tousjours les prestres que n'ont voulsu accepter nostre reformation, et que icteluex accomplissent ancores tout plain d'idolâtrie, dont avons très-grand regret." Herminjard, CRF, 4: 278. "Vous admonestans expressément, sans aulcung délays, de leur donner incontinant le sèrement de vuider vostre ville et seigneurie, et n'y plus fayre résidence, en leur notiffiant que sy ne veulent obéhir, que adviserons comme ly fauldra en outre besognier." Herminjard, CRF, 4: 278.

\(^{55}\) "Si n'avons trouvé en icelle que certaynes prestres mal-aysés, lesqueulx tant par vielliesse et impotence ne pourriont cheminer; sil se sont ouffertz vivre jouste icelle [réformation], et eulx contrevenans estre griefvement punis." Herminjard, CRF, 4: 290.
that it must ban priests who would not accept the Reformation. They must leave Bernese territory. Moreover, it required those who were weak to be placed in prison and then banned from the region.  

Gathering information about the state of the clergy in Lausanne must have been far easier for Bern than determining what was occurring in the countryside. It stands to reason that priests continued to live secretly in the rural regions as well. Records that document individuals being punished for attending Masses or baptizing their children within the territory is further proof that some Catholic clergy, who were unwilling to convert and leave their faith, continued to live in the territory of Vaud.

In 1539, however, the authorities issued a much stricter mandate meant to deal with the remaining recalcitrant priests. The stakes in this conflict increased. Bern ordered the remaining Catholic clergy to publicly declare themselves on the side of the Reformation or lose their benefices and income. The men who rejected the Reformation were banned.  

Former clergy who accepted the Reformation were allowed to stay in Vaud and keep their benefices and clerical income until their deaths. In special cases,

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56 Herminjard, CRF, 4: 302.

such as with the Cluniac monks of Payerne, Bern reached agreements whereby those men
could move to Fribourg and continue to receive their income.  

Pierrefleur details one inquisition at which Catholic clergy appeared before a
congregation and local ecclesiastical and secular officials to renounce their
Catholicism.  

The priests arrived at the Sunday sermon. The pastor introduced the
bailiff, chatelaine, and other secular officials. The pastor demanded to know whether the
priests were ready to live according to the Reformation of the lords of Bern and whether
the Mass was good or bad. Many agreed to conform and called the Mass evil and
promised to live according to the wishes of their new masters.  Not all were so pliable.

Pierrefleur records what happened to those who maintained their Catholicism. He writes,

Those [priests who did not accept the Reformation] were ordered to leave the
territory of Vaud and were banned from the land of the lords of Bern. Their
benefices were confiscated. They were allowed to keep their paternal holdings.
They could return once a year to collect the income but they could come only
temporarily and could not stay.

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58 Henri Meylan, "Les Moines de Payerne et l'edit de Réformation (Janvier 1537)," *Revue
de théologie et philosophie* 25 (1937); Niquille, "Fribourg au secours du convent de
Payerne (1536)."


60 "Les autres faisaient réponse et disaient que la messe était de nulle valuer et contre
Dieu; à ceux-là était permis de demeurer au dit pays, comme gens de biens, savants et de
grande connaissance, les laissant jouissant de leurs bénéfices, si en avaient." Junod,
*Mémoires de Pierrefleur*, 142.

61 "A ceux-là était fait incontinent commandement de vuider et être bannis du dit pays des
dits seigneurs de Berne, leurs bénéfices confisquées, et quant à leurs biens paternels,
iceux leur étaient réservés. Et si de fortune voulaient venir au pays pour faire visitation
Bern used multiple means to convert the Catholic clergy in Vaud. First, it waited for them to spontaneously abandon the old faith and embrace the new. When this did not occur, the city-republic convened the Disputation of Lausanne to add legitimacy to the religious changes and to educate the clergy about the differences between the creeds. These strategies were ineffective and Bern resorted to issuing edicts and threatening punishment to enforce conversion and or, at least, silence and obedience.
CHAPTER 6
BUILDING THE REFORMED PASTORATE

The Disputation was a small start on the road to building a reformed pastorate in the Pays de Vaud. Bern confirmed and dispatched fourteen new pastors to parishes immediately after the Disputation of Lausanne. One of those men was Jean Tandy. The others were known to Bern since they had attended the Synod of Yverdon, which had been held in June 1536. The fourteen joined the other pastors already at work in the countryside. In total, there were approximately thirty-nine pastors, including Pierre Viret and William Farel, available for the 166 parishes throughout the region. Eighty-nine percent of the pastors in Vaud in 1536 were from France. Three were from the town of Orbe in the Common Lordships.

Between 1528 and the end of the sixteenth century, approximately 456 men would work as pastors, deacons, or pastors’ helpers in Vaud’s parishes. Although the data about where these pastors derived from is not complete, for those whose provenance has been uncovered, fifty-five percent came from towns and cities in France. Only fifty-

\[1\] Staatsarchiv des Kantons Bern (SAB), Welsche Missiven Buch A, fol. 480.
five pastors derived from inside the Swiss confederation or Vaud during these seventy-one years. This is a remarkable statistic that demonstrates that the Reformation in the Pays de Vaud, although ordered by Bern, was carried out by a largely foreign pastorate. In a sense, it was a Reformation from above and without, to change a common phrase that historians use to describe the situation in other parts of Europe. The large number of foreign pastors in Vaud is also interesting in light of the fact that Geneva gained a reputation as a training ground for French pastors who were returned to that country secretly. The rupture between Bern and Geneva and the religious crisis in France meant that few men from Geneva were preaching in Vaud.

![Origin of Pastors in Vaud, 1528-1599](image)

**TABLE 1.1**
Over time the ranks of the pastors grew and the desperate shortage of pastors ended. Except for a small decline in 1558 and 1559 that was due to disagreements between Bern, Viret, and the pastors who sided with Viret, the numbers of pastors grew steadily over the century. In 1599, nearly one hundred Evangelical pastors preached in Vaud, far fewer than the hundreds of religious who lived in Vaud before the conquest. One of the lasting legacies of the Reformation was the decline in the number of religious. After the Reformation in Vaud, the ranks of the clergy had been cut by seventy-five percent.

TABLE 1.2

My data are drawn primarily from Vuilleumier's unpublished work: Vuilleumier, "Ministres du Saint-Evangile "

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Bern never filled all of the 166 pre-conquest parishes. It consolidated some and closed others. In some cases, it ordered pastors to preach in filial churches on alternating Sundays or on Sunday or Wednesday evenings. It is unclear whether the parishioners were expected to also migrate from parish to parish to hear at least one sermon each week.

Some of the new pastors were well educated—several had received their training at Oxford, Cambridge, and the Sorbonne. High education increased the cultural gap between the pastor and the parishioners. This gap is highlighted not by the statistics of the social origin, education, and derivation of the pastors, but in the way men like Farel referred with disdain to the people who populated the rural parishes. By his lights, these men and women were stupid, ignorant, and superstitious creatures.3

Amy Nelson Burnett notes that in Basel, the clergy also disdained the peasantry, but they felt duty-bound to assist them.4 She writes that the pastors regarded themselves as

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3 Luise Schorn-Schütte's research and analysis of other work demonstrates that this was a European wide change. She writes, "Thus for Catholic Germany, we can assert that on the basis of the cultural distance 'between the pastor marked by his urban background and the rural milieu of the faithful . . . the gulf between pastor and parishioners' grew ever wider over the course of the seventeenth century." Luise Schorn-Schütte, "Priest, Preacher, Pastor: Research on Clerical Office in Early Modern Europe," Central European History 33, no. 1 (2000): 11.

“as set over and apart from their parishioners by God. Their backgrounds and education certainly separated them from the peasants among whom they lived.”

The situation was similar in Vaud–Farel and other pastors belittled and mocked the rural people in their correspondence.

Providing for the Pastors

Bern assumed a heavy financial burden when it seized control of the churches in Vaud. They funded pastors, provided for the poor, and maintained church buildings with money and wealth confiscated from the Catholic Church. For example, the council ordered, on June 23, that the remaining church wealth in Dompierre should be used to support a pastor. The council ordered the lord of Châtellard to sell church goods to support the pastor and build him a parsonage. Bern also took funds from confraternities to pay pastors and meet other religious needs. For example, in 1543, the council seized the tithe of the confraternity in Dompierre to pay for the bread and wine for the Lord’s Supper. It used fund from the confraternity of the Trinity in Pully to care for the poor in

5 Burnett, “Basel’s Rural Pastors,” 76.

6 “Denen von dompierre das einkhomme gelassen doch da sy ein predicanten da erhaltend.” SAB, AII, Bd. 268, fol. 82.

7 Ibid., Bd. 284, fol. 286.

8 Ibid., Bd. 286, fol. 203.
Lutry and later in Pully. Likewise, in 1539, the authorities ordered the village of Mont-le-Grand to use the funds of the confraternity to pay for the local hospital. The council sold leftover priestly garments to raise income. Bern wielded its fiscal and redistributive authority whenever it seized church wealth.

Bern was also obligated to former Catholic clerics who had converted. The December 24th edict declared that former Catholic clergy who lived in Vaud could remain and receive their benefices until their death as long as they promised to live by the Reformation. Thus, the council ordered the people to continue paying benefices and special tithes. In the Christmas Eve edict, Bern acknowledged the financial burdens it had assumed.

Concerning those who are called people of the church, we have ordered that those of you who wish to live according to God and our Reformation for the rest of your life may keep your benefices and prebends and other pensions. In addition, on account of the great population of such church people, and also for supporting our pastors, we require much income. At the same time, it is necessary to keep in mind the condition of the poor in our country. We have ordered that all of the goods of the church remain as they are and that each will pay as he did in the past up until the death of the said member of the church or we order otherwise. All goods, furniture of the said churches, such as clothing, ornaments, chalices, and other items, which are still present, shall be returned up to the third generation . . .

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9 Ibid., Bd. 267, fol.148 and Bd. 289, fol. 160.  
10 Ibid., Bd. 267, fol. 33.  
11 Ibid., Bd. 269, fol. 244.  
12 “Et à cause qu’il est grand nombre desdits gens d’église, et aussi pour entretenir les prédicans, il faut beaucoup de biens, pareillement est de nécessité d'avoir considération
Fortunately, Bern kept good records of their pastors’ living conditions. Pastors derived income from several sources: remaining church wealth, cash revenue, goods in-kind, farmland, meadows, and kitchen gardens. The authorities first assessed the pastors’ living conditions in 1540. Few pastors had houses, and in some cases, the houses were uninhabitable. The living conditions varied from villages to village. In some cases, the assessors deemed the pastor’s dwelling “tolerable” or “passable.”13 In other cases, it was in bad shape or in need of repair.14 The pastor’s house in Saint Saphorin had no roof or stove.15 One might wonder how a pastor and his family could survive in a home without a roof. Describing the situation the assessors stated, “Und soll man im das huß der pfarr so nider gwallen widerbuwenn hat sunste nut ze versächen.”16 In Lac de Joux, the

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13 In Mesieres, for example, the house is described as "ziemlich gut." Archives cantonales vaudoises (ACV), Bd 14, fol. 3.

14 The assessors in Willenome called the parsonage as "buwloss." Ibid., fol. 4v.

15 “das huss ist lidig gut hat aber kein stuben offen und ist tachloss.” Ibid., 5v. In Lingeroles by Eclee, the assessors noted, "... Bedarff das huss deckens und eines stuben offens sunst zimlich gut." Ibid., 6v.

16 Valorbe
assessors ordered the that a house should be constructed for the pastor. One pastor lived in a castle. If the village where the parish was located did not have adequate accommodations for the pastor, he might find a house in another village. Lisle, for instance, did not have a parsonage, so the pastor lived in the nearby town of Pampiguier. In Yverdon, the parish did not have a house to give the pastor, but the resident pastor, Thomas Malingre purchased one. Malingre had served as the doyen of the Classis of Lausanne and later became the second most powerful pastor in that city. Classis were groups of pastors who worked in the various regions into which Bern had divided Vaud. They met to discuss theological issues and problems that the pastors encountered. Perhaps he was wealthy enough to purchase a house, but few pastors in the rural parishes could afford such necessities.

17 Ibid., fol. 9.
18 "Ist ein predicant dahin geordnet soll in Schloss zhuss." Ibid., 7v.
19 Ibid., Bd 14, fol. 10.
20 Thomas Malingre, from Normandy, was appointed the pastor of Yverdon by Bern in November 1536. He remained in this position until 1545. Vuilleumier, "Ministres du Saint-Evangile qui ont été au service de l'Eglise évangélique réformée du Pays de Vaud." "und soll im all dan die gantze pfrund vom spitell werden hatt kein huss ietizg predicant hat eins khouft . . . ." ACV, Bd 14, 9v.
Modern Americans might wonder how pastors and their families survived without roofs or stoves. These conditions were not unusual in the countryside. Susan Karant-Nunn, in a analysis of assessments from Ernestine Saxony writes,

Endless complaints about inadequate pastoral housing reached the visitors . . . not until late in the century, when the one- and two-room parsonages had crumbled to the ground and the new ones had to be built, did pastors begin to have adequate space. As long as the old ones remained, ministers, without means of providing their own housing, were forced to inhabit them. 21

While such living conditions appear spartan, they were not significantly worse than those of people among whom the pastors lived.

Karant-Nunn has found that the peasants resented the added obligation of building pastors’ dwellings and that they tried to shirk their duty. She notes that when pastors complained, this only raised the ire of the population. In another case, she notes that people used the opportunity to demonstrate their allegiance to the Catholic Church. The pastor in Behlitz complained “that his house was so rotten that it was falling in, but instead of fulfilling their obligations, the people preferred to give their offering ‘to the monks’ in Leipzig.” 22 Similarly, in Vaud some refused to pay tithes because of the Reformation. For instance, the Sire Maillard of Romont, who lived in Fribourg, did not


22 Ibid.
wish to pay the rent he owed to the clergy of Avenches because the Mass had been banned. Maillard took his case before the lieutenant of Montagny. Perhaps he was unaware of the agreements that Bern and Fribourg had reached which stipulated that payments that were owed to parishes in the newly conquered territory would continue regardless of whether the payees were Catholic or lived in Fribourg’s territory. The bailiff of Avenches, at the request of the lieutenant of Montagny, asked the authorities in Fribourg to provide him with a copy of the treaty and to remind Mallard of it.\textsuperscript{23}

However, Maillard’s complaint highlights the complex nature of the situation. Decisions concluded between regional authorities like Bern and Fribourg influenced the lives of men and women living in the villages and smaller towns.

The housing situation improved remarkably over the next several decades. When a parish assessment was carried out in 1559, nearly all of the pastors had some type of housing.\textsuperscript{24} Likewise, when the last assessment of the sixteenth century was conducted in 1584, all of the parishes provided housing for the ministers.\textsuperscript{25} Clearly, Bern wanted its pastors to have proper accommodations.

\textsuperscript{23} Archives de l'Etat Fribourg (AEF), Geistliche Sachen (GS), Nr. 196.

\textsuperscript{24} ACV, Bd 14a.

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., Bd 14b.
Unlike their Catholic counterparts, reformed pastors were married and had families. Bern took this new reality into account and sometimes temporarily improved a pastor’s salary when he had many mouths to feed. Bern retained its pastors by meeting their human needs and improving their salaries and living conditions. Prospective pastors from abroad were unlikely to come to the region unless they were guaranteed adequate income and support.

Karant-Nunn has noted that Evangelical pastors in rural regions were by necessity rural cultivators.26 This was true in Vaud as well. Many pastors farmed and raised crops in kitchen gardens, orchards, and vineyards.27 Others raised livestock in meadows that comprised their income. Pastors who did not wish to farm could rent out these lands and use the income.

In most cases, pastors received produce that was abundant in the region. Along the shores of Lake Geneva, whose rocky cliffs create an ideal microclimate for grapes,

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26 Susan Karant-Nunn reminds us that "outside of the largest urban parishes, the pastors' very existence depended on their success as farmers. Like their predominantly peasant flocks, they suffered hunger if high winds or hail flattened their cereal corps, if unabated rains drenched their arable land, or if the unusual cold killed vulnerable rye and wheat seed." Karant-Nunn, *Luther's Pastors: The Reformation in the Ernestine Countryside*, 31. Schorn-Schütte, “Priest, Preacher, Pastor,” 21-22.

27 This enclosed land is referred to in the assessors’ records as *bünden*. As the years progressed, more and more pastors were given *bünden*. 
pastors received barrels of wine as a part of their income. They also received grain including wheat, rye, and oats.

The authorities supplemented the pastor’s income with money. The master of the purse (Sekelmeister) paid florins to sixty-nine pastors in the 1540 assessment. The average monetary salary was 189 florins. The highest paid pastor received 260 florins, the lowest 180.

Seventeen years later, when the next assessment was carried out, the number of parishes had increased from 69 to 81. Seventy-six percent of the pastors had homes, an improvement from sixty-three percent in the 1540’s. More pastors had gardens and orchards for their own needs. Pastors received larger in-kind payments of wheat, oats, and wine, but their in-specie salaries had dropped by eleven percent on average. 28 Inflation during this period ate away even more of the pastor’s income. 29 Although given the fact that more of these men were living in houses, the drop may not have represented a net decrease in their standard of living. Payments in kind were not subject to diminution by inflation.

28 Based on the analysis of data in ACV, Bd 14a and Bd 14b.

Bern responded quickly to the dismal living conditions that the Evangelical pastors endured in rural Vaud during the first years of the Reformation. The authorities guaranteed pastors a salary and made adjustments when the pastor’s family grew. They also provided cropland for the pastor and his family to farm or rent. Over time, they also provided adequate housing for the clergy in each of its parishes. They accomplished these improvements at a time when the number of parishes was also expanding. The authorities did not simply transfer all of the wealth of the Catholic Church to new Evangelical purposes. Instead, they used that wealth to support the former Catholic clerics who had converted, provide poor relief, and care for the new preachers. However, if it hoped to attract new pastors it had to guarantee adequate accommodations and salaries. Bern was not the only territory vying for francophone pastors to minister to the people.  

New Ecclesiastical Structures and Institutions

Immediately after the Disputation of Lausanne, the religious authorities in Bern established new ecclesiastical bodies to support and educate the clergy and maintain the pace of the Reformation. First, under the leadership of Caspar Megander (1484-1545),

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Luise Schorn-Schütte believes that the clerical office in Zurich, beginning by the eighteenth century, became increasingly attractive and prestigious as urban magistrates guaranteed pastors a secure income even during times of general economic hardship. Schorn-Schütte, "Priest, Preacher, Pastor," 12.
they divided the map of Vaud into six ecclesiastical and administrative units called *classis*. The clergy in each district comprised the class. Classis approved new pastors, elected men to leadership positions, debated doctrine, and discussed morals.\(^{31}\) The classis in francophone territory were modeled on those in germanophone Bern, but there was an important difference between them. Bernese classis did not have the right to independently elect men to serve as local leaders, nor did they elect their pastors. The classis still need Bern’s final approval of their choices; the francophone classis enjoyed more autonomy.\(^{32}\)

Pastors elected the *doyen*. This senior member of the class oversaw doctrine and discipline. Doyens typically served for terms that lasted on average about one and a half years.\(^{33}\) Doyens were usually at the end of their careers. Never did the pastors elect a young or new man to the post. On average the men elected to this positions had served for 17 years as local pastors before rising to doyen. This was a position of prestige and honor that was reserved for the senior members of the local clergy. It was not, however, a sinecure. The doyen were charged with making sure that proper doctrine was upheld.


\(^{32}\) Ibid.

\(^{33}\) I have arrived at this figure based on analysis of the data by Herni Vuilleumier. Based on 45 identified doyens, I determined that they served roughly 1.8 years in office on average. Vuilleumier, "Ministres du Saint-Evangile."
throughout his district and guaranteed that pastors followed Bern’s rites. He also
confirmed the choice of new pastors before their names were passed on to Bern for final
approval. They were also to certify that the local clergy recited the full catechism at least
once a month. Should the doyen learn that a pastor had acted badly or caused a scandal,
he was to reprimand the pastor in front of his peers, particularly for egregious
misbehavior, and he was to send him for correction to Bern.

In order to police the behavior of pastors more closely, jurés, who assisted the
doyen, made frequent visitations to the parishes. They ensured that pastors preached
properly, carried out their functions, and that people in the village attended the
preaching. Not only did the jurés police the morals of the clergy, but the clergy
themselves promised to watch their peers and report any misconduct to the superiors.
Unfortunately, the modern archives do not possess visitation records from the middle of
the sixteenth century. The oldest derive from Payerne at the end of the sixteenth
century. By the early seventeenth century, problems began to plague the pastoral body.
Discipline and morals were slipping, and the authorities in Bern began to take steps to
correct pastors’ failings through conducting visitations.

34 Vuilleumier, Histoire de l’église réformée, 281.

35 Henri Meylan, "Visites d’église en pays réformé le chapitre général de Lausanne,
1624," in Sensibilité religieuse et discipline ecclésiastique, Publications de la Société
Savante d'Alsace et des régions de l'est (Strasbourg: Librairie Istra, 1973), 90.

36 Ibid., 90-91.
The first classis met weekly, either on Wednesdays or Thursdays. Such weekly meetings of the pastorate were common in other parts of the Swiss confederation as well most specifically Zurich where weekly Prophezei were conducted for the education of pastors. Bern followed Zurich when it created its own institutional and educational structures. During the meetings of the classis in Vaud, the pastors studied the Scriptures. The subject for each session was presented by a proposant. Other pastors who wished to speak on the matter followed him. The meetings educated the pastors about the fundamentals of the faith since many had not received formal training. In the classis pastors also dealt with administrative issues related to the parishes. In the meetings of the classis of Lausanne, pastors selected the professors of the academy where young men began their education for the pastorate. Visitors also made annual reports to the classis about the state of the parishes. Admonitions were meted out, and the respective authorities were notified about disciplinary actions to be taken. Usually the classis ended their meetings by sharing a communal supper.


40 Ibid., 286.

41 Ibid.
Synods were conducted annually as in Zurich. All pastors from Vaud gathered at the Synods where authorities read new mandates and urban leaders informed the pastors about what was occurring throughout the diocese. Bruce Gordon, in his study of the Zurich clergy and the rural Reformation, states that pastors asked questions about the marriage requirements, tithes, excommunication, Anabaptists, military service for pastors, and patrons, and benefices during the October synod of 1530 in Zurich and we can assume that similar matters were dealt with in Vaud although the minutes are no longer extant.

At the synod that met in May 1537, authorities carved Vaud into ecclesiastical districts. It was presided over by men from Bern including Kaspar Megander, Peter Kunz, Rodolph de Graffenried, Erasmus Ritter and Nicholas Zurkinden. The third synod convened in Lausanne in 1538 at Bern’s behest. Farel and Calvin were preaching in Geneva at the time, but Bern expressly invited them to the gathering. Bern ordered its authorities to reiterate its rites for use in Vaud and to bar Calvin and Farel from the proceedings unless they had conformed. Two primary differences separated the churches of Geneva and those of Bern at this time. The first concerned the bread used at

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42 Gordon, *Clerical Discipline*, 76-77.

43 Ibid., 77.

communion. Bern used unleavened bread while Geneva employed leavened. Second, Bern’s rites called for baptisms to be conducted at the baptismal font, whereas in Geneva there was no font.

At synods, pastors vented their problems to the authorities in Bern with the hope that corrective action would be taken. They complained that their parishes were in a state of disrepair, and that many of the officers and secular rulers in the region were not upholding Reformation ordinances and allowed priests remain. Pastors also reported that priests continued to wear the habit and say the Mass and continued to live with their concubines. The synod exposed the fact that that regional leaders were not following or enforcing the religious edicts that Bern had issued.

Pastors at the synod grumbled that they were overworked. The pastor of Moudon protested that he alone had to uphold the burdens of this church. Moreover, he was supposed to tend to the neighboring churches without pastors. He bemoaned the fact that he had to preach every day and oversee the activities of the consistory. He requested an assistant. Such overwhelming responsibilities outside of one’s home parish were a typical complaint of pastors in newly converted regions. In many cases, other men, called helpers, assisted the pastor. These men were remunerated much less than pastors. Perhaps they had other work besides assisting the pastor. Complaints such as these highlight the strain under which some were laboring at this point. It is proof that Bern’s
expectations, the low number of pastors available, the ongoing struggle to confessionalize the region, and the burdens that these tasks placed on pastors’ shoulders were great in the second year after the beginning of the Reformation.

The results of the synod demonstrate, however, that Bern honored the decisions taken by the pastors in its *Welsche Länder*. The authorities in the capital issued edicts that supported the conclusions of the synod on baptism and communion. Furthermore, the Bernese ordered that children should attend school and participate as catechumens. They forbade children to attend Catholic schools, and finally they ordered that priests should participate in the ministers’ colloquies.

For 1539, classis were further subdivided into colloquies. For instance the Class of Lausanne was divided into three colloquies: Vevey, Aigle, and Lausanne. Yverdon, a rural class, was divided into two colloquies: Yverdon and Romainmôtier. This facilitated monthly meetings of regional pastors, except in urban parishes or where they met once a week.\(^{45}\) Since some of the rural classis were vast, it was easier for the pastors to continue meeting weekly if they did not have to travel so far. Moreover, as the number of pastors increased, colloquies were smaller and could address specific and local concerns. Classis convened only four times each year after the formation of colloquies.

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\(^{45}\) Ibid., 286-87.
The public attended the weekly colloquies in Lausanne and questioned the pastors about the points discussed. The authorities also ordered former Catholic priests to attend the meetings in order to continue receiving their prebends. Colloquies convened 1549 when concern that disputed theological issues might threaten religious peace, especially if these were aired before the public, caused the authorities to discontinue them.

These meetings were not simply fraternal gatherings of fellow missionaries but organized opportunities for the secular and religious authorities and their supporters in Vaud to educate, monitor, and discipline the clergy. In these early years, when pastors were scarce and hard to find, Bern still relied on many men whose skills were untested and whose preparation for the job suspect. John Tandy, the priest who had converted during the Disputation of Lausanne, was a member of this early cadre of Vaudois pastors. Certainly, his command of reformed theology and teachings must have been untested at best.

The weekly readings and discussion of the Scriptures and lessons drawn from the pericope provided an opportunity to instill reformed ideas in the gathered clergy. It also provided the doyen and jurés in attendance the opportunity to witness whether the men under their charge were competent. In many respects, the classis used the methods of indoctrination and education that were used in the parishes as well. Scholars have repeatedly demonstrated that the primary methods of confessionalization were preaching,
teaching, correction, and punishment. The confessionalization of the clergy took place in
the classis, where individual members came under the scrutiny not only of their peers but
also of the secular representatives of Bern who attended.

Pastors learned about the problems their peers were experiencing in other parishes
from the annual reports that the jurés delivered. They heard the proposed solutions to
common problems and ascertained what behavior was expected of them if they
experienced similar problems. They witnessed how the authorities punished pastors, and
these examples undoubtedly worked on their consciences if they were tempted to
misbehave. The authorities used public correction and admonition in the classis to teach
other clergymen how to act and fulfill their missions.

In the weekly meetings, pastors built the bonds of friendship and camaraderie.
They met other men who had similar backgrounds – many had escaped religious
persecution in France. In these gatherings, they were among their peers. Although
historians can only speculate about the pastors’ interpersonal experiences during these
meetings, they occasionally reveal their affection and friendship in letters and other
written works. Thomas Malingre, pastor in Yverdon, wrote a poem about his fellow
pastors in Vaud and Geneva. Later he sent the work to his friend, the infamous Clément
Marot in Geneva. Malingre reveals his conviction that he and many of his fellow pastors
shared common experiences as refugees, preachers, and doers of the Lord’s Work.
Mais ce villain Dangier, comblé de rage,
D’icy en France empeschoit le passage,
Et ne laissoit passer, ne rapasser
Nul de noz gens, qu’il ne fit trespasser
Ou qu’il ne mist en péril de leur vie.

But the villain named Danger, filled with rage
Hindered the passage from here to France
And did not let come or go
There were none of our people whom he did not cause to die;
Or put in peril of their lives.

(10-15)
Or maintenant, puis que malgré envie,
Dieu a chassé Dangier de sa caverne
Par le moyen de haultz Prince de Berne,
Prince puissans et Princes chrestiens,
Nous te pourrons aller veoir et les tiens.

But now, on account of his jealousy
God chased Danger from his cave
He used the High Princes of Bern as his instrument
Powerful and Christian princes;
And now we can come see you and your closest ones.

In the opening of the poem, the Catholic rulers of both France and Savoy are personified
collectively as Danger. The princes of Bern liberate the region, at least Savoy, and
enable these men of God to assemble once again as a group and do their work.

(20-23)
Dy donc, Poète éloquent et disert,
Pourquoý tu viens en ce pauvre désert?
Désert, je dy selon droicte raison,
Si à la France on fait comparison.

Pray tell, eloquent and talkative poet,
Why have you come to this barren desert?
Desert I say with reason
If one compares it to France.
Tu ne viens pas pour y vivre en délices
Mais pour mourir journellement aux vices:
Car qui vouldroit en plaisirs mondains vivre,
Devroit la Court plus que Savoye suyvre:
Dont clairement à tous affermer j’ose,
Que tu viens cy pour plus bien grande chose:
C’est assavoir pour délaisser erreur,
Et pour aymer et servir Dieu de coeur,
Et ton prochain, par charité non fainte,
Comme il requiert et veult en sa loy sainte.

You did not come to live here in luxury
But to die daily to vices
Because the one who wishes to live with everyday pleasures
Should follow the court rather than Savoy
Which clearly I dare to affirm to all
That you have come here for a much greater purpose
Which is to say to get rid of error
And to love and serve God with all your heart
And your neighbor, with no feeble charity
As He instructs and desires in His Holy Scriptures.

Malingre believed that the men who had come from France did so not for any material
gain or for personal pleasures, but to convert the region and to live in a reformed
territory. They could live in peace and do the Lord’s work. Nevertheless, this early
cadre of pastors, many of whom were working in the countryside, maintained their
identity as set apart from the local population by provenance and as workers for Bern.

(69-72)
Si maintenant nous sommes affligez
Un peu de temps par tormens infligez
(Comme l’a dit saint Pierre en un mot tel)
Nous attendons l’heritage immortel.

If now we are afflicted
Temporarily inflicted with torments
(As Saint Peter put in one expression to that effect)
We expect an immortal heritage

(73-79)
Prends donc en gré, et ne sois esperdu,
Qui avec soy a Dieu, n'a rien perdu
Mieulx vault un peu d'avoir avec Justice,
Qu'un revenu bien grand en Injustice
Et si en France, avois lieux spacieux,
Où que tu sois ton âme aura les cieux,
Avec Jésus: si comme luy endure.

Do so willingly, do not be disheartened
Who goes with God has lost nothing
It is better to have a little holding through justice
Than a great revenue through injustice
So if you have extended spaces in France
Wherever you are, your spirit will have the heavens
With Jesus: as he suffered.

Regardless of these trials, the author reminds his friend that this was only a temporary
affliction and that they would be rewarded in eternity. On earth, they were set apart from
their congregation, and in heaven, they expected to be individually rewarded for their
special and arduous tasks as pastors. In the end, however, they hoped for something even
greater. They hoped to identify themselves with Christ, who had also suffered on earth.

It was one thing for historians to see the commonalities in these men’s histories
and label them a group and a social caste set a part; it is another to demonstrate that they
perceived this group identity and separateness. The selections from the above poem
demonstrate this to a certain degree. However, the author of the poem does more, he also
describes the characteristics of the local pastors. For example, he writes,
(107-109)
Tu as Richard du Bois, qui sait les langues
Entièrement, dont il fait belles harengues,
Soy combattant à l’infernalle lerne,
Par ses sermons qu’il fait dedans Payerne.

You have Richard du Bois who is most learned in languages
From which he constructs beautiful orations
He fights the infernal teachings
Through the sermons he gives in Payerne.

(114-115)
Dedans Vivey, tu as Vincent Pennant
Pour l’Évangile incessamment peinnant

In Vevey, you have Vincent Pennant
Always suffering for the Gospel.

(128-130)
A Couldrefin, as noble Gabriel
Plus gracieux et plus doux que miel,
En sa doctrine et sa vie homme ouvert:

In Coudrefin, you have noble Gabriel
More gracious and sweeter than honey
In his doctrine and in his public life
Open in his teaching and his conduct.46

He includes descriptions of local pastors in the countryside and Calvin in Geneva. He
makes the list to demonstrate to Marcourt that they have precursors in the metaphorical
vaudois desert as well as fellow pastors working alongside them. They are not alone.
They are a diverse and varied group bound by their high education and common purpose.
Some, such as Morand, are schooled in the seven liberal arts. Others are well versed in

46 The translations of this poem are mine. The French text appears in Herminjard, CRF, 8: 202-09.
law. A couple of the men, Mouchy and Ferenneville, were nobles. However, their most common characteristic of them was that they had abandoned France for Jesus and the wellbeing of the poor.

As Is the Pastor, So Are the People; As Are the People, So Is the Pastor

The Reformation in Lausanne was modeled on the Reformation in Bern; the articles concluded at Bern’s 1532 synod bound pastors in Vaud. The articles consist of forty-four chapters that deal with distinct aspects of the church and pastoring. The acts are less a statement of theology than a manual for pastors in the parishes, both urban and rural. The chapters are succinct and record the official position on pastoral duties including baptism, correcting parishioners, instructing the populace in the catechism, and the respective roles of church and secular power.

Pastors were the first means of communication and connection between the central government in Bern and the outlying hinterlands. Before Bern could reach the greater population however, it needed to ensure that their pastors were good role models and provided examples of godly living. As the authorities from Bern stated at the outset
of the chapters dealing with pastoral behavior, “As is the pastor, so are the people, and as are the people, so is the pastor.”

The congregation’s behavior, whether good or bad, was a mirror of the pastor’s. The pastor’s sins showed up when the laity rebelled against the truth. A good and Christian congregation was the fruit of the pastors’ obedience. Bern expected its pastors to behave properly partially to keep the people from complaining and turning against them. As a figure of Bern’s authority within the village, it was critical that the pastor’s behavior be beyond reproach. Pastors had responsibilities to behave properly not only on account of God but for the sake of Bern as well.

Pastors were encouraged to read the Scriptures and pray every day. Prayer lifted burdens and ignorance from the heart. It is clear, they write, that prayer allows the heart [soul] to expand and enable the reader to grasp what God wishes to convey in a particular text. Prayer helps to “to reveal the counsel of God that is hidden in the text.”

47 “Ce que dit le prophète reste encore vrai: ‘tel prêtre, tel peuple.’ et ’tel peuple, tel prêtre.’” Le synode de Berne, Ordonnance sur la conduite, 140.

48 “Par conséquent le peuple, s’il n’est pas pourvu en notre personne comme il devrait l’être, ne doit en attribuer la faute qu’a lui-même. De notre côté, nous n’avons à nous plaindre de personne que de nous même, si notre peuple es si mal élevé, de colroide et rebelle à la vérité, car c’est le résultat de nos péchés.” Ibid., 140-41.

49 “. . . et à retenir le sens et le conseil de Dieu, qui est caché dans la lettre.” Ibid., 144.
The Bible was not simply a history book about the Judeo-Christian heritage but the Word of God. Therefore, the reader should focus on divining what God wanted to communicate to him. He should expect to receive wisdom and knowledge from the exercise. He should delight, but not overly so, in those areas where new insights and thoughts came to him about the Scriptures. He was not to gloat over these sparks of inspiration and original thinking. In areas that contradicted some other aspect of the Scriptures with which he was familiar, he was to return to prayer and ask for guidance. He should continue with this searching for resolution until it occurred. Likewise, he was encouraged to seek other books and writers on the particular subject and read what they had stated. What a joy it is, the authors exclaim, when ignorance is lifted! However, they again remind the pastor that he should not become puffed up over his insight.

Bern wanted its pastors to use the Bible for study and preparation. Natural and human histories were appropriate in limited doses for edifying the pastor and improving his discernment and judgment, but only the Bible and the Holy Spirit provided direction for doctrine, correction, and admonishment. The pastor, as the “dispenser of the secrets of Christ,” was to focus his study on divine texts rather than those of men. The Bernese

50 “Ah! quelle joie, lorsque quelqu'un trouve que Dieu lui a donné, à lui aussi, quelque chose qui s'accorde avec ce que les autres on recu, our bien quelque chose que d'autres, peut-être, n'ont pas encore obtenu! Il ne s'en engorgueillit pas, puisque c'est à Dieu qu'il l'a demandé, et qu'il sait bien ce qui s'ensuivierait s'il tombait dans une présomptuese vanité.” Ibid., 146-47.
stated that they were not keeping pastors from reading secular sources, but that they wanted them to know and have a command of the Scriptures. The Bern Synod aimed this particular section of the acts specifically at pastors in the countryside. They believed that rural pastors were not as concerned about reading the Scriptures as they were to the texts of men. They wrote, “Therefore, unfortunately, the pastors in the countryside are not as diligent in this regard [using the Holy Scriptures as opposed to those of men for dispensing the secrets of Christ]. Thus it is not without reason that we have proposed this admonition.”

The primary function of the new clergy was preaching. Although Catholic priests’ functions were primarily sacramental and focused on the eucharistic celebration, the sermon became the focus of the reformed service. The Reformation across Europe stressed that preaching was the primary means of instilling new theological concepts and bringing about a true Reformation in the church. Evangelicals believed in the notion of *fides ex auditu* or that through preaching and hearing the Word, the Holy Spirit began to instill faith in the listener’s heart. Ideally, it was to occur four times a week: on Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Pastors complained in Vaud and Bern, as in

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51 Ibid., 151-52.

52 "Bien que, malheureusement, les pasteurs à la campagne ne soient pas tous zélés à cet égard, ce n'est pas sans raison que nous avons proposé cet avertissement." Ibid., 151-52.

other parts of Europe, that few came to hear them preach. Regardless, the authorities wanted them to preach even if there were only one or two parishioners in the church. Based on the sources, Bern expected its pastors to preach constantly. They were to deliver at least one sermon in their home parish and make the rounds to rural parishes where no pastors had yet been installed.

What did pastors preach? This question is more difficult to answer since no sermons from the period survive in the archives that could shed light on the question or demonstrate the clergymen’s skill. Based on these very broad descriptions of the pastoral office and the form that preaching took in other parts of the Confederation, Vuilleumier concludes that format of the *serie continua*, modeled on the one used in Zurich, was probably well suited for the needs of the Reformation in Vaud.\(^{54}\) Preachers usually began with the beginning of a particular book of the Bible, which they explicated from beginning to end. Unlike Luther, who maintained the pre-Reformation pericope, Zwingli’s format for sermons more closely adhered to that of the Scriptures themselves. Vuilleumier concludes that this would have been the most practical way of introducing the Scriptures, one of the chief goals of the Reformers, to a Catholic population that was

largely illiterate and did not have access to the actual text. From his point of view, this method would have provided the greatest variety of scriptural topics.

However, the Reformed sermon was also a time to attack the old faith and to hammer home the differences between the papists and the Evangelicals. Officials expected pastors to know the *Loci communes potificiorum*, or “essential teachings of the papal church,” and to refute them occasionally in their sermons. Bern did not want sermons to become an anti-Catholic harangue, but they did want pastors, after they had preached about Christ, to “combat” papal teachings and practice. Not only was this necessary to make sure that people did not return to their old ways, but Bern believed that it was important to address the errors of the papal Church so that simple Christians would not feel guilt over having abandoned the old teachings.

One observer, Antoine Cathelan, stole into Vaud under the guise of being a defrocked priest. Upon his return to France, he published a fictional pamphlet in the

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55 Ibid., 327.

56 Ibid., 328.

57 “Il importe, d'autre part, que les pasteurs connaissent bien les "Loci communes potificiorum," c'est-à-dire les points essentiels de l'Eglise papale, et qu'ils les réfutent en peu de mots dans leur sermons, après avoir prêché le Seigneur Christ, comme il a été dit, et cela point par point. Non pas toutefois dans une seule prédication, mais que l'on combatte tantôt telle erreur, tantôt telle autre, selon qu'il est à propos." Le synode de Berne, *Ordonnance sur la conduite*, 106-07.
form of a dialogue that described what he had witnessed in Vaud. Although his account was a form of propaganda meant to mock the Reformation in Vaud; his description of the reformed sermon may contain elements of truth, and indeed, he knew the names of the local Evangelical pastors. Cathelan writes that the sermon served no other purpose than to call the pope the antichrist, cardinals gourmands, the monks and priests vermin and hypocrites, and the Catholic kings and princes butchers and tyrants for the Antichrist. Moreover, he states that the people are not taught that good works are necessary and they were permitted to live as they pleased.

One archival source in Fribourg, reportedly contains what one errant priest was preaching against the Catholic Church in the village of Lugnorre, near the town of Morat. The authorities from the Catholic city of Solothurn informed their counterparts in Fribourg about what the priest had said in front of his parishioners. Although the date of the letter sent to Fribourg is uncertain, it is officially dated between 1530-1560. It appears that Farel or other Evangelicals who were nearby may have influenced the priest.


59 Ibid., 36-37.

60 Ibid., 26-28.

61 AEF, GS, Nr. 229.
Although this is only a second-hand account and not a sermon, the description uncovers the fact that even in rural villages, preachers were speaking out against the Mass, transubstantiation, and the role of priests. In this case, the local cleric purportedly preached that the Catholic doctrine of the Mass turned priests into worse criminals than the men who had crucified Christ in Jerusalem. He contradicted the notion that the full body of Christ was contained within each piece into which the host had been broken. He alleged that this teaching pushed the people into idolatry. He explained that the magical role of the priest at the Mass was an evil teaching that led simple, poor Christians to look to priests rather than God for salvation. He complained that this teaching caused these simple folk to blaspheme against God, and to reject Christ and the Holy Spirit. He charged that the devil was worshipped when Catholics venerated images and holy objects. He concluded that the Mass was the devil’s creation and was perpetuated by the lies of his false prophets and teachers. Evidently, this was not the extent of this preachers’ teaching, but the informant believed that to go on would only bore the reader.

The report is not only important for the content of the preacher’s sermon, however it is standard fare, but for what it reveals was occurring in the rural towns in the region where Farel and the Evangelicals were active. First, it uncovers that Evangelical teachings were finding their way into rural Catholic parishes, some of which were located in Fribourg’s territory. In this instance, it is never made clear whether the preacher was
the local Catholic priest or an itinerant preacher, but the former seems most likely since the author refers to him as the resident priest in Lugnorre. Clearly this man had heard the Evangelical teaching of Farel or others and was convinced enough of its truth to preach the same message to his own congregation. Apparently, he had converted but had not left his Catholic post. His preaching was provocative and dangerous enough for its main points to be recorded by the city secretary in Solothurn and sent to Fribourg.

The description does not indicate how the people reacted to the sermon or the new teaching. Perhaps some had already been exposed to the new creed in nearby Morat or Payerne. One simply cannot know how the message resonated in the countryside in this instance. Regardless of the popular reaction, the preacher was sowing the first seeds of doubt and discontent about the Catholic teaching and its rituals at this location. The pastor’s purpose was not only to spread the new message but ultimately to convince his congregants that they should leave the Catholic Church for the sake of their own souls.

Similarly, in Moudon, immediately after the Reformation was introduced, a preacher was paid to give sermons against indulgences.62 Although they may not have understood the finer points of theology of the sacrament of the Mass, they were certainly sophisticated enough to understand that their priest believed the sacraments of the Catholic Church and the veneration Catholic iconography were of the Devil.

This priest was dividing the rural community. Although some of the rural inhabitants were undoubtedly aware of the religious strife that had gripped nearby towns and villages, in this case it directly affected their own lives. The priest in Lugnorre was teaching his congregants how to distinguish Catholics from Evangelicals and was demonizing and denigrating the Catholic faith. Now these rural residents had received a lesson on the evils of the Mass that had previously not entered their worldview.

According to the account, the priest used words like *devilish, evil, misguided, and corrupt* to describe Catholic practice. Religion and its practice could be used, if they believed their priest, to distinguish between those people caught in Satan’s clutches and those who were on the path to salvation. These new labels of identification, and all the implications that surrounded them, carried the potential for disrupting families and relations among villages and towns, and of course, as we have seen in Grandson, intra-communal relations.

Some may have been persuaded by the priest’s discourse of division, while others may have continued to cling to the old faith. Lugnorre was located within Fribourg’s territory and therefore the Evangelical faith was just as suppressed there, as the Catholic faith would become in those regions where Bern governed independently. The respective faiths’ fields of action were limited by their location.
The pastor was to be the model of moral and Christian behavior for his congregation to emulate. He was to be beyond reproach. As a highly visible actor on the parish stage, his comportment carried meaning and would be read and interpreted. From Bern’s standpoint, the pastor was the living “embodiment of the efficacy of Christ’s resurrection.” Pastors were to shun the temptations of this world and guide their churches as well to all that is “true, honorable, right, pure, lovable, and commendable.” They were to be sober, modest, of good moral character, hospitable, capable of teaching, not drunkards, not violent in language, and persons who supported dishonest gain. Moreover they were to be gentle, peaceful, and in charge of their own household. They were to be “married to a single woman.” The authorities explained that the advice from Paul concerned chaste living. They admit that temptations of the flesh existed in marriage, but pastors were to resist them. Pastors were to distinguish themselves through their simple dress. As representatives in the villages and countryside of both the state and church, their clothing conveyed meaning. Pastors were to avoid worn-out clothing.

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64 “Au contraire, nous qui prêchons la croix de Christ, nous devons dans notre vie mortelle porter avec nous la mort de Christ et, par une vie céleste, donner une preuve efficace de la résurrection de Christ . . . .” Ibid., 160.

65 “c'est par là que nous amènerons nos Eglises à penser sérieusement aux choses qui sont vraies, honorables, droites, pures, aimables, et louables . . . .” Ibid.

66 “. . . et qu'il y ait une différence dans le vêtement entre un garçon boucher et un minister de la Parole . . . .” Ibid., 162.
Such demonstrations of modesty were actually equated to the overly pious displays of the Pharisees. They wrote, “We are not saying that the hypocrisy of the Pharisees pleases us, but that a happy medium is best.”

At least two other factors were at work when the Synod addressed the behavior of its pastors. First, the authors were keenly aware of the many moral failings of the Catholic clergy. Less than a generation before, the reformers had expertly manipulated anticlerical sentiment against the Catholic Church and knew the power they possessed to discredit the clergy and the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Gerald Strauss and others have demonstrated that anticlericalism continued in the post-Reformation era, only now it was the Protestant clergy and institutions that were the targets of complaints. Despite the Reformation, the clergy continued to remain a corporation set apart from the rest of society. Especially in Vaud, the clergy was educated, drawn primarily from urban areas, and from outside the Confederation or Vaudois soil. The clergy were burdened with providing good examples and guiding the rest of the population. Although they were no longer primarily performing the sacramental roles of the past, which clearly set priests apart from their village cohort, the Protestant clergy existed at a similar if not greater

67 “Nous ne disons pas par là que l'hypocrisie des Phari siens nous plaise, mais qu'il faut ici tenir le juste milieu.” Ibid.

social distance from the laity. Bern had encouraged a disciplinary and exhortatory role for the clergy in the parishes. In order for the pastors to maintain their credibility with their congregants, they had to stand before them as exemplars of pious, godly, obedient men of God and representatives of Bern.

**Conclusions**

Very few Catholic clerics became pastors in the new church, thus Bern looked outside of Vaud to begin creating a new pastoral core that could spread the Reformation message to its people. Bern believed it was essential that the Word be preached and the region converted for both spiritual and political reasons. The spiritual authorities in the capital believed and asserted it was their spiritual duty to spread their theological teachings to Vaud.

At the same time, Bern focused on building the ecclesiastical and financial structures needed to support its Protestant pastors. It assessed the financial status of the parishes and made adjustments when necessary. It also established the ecclesiastical foundation for the pastors who were in need of explicit directions concerning pastoring in the new territory.

Regardless of the failure to convert the native clergy, the old clerics had to be neutralized as a threat to Bern’s spiritual and secular domination. Thus, nearly three
years after the conquest, Bern ordered the Catholic clergy to accept the Reformation
publicly or leave the region. As long as they remained and continued to offer the
sacraments, Bern’s authority was in jeopardy. Regardless of their efforts however, some
continued to cling to the old faith and its practices long after the new clergy was installed.
CHAPTER 7

THE CONVERSION OF THE RURAL POPULACE

Bern issued religious mandates after the Disputation of Lausanne to systematically enforce reformed religious practice and belief and improve the behavior of their new subjects. The simple folk, however, did not give up the faith of their fathers quickly or easily. Decades after the Reformation, they continued to participate in Catholic rituals and feast days.

Traditionally historians of the Reformation in the Pays de Vaud have disregarded the reaction of the common people to the religious changes. They focused on the high theological and political events of the era instead.¹ Here I explore the behavior and religious practices of the Vaudois population during the first decades after the introduction of reform. I will focus as much as possible on the common men and women whose history is often untold given the paucity of sources. Indeed, many of the records

examined here, primarily lists of citations in account books, derive from rural towns and villages, and document the Catholic practices that simple folk continued after the conquest and Reformation.

Much of the Pays de Vaud borders Catholic territory. Vaudois villagers easily visited their Catholic counterparts with whom they shared a common language, traditions, and social and economic networks. In border regions and religiously mixed areas, the population can more easily pick and chose which religious practices, traditions, and beliefs to continue. Historians and anthropologists can then assess, based on this behavior, which religious practices endured and which may have represented the true heart of traditional religion in Vaud.

Susan C. Karant-Nunn has studied confessional border regions in Württemburg and concludes that even a generation after the Reformation, ties between Catholics and Lutherans remained strong. Regardless of the efforts of theologians and magistrates, she writes, Lutheran simple folk “felt no alienation from their Catholic peers.”

Villagers in Vaud may also have visited Catholic festivities, heard the Mass, or baptized the children in Catholic parishes simply because it solidified social and kinship ties with folks living

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in Fribourg and Valais with whom they were connected prior to the imposition of the confessional border.

On the one hand, their misbehavior is a sign that Bern and its representatives were failing to confessionalize the population. Fifty years after the conquest, pastors, the main disseminators of reformed belief, had not convinced all people of the spiritual danger they could suffer if they continued the old customs. They were also failing to create loyal, reformed subjects.³ Regions where creeds abutted provided opportunities to reject confessionalization that originated from above. They also fostered and accommodated ambiguous or even mixed religious identities long after official efforts to unify the population in an institutional church and around a particular creed and doctrine had been initiated.

People who remained close to Catholic parishes could easily walk across the confessional border to attend the Mass, engage in holiday services, and feasts. Their behavior can be interpreted as an attempt to keep alive the practices that they believed most important. Based on the information presented here, people were most often prosecuted for engaging in ritual celebrations and festivities. Rather than being punished by the Bernese for continuing to espouse Catholic doctrine or teachings on transubstantiation, baptism, or purgatory, they were usually apprehended for engaging in

Catholic rituals. The residents of Vaud understood these practices as comprising the heart of the “faith of their fathers” in which they wished to remain. In addition to serving religious purposes, such events solidified the social and kinship bonds, as Karant-Nunn has pointed out in her study of ritual in Germany. The residents of Vaud wished to maintain their common heritage and identity with their brethren in Vaud.

The evidence presented here does not demonstrate that resistance in Vaud was either organized or systematic. It does not appear grounded in theological arguments against the teachings of the new pastors. It would be difficult to conclude then that there was overwhelming resentment on the part of the Vaudois for the Reformation.

Nevertheless, these accounts only represent a fraction of the misbehavior which may have occurred—those whose names appear here are the unlucky ones who were both caught and punished, and whose fines appear in the account books. It is clear however that the opportunity to continue practicing Catholicism across the border was a far more

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4 "In town and country they strove to eliminate spinning bees and engagement dances, the ritual drunkenness of wedding festivities and sexual license. From our perspective, they failed to understand the profound underlying meaning, indeed the relational necessity of each of these seemingly exuberant, indulgent activities. Engagement drinking sealed contracts between families, and demonstrated generosity and trust. Wedding parties and dances celebrated sexuality and the continuance of family bloodlines. The postponement of baptism allowed relatives from other regions to come and express their common identity as a family, and in the subsequent eating and drinking together to mark the continuity of kinship. The post-churching cake or meal thanked the women of the birthing chamber and brought an end to the feminine reproductive circle. Funerary meals resealed in a new configuration bonds cut open by death. These were hardly 'laughing' matters. They stressed stability, not revolution." Karant-Nunn, *The Reformation of Ritual*, 199.
appealing prospect than disobeying and resisting the Bernese mandates at home. Had the people engaged in these behaviors in their villages, they would have been immediately spotted and punished. Crossing the border represented another alternative, one that carried less risk, for defying Bern and its spiritual program.

Mandating Reform: The Religious Edicts of October and December 1536

Bern’s strategies for introducing the Reformation in the rest of the Pays de Vaud after the conquest were similar in many ways to their efforts in the Four Bailiwicks and Common Lordships. The most important difference was that Bern now governed this region alone. It was not necessary to conclude religious settlements with Fribourg.

Bern acted slowly. It waited nearly nine months after the conquest to convene the Disputation of Lausanne and eleven months before releasing a comprehensive Reformation mandate. Originally, Bern had hoped that new faith would attract a larger following in the Pays de Vaud. Thus, the Reformation in Vaud began in earnest after the triumph of the Reformers at the Disputation of Lausanne. Although residents did not participate in the event directly, at least in Lausanne the event was well known.

Vulliemin was correct, although somewhat romantic, when he wrote in 1835-36,

We would be fooling ourselves if we believed that the impact of the disputation was limited only to what occurred within the walls of the great cathedral [of Lausanne]. When it was finished in the temple it was time to show the new
religion in town squares, the intersections, in the homes, and in all gathering places and houses of fellowship.  

Eleven days after the close of the Disputation of Lausanne, the Bernese issued the First Reformation Edict for the Pays de Vaud. The city-republic had earned the right through conquest to dictate the religion for its new territory. Although to convince local villages and towns to surrender Bern’s military leaders had allowed Catholicism to continue, eleven months later, it was clear that Bern had no intention of keeping this agreement.  

Thus, it ordered the immediate destruction of all idols and the end of all papal ceremonies, traditions, and rules that did not conform to the “Word of God.”  

Government officials circulated through the new territory and ordered monasteries and convents to stop all Catholic practices “completely and totally.”

The first Reformation mandate of October 1536 banned the Mass and ordered the people to await further instructions, which would be coming shortly from Bern. Taking as their example the kings of the Old Testament, the Bernese wrote that they held themselves responsible for the faith of their subjects. Thus they ordered every

5 "On se ferait de la Dispute une fausse idée si on se la représentait renfermée sous les arceaux de la grande cathédrale. Quand elle avait fini dans le temple, c'était pour se montrer sous de nouvelles formes dans les places, dans les carrefours, à tous les foyers, dans tous les lieux de réunion et d'entretien." Vulliemin, *Le Chroniquer*, 336.


7 Grenus, *Document[s]* 203-08.

8 Ibid.
Baillif, chief magistrate, lord, lieutenant, and other officers. . .to travel from one parish to the next, and also to each cloister and monastery that is under your charge and tell each priest, provost, dean, canon, pastor, vicar, chaplain, abbot, prior, monk and nun, and all other people who call themselves members of the church, to cease all papal ceremonies, sacrifices, offices, institutions, and traditions, if they wish to avoid our anger and punishment.9

On December 24, 1536, Bern enacted a more sweeping Reformation edict for the Pays de Vaud. This edict dealt with a number of issues directly and indirectly relating to religion and its practice in Vaud. Alongside the religious directives, the authorities included sections on mercenaries, oaths, and war. Most important for the ongoing conversion of the people were those sections that dealt specifically with new faith and its practices, and the banning of traditional rituals and behavior. The ordinance was in keeping with the changes that had already occurred in Bern. The sacraments, were limited to two: baptism and the Lord’s Supper. Marriage was no longer a sacrament. Feast days were limited to Christmas, New Year, the annunciation, and Ascension Day. Not only did they trim the calendar of the Catholic festivities, but the Bernese ordered that these were days for attending the sermon and abstaining from work. Pilgrimages

9 "A ceste cause et effect mandons et commandons à tous et un chacun nous bailliffs, advoyer, chastelains, lieutenans et aultres officiers que, incontinent avoir vues icestes, vous transpourtiez d'une église en l'autre, et aussy és cloistres et monastères que sont soubs votre charge et office et à tous prestres, prevosts, doyens, chanoines, curés, vicaires, chappelains, abbés, prieurs, moennes, nunins et toutes autres personnes appelées gens d'Eglise, de notre part fassiez exprès commandement de soy incontinent dépouter de toutes cérémonies, sacrifícies, offices, institutions, et traditions papistiques, et de toutellement cesser d'ycelles, entant qu'ils désireront d'éviter notre male grace et griefve punition . . . ." Vulliemin, Le Chroniquer, 341.
were forbidden as were rosaries and repeating the Ave Maria. Other practices that were of a less religious and more superstitious nature, such as ringing the church bells at the approach of storms or after a death were likewise prohibited. Finally, the officials in the capital reminded the population that they were not to attend the Catholic Mass.

In each case, violation of the ordinances’ specific regulations was punished with the imposition of monetary fines or prison time. Sometimes both monetary fines and prison sentences were prescribed. Men were fined at twice the rate of women in most cases. The ordinances were prescriptive documents that outlined Bern’s intentions for the construction of the Evangelical church in its new territory. More important the documents set benchmarks against which to judge the progress of conversion.

The ordinances also underscore another aspect of the Bernese Reformation that at first might escape attention were it not so prominently displayed within the document. Bern’s vision of a successful conversion to the new faith meant that the morals of the people would change as well. More ink was spilt outlining proper and righteous living than on the traditionally religious aspects. Bern’s religious authorities sought to reign in and abolish adultery, gluttony, blasphemy, licentiousness, prostitution, games, dancing, and improper dress. Indeed violations of the moral ordinances would appear more often in the lists of punishments than would the strictly religious violations. However, the city
strove to mold well-behaved, loyal subjects whose internalization of religion had tempered their carnal desires.

On December 22, 1536, two days before the release of the general ordinance for Vaud, it was proclaimed in Lausanne’s streets that no one was to participate in the Mass in the city or the surrounding region, either publicly or secretly. No one was to travel to other territories to celebrate the Mass. No one should baptize children except according to the Evangelical laws. All papal ceremonies were to end. An ordinance itself could not change hearts, minds, or behavior overnight, but it did immediately communicate that Bern was in charge and determined to reform the church in Vaud after the image of the one in Bern.

After 1536, the authorities in Bern flooded their districts with religious and moral ordinances. The leaders in the capital expanded on aspects of the new religion that the people were ignoring or where they were falling short. For instance, mandates were released that forbade dancing, specifically certain types of round dances. Other ordinances dealt with the number of dances that could be performed at weddings. Some directives forbade consulting soothsayers. Bern also ordered the population to refrain

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from gaming and from drinking too much. They advised repeatedly that the people should attend the sermon regularly.

Pastors read the mandates from their pulpits and instructed the people in the new faith and the Scriptures. Bern expected that the pastors would remind the people that they were obligated to attend the preaching. In Lausanne, in 1548, the council ordered the populace to be present at both the Sunday and Friday morning sermons. Authorities fined truants 3 sols. Merchants did not conduct business legally during the hours of the sermon, and taverners did not serve drinks after 9 p.m. the night before the sermon. (Although it is not stated, one can assume that this meant that drinks were not to be served after 9 p.m. on Saturday to assure that no one was too ill to attend the services the next day.) Spies policed the village of Moudon during the sermon to make sure everyone was in church. They fined those people found in the streets or tavern ½ jug of wine, which was the equivalent of one sol. Even in parishes that were the most rural and still

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11 "Que icheus ministres purent annoncent la parole de Dieu, et ne mettent en avant par leur doctrine ni enseignement autres choses, sinon ce qu'ils peuvent approuver par la sainte-écriture du vieux et nouveau Testament; vous nosdits sujets, hommes et femmes, admonestant d'ouïr la parole de Dieu, en tant que désirez éviter notre mal-grace." Grenus, *Documen*\[t\]s 203-04.

12 Chavannes, “Extraits des manuaux,” 45.

without a pastor, Bern ordered the people to attend the sermon in nearby villages and to provide the pastor with a horse so that he could come to preach.\textsuperscript{14}

As much as the sermon was a vehicle for converting the population, it was also the location where the people demonstrated their resistance to Bern’s religious changes. Pastors frequently complained about bad behavior. Pastor Benoit Conte in Lausanne complained that many people played cards and games when they should have been in the church.\textsuperscript{15} Villager Claude Porta did not even make it to the sermon. Before the service, he and his friends had been drinking in the public tavern.\textsuperscript{16} Others disrupted the church service by making noise that not only disturbed the pastor but also made it hard for others to concentrate.\textsuperscript{17} Claude Orsat and George Fournoỳ prattled during the preaching on Sunday at the church in Saint Saphorin. They were punished.\textsuperscript{18} Jehan Mandrot tried to disturb others during the preaching and received a warning from the pastor.\textsuperscript{19} In other parishes, the authorities punished some for making disruptive noises during the service.

\textsuperscript{14} Staatsarchiv des Kantons Bern (SAB), AIII, fol. 23

\textsuperscript{15} Chavannes, “Extraits des Manuaux,” 45.

\textsuperscript{16} Archives cantonales vaudoises (ACV), Bp 32, Lausanne: 1579-1580.

\textsuperscript{17} For a comparison to other parts of Europe see Laura Feitzinger Brown, "Brawling in Church: Noise and the Rhetoric of Lay Behavior in Early Modern England," \textit{Sixteenth Century Journal} 34 (2003): 955-72.

\textsuperscript{18} ACV, Bp 32, Lausanne: 1579-1580.

\textsuperscript{19} ACV, Bp 42, Yverdon: 1566-1567.
Whether they were avoiding the sermon altogether, drinking in taverns or playing cards when they should have been listening, this behavior demonstrates at least a lack of seriousness about or interest in what was being preached.

Certainly, it is impossible to know whether these unruly individuals simply gave into the temptation to drink, work, or gaming rather than hearing the Word of God, but their behavior is typical of the way that subordinate people resist authorities. They did not take to the streets to protest the orders to go to church; indeed, this form of open resistance may not have even crossed their minds. However, they communicated to the Bern and the local councils that they were not committed to following the regulations of the new religious order.

Over time, Bern altered the physical layout and interior space of the churches in Vaud to reflect the changes in theology and the importance of the sermon. They immediately replaced altars with simple tables for the Lord’s Supper and also installed new pulpits for preachers. Architects drafted new, oval-shaped churches. Although

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few such churches were built in Vaud, the interior changes Bern that implemented emphasized the more communally focused nature of reformed parishes. The new designs focused more attention on the pulpit, which was easily visible. This shape also meant that the entire congregation could easily be viewed by the pastor. Likewise, the faces of the congregants were visible to one another. Scowls, looks of disapproval, interest, and sleeping could not be kept from one’s fellows. The congregation became the audience not only to the pastor, but to one another as well. Not surprisingly, the new church architecture reinforced the communal policing that the institution of the consistories would draw on to nip heresy in the bud. Cathelan describes the reformed churches as schools where the congregation was like a group of students learning from their teacher, the pastor. With the Reformation, the emphasis of the religious service had shifted away from the sacrament of the Mass towards hearing the Word of God preached. From a practical as well as symbolic standpoint, the new focus necessitated changes in the structure of the churches themselves. Cathelan notes that the churches were full of pews, some of which were smaller to accommodate women and children, and others of which were taller for the men.22


22 Cathalan, Passevent Parisien, 26.
Iconoclasm is a well-known, quick, and dramatic means of changing the interior space of the church and investing it with new religious meaning. Throughout Vaud, churches were “cleansed” of their church art and statuary. Even today, one can witness the profound differences between the sacred spaces of Protestant and Catholic churches in Switzerland, some within walking distance of one another. These changes advertised and concretized the theological differences separating the two faiths. However, the differences were not limited to simply a lack of altars, stained-glass windows, and statues.

Alongside the interior changes of Catholic churches after the Reformation, economic changes occurred as well which can be interpreted as another means through which the Bernese sought to convert the people. Church wealth was redistributed, and the funding mechanisms of the old faith were disassembled. Giving money and goods to the church for the saying of Masses and vigils was discontinued. Wealth that had previously been given to the church was returned to family members and kin up to the third generation. This may have acted as an enticement to adopt or at least embrace the Reformation. No longer was wealth being siphoned from the laity to fund the easy and corrupt lives of the clerical estate, the representatives of Reform could argue.

This restructuring did not mean necessarily that the economic burden that rested on the shoulders of the people was removed. Bern accepted the need to support the old Catholic clergy until their deaths. Likewise, it was obligated to ensure that pastors, many of whom now had families to feed, were maintained and cared for with adequate funds. In the second Reformation ordinance, the authorities referred to their obligations and what this meant for the laity. “And on account of the large number of clergy, and also to support the pastors, much funding is needed,” they wrote.24

In addition to the multiple meanings the confiscation of church wealth had for the population, it was also a signal that the Catholic Church was being disassembled economically. This was a sign of the permanency and thoroughness of the Reformation. The Church, through its extensive landholdings, touched nearly the entire population in some way.

In the countryside, the assessment and redistribution of church wealth caused a number of villages to experience first-hand the impact of the new religious reality. Along the borders between Fribourg and Vaud, especially in locations that were exclaves of Fribourg and were surrounded by Vaudois territory, sections of land that had supported the Catholic Church now became the objects of dispute, especially as Catholic villages

24 “Et à cause qu'il est grand nombre desdits gens d'église, et aussi pour entretenir les predicans, il faut beaucoup de biens . . .” Grenus, Document[s] 204.
did not wish their land to be used to support Protestant parishes. In 1538, a prior, Jacques Copyn, brought five volumes to the Council of Lausanne that contained the holdings of the abbey of Montheron, some of which were in Fribourg’s territory in Assens, and Boussens. Long and drawn out legal battles ensued to ensure that the tithe due on Catholic lands went to support their own priests rather than parishes in Bern’s territory. Some of these disputes lasted well into the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which demonstrates the fact that Catholic communities and villages were aware of the differences separating them from their Protestant neighbors.

In the rest of the territory, assessors traveled from parish to parish to examine the finances in each location. The first assessment lasted from 1537 until 1540. During this period, they compiled detailed lists of church possessions including clothing, ornaments, and other accoutrements. Assessors inventoried other items as well including land, tithes, rents, vineyards, titles to revenue for monastic houses, chapels, and churches. Residents, both lay and clerical, carried out the paperwork that accompanied the region-

25 ACV, IB, Nr. 38.
27 ACV, IB, Nr. 79.
wide assessment. They unearthed volumes that listed ecclesiastical possessions. In some cases, inventories were created for the first time in many years.

Bern had multiple obligations for its wealth. It had to provide a material base for its new pastors, former Catholic clergy who had accepted the Reformation, and who remained in Vaud, poor relief, and schools. Some Catholic clergy who stayed in their communities were paid by the Bernese or governing city councils alongside the resident pastor. For instance, Domp François Jayet, the vicar of Morrens, was provided twenty florins per year to maintain the house and church while another preached the Word of God. Some Catholic clergy were well cared for when compared to their Protestant counterparts. Laurent Cinquensod was given an annual salary of 100 florins, a muid of wheat, and two barrels of wine. According to the city council records from Lausanne, this was what he received from the Bernese; he took in an equivalent amount from Lausanne from the revenues of the abbey of Montheron. In Lausanne, the city council removed the bells from the churches but left the one in the cathedral of St. Pierre to be


31 Ibid., 6.

32 Ibid., 7.
rung in case of emergencies. In Moudon, the bells of the church were taken down, melted down in Fribourg, and the metal was returned to the council.

Vast amounts of Catholic Church wealth were transferred to Bern. In some cases, Bern displayed its new possessions to symbolically announce its conquest. For instance, the altar table that had been in the great cathedral of Lausanne was transferred to Bern and today is the chief altar in St. Vincent’s Church there. Not only did much of Lausanne’s ecclesiastical holdings end up in the capital, but even smaller towns like Yverdon and Payerne received their shares of Catholic booty. In one instance, village representatives arrived in Lausanne with the required church wealth only to be sent home with the objects and permission to keep them. Some ecclesiastical wealth was shared between Fribourg and Bern and became the object of much negotiation.

In other cases, the local city councils authorized the sale of former church possessions. On September 8, 1555, the river Flon flooded near Lausanne and ruined a bridge, destroyed houses on the banks, and killed eight people. In 1556, twenty years after the conquest, the council of Lausanne sold part of the remaining ecclesiastical valuables to a citizen and resident of Lausanne, N. François Seigneux, lord of Vufflens. Seigneux bought crosiers, miters, crosses, and chalices for one hundred gold ecus. The

33 Ibid., 9.

34 Ernest Chavannes, Le trésor de l’église cathédrale de Lausanne: documents accompagnés de notes historiques (Lausanne: Rouge et Dubois, 1873), 68-78.
money was to be used exclusively to repair the damaged bridge and houses.35

Interestingly, Seigneux kept the items for three years and then tried to sell them in Geneva, where he was arrested for their possession. His release and the restoration of his reputation required the good offices of the councils of Lausanne and Bern. Even after the Council of Lausanne had sent representatives to Geneva, the authorities there would not release him. Finally, on December 21, 1559, they set him free. Upon his return to Lausanne, Seigneux demanded that the council in that city attest to his good name and it pay for the cost of his food and maintenance in jail. The magistrates agreed to his requests.

Iconoclasm and the seizure of church wealth did not sit well with some locals, although resistance to the cleansing of the churches was rare and sporadic, occasionally it turned violent. The three towns of Lutry, Villete, and Saint Saphorin, located a few kilometers from Lausanne on the shores of Lake Geneva, were directly held by the bishop of Lausanne before 1536. It was in this region that the Bernese experienced the most resistance to the Reformation. The town of Lutry was especially oppositional. The town was home as well to a Benedictine monastery. In April 1536, the council proclaimed that it did not wish to have a Protestant preacher in its town and would not attend the sermon. Moreover, if anyone in the town went to hear the sermon, that person

would be fined 10 florins. Upon hearing the news that the invading troops from Bern were burning images and cleansing churches, the council minutes report that three men, Jean Sechaux, Nicod Mestraux, and Guillaume Carra, took down the large crucifix to hide it.

In October 1536, after the promulgation of the first Reformation edict, the army of Bern arrived. It wanted to “destroy the altars, and burn the images.” It did not carry out its task on the promise that the people of Lutry would carry out the ordinance themselves. The vicar asked the council what should be done with the conche that held the baptismal water, the host or corpus domini, and the vestments that belonged to the church. The council decided that the host and conche should be hidden in the grotto, illuminated by a lamp “as if it were still in the church,” and that the clothing should be turned over the authorities. The council gave the priest latitude to take whatever steps were necessary to protect the host. The council also went to the convent of Savigny to collect the clothing of the religious and the chalice that belonged to the parish. They

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36 Vuilleumier, Histoire de l’église réformée, 133.


38 "... Monseigneur le bailli arrivait à Lutry, 'ensemble sa compagnie pour abattre les autels et brûler les images ...'" Ibid.
received the clothing but not the chalice. The clergy hid other precious items in a cellar of the Confraternity of the Holy Spirit (du Saint-Esprit).  

The council was aware of the risk it was running in disobeying the orders of Bern. The council minutes report that the town realized that if the Bernese bailiff came to Lutry and learned that items were being hidden in the grotto, there could be consequences. In a move that appears to distance it from the situation, the council told the local priest to do what he felt was necessary to protect the items. The council sent representatives to Lausanne to ask for a delay of the posting of the conclusions of the disputation. It also dispatched men to Bern to protest that the religious edicts violated the town’s franchises. Finally, Lutry pleaded with the clergy in Fribourg to attend the Disputation of Lausanne to make sure that the Catholic faith was supported. In each case, the council met with failure. Their ambassadors did not convince Lausanne, Bern, or Fribourg to intervene or change directions. The council therefore took matters into its own hands to defend the faith – faith that Vuilleumier denigrates as superstitious and evidence that the town was still stuck in the Middle Ages.  

39 This confraternity existed in nearly every parish throughout Vaud. In this case, the confraternity actively conspired with the town council and the clergy to keep precious items from being destroyed or confiscated.  

The mayor of the town also took possession of the *custode* (the drape that covers the container of the host). Later the priest turned over all ecclesiastical clothing, which the council inventoried and placed in a cellar of the Confraternity of the Holy Spirit.

The Bernese authorities continued to ask the officials in Lutry to make an inventory of all church good, titles, and rights. At the end of November 1537, nearly one year after the promulgation of the second Reformation mandate, the bailiff authorized the mayor of Lutry to assess the wealth of the clergy in the town. His role in the events was complicated by the fact that he also wanted to take possession of a chalice and chasuble that he alleged had been given to the church by his ancestors and was marked with his family’s coat of arms. The council wanted proof that these items had been given by mayor’s family to the church. The clerics also protested that when the mayor had made his inventory of their possessions, he had violated their rights and customs. The council deferred to their new authorities and decided to wait until the arrival of the commissioners from Bern to settle that matter.

On February 15, 1537, the chalice was returned to the mayor. The council returned the chalice conditionally. It stated that should the old faith return, he was to give the chalice back to the church.\(^{41}\) This is an interesting statement from the council. Just

\(^{41}\)”Monsieur le mayor a de rechef insisté pour rentrer en possession de son calice. On arrêté qu'il lui sera rendu à la condition que si par fortune l'église revient à sa destination primitive, il soit denu de le restituer.” Campiche, "La fin du culte catholique," 318."
the day before, on February 14, the commissioners from Bern had come to town. Six clerics had given up the cowl.\textsuperscript{42} On February 8, 1537, the council had ordered that church should be cleansed \textit{nectoyer}.\textsuperscript{43} The Reformed pastor was already in Lutry and preaching. Yet, the council still held out the possibility that the old church would return, regardless of the repeated demonstrations to the contrary.

Clergy and town authorities in Lutry opposed the Reformation imposed on them by the Bernese, but they walked a moderate line in order to avoid Bern’s wrath. They cooperated, but they did so slowly. They did not immediately cleanse the churches but only did so after the authorities had repeatedly ordered it. They were also slow to return church wealth to individuals. Perhaps they were dragging their feet and hoping that the Reformation movement would pass, and that they would be allowed to continue in the faith of their fathers as the Bernese had promised during the invasion. They eventually carried out the removal of church art and icons, but this did not mean that they were endorsing the Reformation. Remark ing on a similar situation in England, Eamon Duffy writes of the churchwardens, “All over England churchwardens cooperated in the removal and destruction of images and the suppression of traditional services, but this

\textsuperscript{42} "les commissaires sont arrivés et ont ordonné aux religieux de poser l'habit; six l'ont fait." Ibid., 317.

\textsuperscript{43} "que l'on fesse nectoye l'eglise et mestre les pierre des ouctard appart." Ibid.
cooperation should not be read as approval." Instead, these actions can be viewed as the public acts of subordinate people who knew that there were limits on their ability to resist. The slow manner in which they proceeded, their reluctance to completely destroy religious objects and instead hiding them, and their belief that one day the Catholic faith might be restored are faint traces of the hidden agenda of resistance that could not be openly voiced.

Occasionally their displeasure did break through the hard crust of fear to the surface. When the new pastor read the mandates of the Reformation issued by Bern on February 18, 1537, the Sunday of the celebration of the *les brandons* (a celebration that occurs around the time of Carnival) the *banderet* and the governors of the town voiced their opposition.45 The council records are silent about the content of their protest. Their objection was not made to the commissioners or lodged in Bern or Lausanne; instead, it was voiced in the relative safety of the local church, before the new pastor, whose position in the town, in the minds of those who believed that Catholicism might return, was tenuous.


45 "Le prédicant a donné lecture des ordonnance faïtes sur la Réformation par Nos Très Redoutés Seigneurs, le banderet e les gouverneurs ont manifesté leur opposition." Campiche, "La fin du culte catholique," 318.
Nevertheless, the next day the mayor assembled the governors to transport items of the church to Lausanne. Likewise, the council had approved the idea of the new pastor, Matthieu Delacroix, to petition the commissioners of Bern to allow Lutry to create a special fund to support the poor and found a school. Some of the councilmen even accompanied the pastor to Lausanne. Again, in February 1537, the pastor offered to assist the council in its request to disperse funds from the chapel of St. Pierre and the chapel of the Trinity to support the poor and the local hospital. This is a clear indication of the council’s support for some new ideas that were directly related to the implementation of the Reformation but which did not require the elimination of the Catholic faith. Creating a fund to support the less fortunate and educate children did not threaten the religious traditions and the fabric of the town. Indeed such steps could have been viewed as needed improvements to the economic infrastructure of the commune.

Likewise, the day after the pastor’s reading of the Reformation ordinances met some protest, the members of the council gathered to deliver more church goods to Bern. One member of the community, François Destra, provided a horse for the journey.46 The fact

46 It is interesting to note that the men returned to Lutry a few days later still in possession of the church vestments. The commissioners had returned them to the parish with the agreement that Mayor would also receive the chalice marked with his family’s coat of arms. This seems to indicate that he had not only made his request to the local council but also to the commissioners themselves. According to the council records the chalice had already been returned to Mayor. Other members of the city, including Nicod Mestraux and Jean Mermet, received a chalice and a chasuble respectively. Ibid., 321-322.
that these funds were to come from former ecclesiastical wealth may have been seen by the people as a needed step towards reforming a bloated and over-financed Catholic Church. At the same time, their request to keep the funds from the local religious establishments at their disposal was a step towards keeping control over church wealth rather than turning it over to Bern. From this perspective, their cooperation with the pastor can be viewed as resistance to Bern appearing as cooperation.

Ethan R. Shagan’s observations about the spoliation of the Abbey at Hailes during the Reformation in England apply as well to the sale of church property in Lutry. He notes that both Catholics and Protestant engaged in the looting of the Abbey’s property and possessions, although he notes that the vast majority were not motivated by “any clear ideological objective . . . .” These folks partook in what he calls an “unprecedented act of sacrilege without any obvious motive other than a desire for material profit.” Shagan’s interpretation, as he notes, undermines the conclusions of historians like Eamon Duffy who could not imagine the population engaging in this type of behavior, as well as those of A. G. Dickens who believed that the gradual diminution of apparent Catholic practice meant that the Reformation was succeeding.

Similarly, in Lutry, the council agreed to the sale of church items not necessarily for religious reasons. It did not signal their conversion. Further reinforcing the notion

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48 Ibid.
that their cooperation with the pastor cannot be viewed as support for either the Bernese or their Reformation, is the fact that the council took different measures with various types of church wealth. Although it followed orders and cleansed the churches in advance of the arrival of the commissioners, some church wealth was hidden away in strong boxes and kept in the cellars of the Confraternity of the Holy Spirit, including the church vestments. Even more revealing is the fact that the cleansing was only partial; some altars and crosses remained. In March 1537, the council decided that if Bern’s bailiff complained about these remaining Catholic artifacts, the men would tell him that they would be removed forthwith and that the wood from the cross would be placed in a hall. The implication in this conditional phrase is that if the bailiff did not notice the cross and altars, the council was not going to bring the items to his attention nor remove them. The council’s behavior was complex and multifaceted. What are we to make of their occasional cooperation and similarly occasional resistance to conversion and the destruction of their faith? One answer that explains their actions lies in the fact that they were strategic in their dealings with Bern. When it was necessary to openly comply, as

49 "On a mis dans un archeban à deux compartiments, lequel appartient à l'église et se trouve dans le cellier de la Confrérie; -- d'une part, les vêtements sacerdotaux et ornements sacrés appartenant à la Ville, -- et de l'autre, ceux qui lui avaient été confiés à titre de dépôt par les religieux, et que les commissaires ont abandonné à la paroisse, y compris le calice destiné à la célébration de la Sainte Cène. Puis le dit coffre a été fermé à clef." Ibid., 322.
when the commissioners were a few days from entering the city, they made a partial
sweeping of Catholic artifacts from the church. When the eyes and ears of Bern were not
apparent, they voiced their opposition to the mandates to the local pastor and in front of
their peers.

Behind the confines of the walls of their own city, they cooperated with the
former town priest, who was still uncertain how long he would remain in Lutry. The
council did not order him to leave immediately but permitted him to remain. Similarly, it
did not order the helper of the local monks to leave regardless of the fact that he had not
set aside the cowl after six of his fellows had done so. Indeed, he was certain enough of
his support on the town council to inform it that he would remain if it would “tolerate”
him. The records are silent about his fate; however, the council did not order him to
leave during that sitting. Finally, the council clearly distinguished between sacred objects
of veneration, which it protected in the cellars of the confraternity and in strong boxes,
and money, which could support civic needs.

Twenty years after the Reformation, when the conversion in the Pays de Vaud
was certain and the generation that had lived through the events had passed, the council
authorized the sale of the items that were still kept hidden in the grotto. By this point, the
possibility that Catholicism would return had evaporated. More importantly, by 1559,
twenty-three years after the promulgation of the first Reformation edicts, most in Lutry
were probably committed to the reformed faith. Indeed, based on one measure of religious sentiment, the sacred value of the religious artifacts of the Catholic Church, the conversion of the Pays de Vaud was secure. The council declared “We have many capes, clothes, and other linens which are in the town’s cellar, which are wasting away and do not provide anything for the town . . . it would be much better to sell these items and give the proceeds to the town.” The council decided to sell the items for the highest amount possible and give the proceeds to the hospital for the poor.  

Further evidence that the conversion of Lutry was complete were the new religious uses that some ornaments found. A silver cross and chalice that had once resided in the Catholic Church were transformed into cups for the reformed Holy Communion in 1559. The items retained their spiritual use, but through the process of melting and taking new shape their Catholic significance was removed. It would be interesting to know how people who had revered these Catholic icons reacted once the crosses and chalices were transformed into cups for the Holy Communion. In the case of Lutry, twenty-three years after the Reformation, it is unlikely that many in the town would have remembered the items for what they once were. Ten years later, another

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50 “. . . mantifz, serviete et aultres linges qui sont en la crotte de la ville, lesquelz se gastent et que ne servent de rien à la ville, demandant advis, comme l'on en veult faire, et que vouldroit beaucoups mieulx les vendre pour mettre à quelque aultre proffit de la ville. Surquoy a esté conclu que tout le linge qu'est en la crotte se doibge vendre au poille du Conseil, et au plus auffrant, et que l'argent qu l'on pourrat restirer desdicts linges se doibge mettre au profit des pouvrez dudict hospital.” Ibid., 331.
silver cross was stripped of its precious metal, which was taken to Geneva. There the silver was melted into cups and goblets, bullion, and a seal of the town. The town used the money to purchase a scale for measuring bread and bullion to reimburse Jehan des Portes, a lieutenant in Lutry, who had taken the items to Geneva and who also made a trip on behalf of the village to Bern.

The Continuation of Catholic Practices by Individual Common Men and Women

The authorities appointed by Bern punished those who violated the new religious and moral program. Using the mandates as their rulebook, they cited men and women for continuing Catholic rituals, attending the Mass, participating in Catholic festivities in neighboring villages, overindulging in food and drink, playing cards, and dancing. The authorities meted out punishments for both moral and religious misbehavior. Regardless of whether we rank attending Mass as a primarily religious expression and dancing as something less than religious and therefore less threatening spiritually, the Bernese often gathered religious and moral infractions together under the “Reformation Bussen” or “Les Bamps de Reformation” headings. I believe that to create too great a gulf between moral and religious behavior would be to impose a dichotomy that neither the Bernese nor the Vaudois perceived.
The authorities that Bern had appointed maintained account books for each of Vaud’s districts. The accounts record everything from the amount of grain received and owed to the regional government, to the amount of income received in particular parishes, to the amount paid for a new pair of children’s shoes. Along with these day-to-day items, the accountants also recorded how much money was paid to those whom the government employed to smash the idols and melt down the organ in Lausanne. Likewise, they kept account of the penalties paid by those who had been accused of breaking the Reformation mandates. These records are sporadic. In some years no Reformation violations appear, while in other years the pages are filled with offenses, fines, and punishments. The information and detail of the Reformation Fines entries are just as fragmentary. Sometimes we learn very little about the offender or his or her misdeed. In other cases, the entries supply rich descriptions.

Simply put, the account books are only traces of historical evidence with which to judge the reaction of common men and women to the Reformation during its early years in the Pays de Vaud. Moreover, by their very nature the accounts are skewed: they present exclusively the perspective of the Bernese and that city’s appointees. The account books are unreliable gauges of the prevalence of disobedience: since we have incomplete population statistics, we have no way of knowing what percentage of the population resisted or went astray. The only people mentioned in the accounts are those
who were finally apprehended and punished. The path from misbehavior to apprehension to penalty and later to mention in the account books is circuitous, and many people probably dropped out at one stage or another along the way and never appear in the final draft. Moreover, we cannot know how many people were able to escape detection and continue to worship or behave in forbidden ways. The books are also incomplete: modern archives are missing entire years, and sometimes the contemporary accountants did not include Reformation fines every year. We cannot assume however that there were no Reformation violations committed during the years when the books are silent, only that none were recorded. The inconsistencies and lacunae notwithstanding, these are the only sources available to decipher the mood of the people at the moment when the Bernese mandated Reform.

Finally, only one other historian has used the account books as evidence of religious sentiment and behavior. Raymond Berguerand first explored the accounts for his 1965 bachelor’s thesis at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland. Berguerand wrote forty-one years ago. At the time, the University of Fribourg was a staunchly Catholic university; indeed, it was the only Catholic university in Switzerland. Thus, it is not surprising that Berguerand interprets the behavior of the Vaudois as a manifestation of sincere and pious Catholicity.

51 Berguerand, "L’introduction de la Réforme".
I agree with Berguerand’s conclusions that the Catholic faith maintained its hold on the Vaudois imagination and heart long after the conquest. Nevertheless, by today’s standards, Berguerand paints a one-dimensional picture. He does not explore reasons outside of religion that may have motivated the Vaudois to continue their Catholicism. Further, he accepts without question the orthodoxy of the simple folk’s beliefs and finds that traveling to Mass or partaking in feast days were signs of their continuing and full allegiance to the Roman Church. Finally, he does not explore the meaning of the many moral violations that the Bernese recorded. Undoubtedly these descriptions may not have fit well with the image he molds of an upright, Catholic population suppressed by the Bernese. Even when some morals violations occurred in the course of other Catholic rituals, Berguerand ignores them. Thus Berguerand, as the first to explore these rich sources, deserves full credit for bringing them out of the darkness of the archives into the light of day. His documentation and partial transcription of the account books have saved me innumerable hours of translating and deciphering sixteenth-century handwriting, although in several instance I have corrected his transcriptions based on the originals.

At the beginning of this period, the policing of religious behavior rested in the hands of the regional authorities. Later, beginning in mid-century, consistories were established throughout the territory to monitor religious and moral behavior and to mete out punishments. Unfortunately for historians, none of the consistory records for the
territory’s parishes before the 1570’s are extant. The earliest begin in the late 1570’s, from Payerne.

**Crossing the Confessional Boundaries: Attending the Mass at Home and Abroad**

The most prominent and ubiquitous Catholic ritual in Vaud before the invasion was the Mass. The sacrament was the centerpiece of Roman Catholic worship. The bread and wine as the flesh and blood of Christ not only conferred grace to those who partook but were popular objects of adoration and veneration. Clergy and laity paraded the host through villages and towns at the annual feasts of Corpus Christi. Some came to church simply to watch the elevation of the Host and its transformation into the body of the Savior.

In Lausanne, the Mass was celebrated multiple times each day in the imposing city cathedral. Although the cathedral was far removed from the mostly rural territory of Vaud, some farmers and common men and women visited the town for markets and fairs. Lausanne was the local hub of commerce and exchange. Here, Roman Catholicism in all of its splendor and overwhelming grandeur was on display to impress upon the laity the power of the divine and its earthly representatives, the clergy. Likewise, on a smaller and less impressive scale in the rural churches, the clergy reenacted Christ’s sacrifice and transformed the bread and wine into his flesh and blood.
For the Reformers, whether from Wittenberg or Bern, the Mass was an idolatrous, superstitious ritual that should be abolished as a part of any program of church reform and cleansing. The new religious mandates made clear:

... the small and large councils, called the two-hundred of Bern, make known to all of our cherished and loyal subjects both here and abroad, that by our mandate, which our bailiffs have published, you are well enough informed of the reasons, that we have abolished all papal ceremonies and traditions of men.52

Regardless of Bern’s religious mandates, the Vaudois continued to go to Mass. They attended secretly in their own and neighbors’ homes. They crossed the confessional boundary into Catholic Fribourg, Valais, and France, where the Mass continued unabated. They attended the ceremony while celebrating Catholic feast days, weddings, or while on pilgrimage. Men and women, both simple and upperclass, sought the spiritual comforts of the sacrament and the social experience of participating in the familiar ritual with fellow religionists.53 Unfortunately, the account books never state unequivocally what motivated men and women to seek out the Eucharist after 1536. Nevertheless, historians can speculate that they went to quench their spiritual thirst, to continue familiar religious rituals, to reaffirm their identity as believers in the spiritual and miraculous power of the Eucharist, to meet family and kin on the opposite side of creedal border, and to resist the religious changes that Bern had forced upon them.

52 Grenus, Documents 203.

Immediately after the conclusion of the disputation at Lausanne, many Catholic clergy either left the territory or Vaud or officially adopted the Reformation. Others, however, remained secretly and continued to carry out their spiritual office. Some remained specifically to perform the ritual of the Eucharist. Johan de la Cuaz continued to sing the Mass in 1537 in the district of Lausanne. He was fined for his behavior. A cleric from the village of Trelex, Löys Brasier, furtively conducted the rite in the district of Nyon. He skirted the regulations and avoided detection while providing spiritual sustenance for six years to local residents. Eventually, in 1544, the authorities cited and stopped him. In that year, the local agent collected 58 florins from 18 offenders who had attended his services.

The officials state that Braiser had been saying the Mass in the homes of the Catholic faithful for a long time. The duration of his clandestine services indicates that he was receiving tacit if not outright support from the local population. The people were either unwilling or not interested enough to tell the religious or secular authorities, who would have put an earlier stop to Braiser’s disobedience. At the same time, others were

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54 Lyon, "Le sort du clerge vaudois".
55 ACV, Bp 32, Lausanne: 1537.
clearly pleased that Braiser provided local access to the sacrament even after doing so was officially forbidden.

Most Vaudois villages were near to Catholic territory and parishes. It would not have been difficult for local residents, who knew the terrain and had friends and family on both sides of the border, to slip into nearby Catholic villages for religious ceremonies. Most of the entries do not state exactly where the violation took place. It is uncertain whether the faithful secretly attended a ceremony in their home village or whether they ventured into nearby Catholic towns. Nevertheless, when a location is listed, the culprits usually had traveled to Catholic Fribourg or Valais to partake of the Mass. Without local Catholic clergy to actively attend to the spiritual needs of their flocks, most of those who did suffer punishment probably received the Eucharist outside of Vaud.

Towns like Attalens that were located directly on the confessional border were popular destinations for those in search of the Mass. From the years directly after the conquest until the later decades of the sixteenth century, many Vaudois received the Eucharist in Attalens and other border towns in Fribourg, Valais, and France. Attalens, located near the Lake of Geneva and once a part of the duke of Savoy’s territory continually received worshippers as well as festivity seekers. In 1571, nearly forty years after the Bernese had imposed the Reformation and banned the Mass, 36 men and women
from Lausanne sneaked into Attalens on Christmas Eve to attend the sacrament. Each was fined ten florins.  

Such large groups catch the historian’s attention and cause him or her to ask questions that cannot be answered by the sources. Were such groups organized? Did they originate in the same village or did they attract other nonconformists as they made their way to Attalens? Did they receive an invitation to attend from friends or relatives who lived in Attalens? Were the 36 related to one another in any way? The ritual of the Eucharist became a means of defying the new authorities who commanded their villages. Yet, it also provided an opportunity for those who now lived in Protestant territory to renew ties and strengthen the bonds of a religious community that was now separated and divided by a confessional boundary that had been erected by outsiders. Not only did attendance at the Mass create a regional and religious identity that spanned the border, but also it served to strengthen reconfirm the Catholic and non-Bernese identity of the attendees. Together they risked punishment to celebrate Christmas Eve as Catholics.

Going to the Mass solidified the bonds among individuals.  

Not surprisingly, many of those charged with violating the religious mandates were from the same family. Caspar Olivey, his brother, their wives, and two sisters all

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57 ACV, Bp 32, Lausanne: 1571-72

went to the Catholic village of Morlens to attend the Christmas Mass in 1562.\textsuperscript{59} Antoûne Cumb and his wife attended the Mass in 1568.\textsuperscript{60} Crossing into Catholic territory for the Mass was a family event.

Regardless of the differences that rent the Swiss Confederation in the sixteenth century, Catholic and Reformed regions maintained economic ties. Merchants from Vaud did business in Catholic territory. One shopkeeper used his visit to a fair in Catholic territory to attend the Mass. He may have been tempted to participate in the religious ceremony, or he may have decided that it was a smart business move to identify himself as a member of the same religious community. Regardless of his motivations, he received a fine from the authorities back in Vaud.\textsuperscript{61}

Scholars speculate that the power of the ritual to create social cohesion and strengthen belief increases proportionally to the amount of effort involved in carrying out the rite.\textsuperscript{62} Thus the more difficult the ritual, the more impact it will have on the participants. For the Vaudois the Mass went from a common, everyday occurrence to one that was rare and risky to attend. Regardless, it continued to be celebrated by many

\textsuperscript{59} ACV, Bp 34, Moudon: 1561-1562.

\textsuperscript{60} ACV, Bp 29, Chillion-Vevey: 1567-1568.

\textsuperscript{61} ACV. Bp 29, Chillon-Vevey: 1550-1551.

long after the official banning of the Mass in 1536. Perhaps this explanation reveals one reason why some continued to venture into Catholic parishes regardless of the potential punishments. It was not only a chance to express the faith of their ancestors, to defy the Bernese authorities, but to solidify and maintain their local identity as members of a particular geographic region with similar spiritual practices.

**Baptism**

Attending the Mass is the most common violation of the Reformation mandates cited in the account books. Receiving the Catholic sacrament of baptism is the next most common offense. Regardless of the directives of the Bernese religious and secular authorities, Vaudois parents continued to baptize their children according to familiar customs. They crossed the confessional frontier and brought their infants to Catholic parishes in Fribourg and other locations in “la papisterie.” Although the records are silent, fear motivated many parents who believed that without the sacrament the salvation of their child was at stake.

The Catholic sacrament of baptism that had been practiced for generations in Vaud removed the original sin into which the child had been born. Indeed baptism was necessary to ensure that the child, who was tainted, would enter heaven if he or she died. Given the uncertainty and danger surrounding early modern birth, midwives, as in other
parts of Europe, could administer the sacrament of baptism should the child’s life be in danger. The fact that this exception was made to allow for a member of the laity, and a woman no less, to step in and perform the baptism underscores the necessity of the sacrament and its importance in the minds of early-modern Europeans.

After the conquest, the Vaudois were forced to adopt the sacramental practices of Bern, which forbade midwives to baptize infants even if they were near death.\textsuperscript{63} Emergency baptisms, or baptisms \textit{in extremis}, were no longer necessary since Reformed theology had done away with the Catholic doctrine of limbo. According to the Acts of the Synod of Bern, children who died unbaptized would not suffer for eternity. Thus, emergency baptisms were nothing more than a cleansing of the exterior of the child, and baptisms performed by midwives were no longer sacraments.\textsuperscript{64} Instead, baptism signaled the entry of the child into the Christian community and was to take place in the church with the congregation as witnesses. The articles state,

Also baptism should not be administered unless the congregation is present, because otherwise it is not a sacrament of the Church but a simple washing of the infant. When a superstitious midwife baptizes a newborn at home, in the case of necessity, as they did under the Papal Church, whoever was there participated. This was not a baptism because she did not have any authority from the Church of God [to perform the rite]. Moreover, it was conducted under the false belief that if a child did not receive exterior baptism it would be lost for eternity . . . .”\textsuperscript{65}

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\textsuperscript{63} Vuilleumier, \textit{Histoire de l’église réformée}, 340.
\textsuperscript{64} Ibid.
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\textsuperscript{65} “Aussi le baptême ne doit-il pas être administré sans que l’Église soit présente, car si l’Église n’est pas présente, le baptême n’est pas un sacrement de l’Église, mais une
\end{flushleft}
The reformed sacrament took on new meaning, as Susan Karant-Nunn has described in her study of ritual in early-modern Germany, “The words of the [reformed] service embodied this intended emphasis upon the Christian collectivity . . . . Baptism joined the individual to the group of his neighbors . . . .”

According to Reformed teaching, baptism was no longer necessary to ensure that a child was received into heaven should he or she die before receiving the sacrament. The Reformers had repudiated the Catholic doctrine of limbo; the sacrifice of Christ was solely responsible for salvation. Undoubtedly this did not allay the parents’ fears, especially those who were either unaware of or unconvinced by the new doctrine of baptism. Based on the records of the account books, some were willing to risk monetary fines and punishment to seek out a Catholic baptism for their children.

On the one hand, true religious conviction and fear may have motivated some parents while confessional ambiguity and ignorance may also have propelled others across the border for the sacrament. For instance, a couple from the district of Lausanne baptized their children twice. According to the records, they brought the child first to be simple ablution de l’enfant. Quand une sage-femme superstitieuse baptise le nouveau-né à la maison, en cas de nécessité, comme on le leur a appris dans le papisme, y assiste qui voudra, ce n’est pas là un baptême, car elle n’a reçu aucun ordre de l’Église de Dieu. De plus, il s’y mêle la fausse croyance que, si l’enfant n’est pas baptisé extérieurement, il doit être perdu pour l’éternité. . . .” Le synode de Berne, *Ordonnance sur la conduite*, 89.

baptized according to Catholic tradition and later according to the “Gospel.” The parents were fined ten florins, but their case raises interesting questions. Were they so concerned about the spiritual safety of their children that they decided to hedge their bets and baptize them in the competing traditions? Did they rebaptise their children only to hide their original misdeed from the authorities in the hope that they would simply go unnoticed?

Parents presented their children to priests in Catholic villages both as couples and as single parents. Both men and women went alone to baptize their children. Interestingly, however, and in contrast to other offenses where women dominate, seventy-five percent of the individuals charged with acquiring a Catholic baptism for their children were men. This undoubtedly reflects the fact that women were confined after the birth. Men also received higher fines than women who committed the same offense. The prevalence of fathers as the ones who had their children baptized according to the old rites is even more interesting given the fact that at least in Reformed Geneva, Calvin worked tirelessly to break the old customs that allowed fathers to stay away from the baptism.

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67 ACV, Bp 31, Lausanne: 1537.

68 Karant-Nunn, *The Reformation of Ritual*, 82-84.

Baptism outside of Vaud and away from the scrutiny of local consistories and pastors enabled some to keep other sins secret. Consistories were always ready to deal with adulterers. It was hard to conceal the offspring of those relationships from the religious authorities especially if they arrived to be baptized. Parents of illegitimate children baptized their children in Catholic parishes. Peterman de la Fontaine from Lausanne allowed his illegitimate child to be baptized in a Catholic parish in 1556. He paid ten florins as a penalty. Twenty-three years later Daniel Vallon from Yverdon paid the same fine for allowing his child to receive the Catholic sacrament. Baptism in Catholic territory, outside of one’s home parish and across a confessional boundary enabled one to hide other sins such as adultery.

Although the theology upon which baptism was based had changed, the Vaudois population may not have grasped the differences, or even accepted the new teaching. For generations baptism had been necessary to both enter the community of believers and remove the taint of original sin. Nearly overnight, however, the reformers ordered that

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70 Karen Spierling has noted the same phenomenon in Reformed Geneva. A number of parents of illegitimate children baptized their child in Catholic territory to avoid alerting the Genevan Consistory of the adultery. Ibid.: 113.

71 ACV, Bp 32, Lausanne: 1556.

72 ACV, Bp 42, Yverdon: 1579-1580.
baptisms would take place in the church, in front of the congregation, and they forbade midwives to perform the ritual.

**Festive Holidays and the Liturgical/Agrarian Calendar**

Sixteenth-century Vaud was a rural, agricultural region. The liturgical/agrarian calendar dominated the lives of the population, and not just the farmers. All marked time according to the tempo set by the Roman Catholic liturgy and by nature. Religious holy days and feasts marked the important stages in Christ’s life: his birth, circumcision, baptism, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. The calendar also kept track of the parade of saints’ days that occurred throughout the year. The most important holy days correlated with the vital stages of the agrarian calendar: sowing, tending, harvesting, and storage. The syncretistic work of the early church to attach new, Christian meaning to ancient pagan holidays that were celebrations of nature-based cycles continued to shape the experience of Europeans. Eamon Duffy writes, “It is not difficult to understand the importance of the liturgical calendar for late medieval people. There was, in the first place, no alternative, secular reckoning of time. . . . The seasonal observance of the liturgical calendar affected everyone.”

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Even for those not tilling the fields, the traditional calendar shaped their view of
time and was a deeply embedded aspect of the popular mentality. The account books for
instance, even after the Reformation, continued to mark their opening and closing of
accounts according to the traditional religious calendar. Mandates from Bern, by
contrast, are almost always dated according to the modern system. This is not surprising
since it is well known that the reformers of Switzerland turned away from the traditional
Catholic calendar and considered it emblematic of an idolatrous system.\textsuperscript{74}

However, such seemingly simple alterations as the way dates were recorded in the
account books provide clues to the larger changes that were afoot during the Reformation
in Switzerland. According to Gerald Moran, the dating of official documents provides
evidence about the mentalities and conceptions of time of the notaries and authorities
who wrote them and the audience that received them.\textsuperscript{75} In his study of documents from
Montpellier, he concludes that historians can interpret the increasing use of the modern
dating system as an indication of the Church’s retreat both as a religious and an economic
power.\textsuperscript{76}

\textsuperscript{74} Lutherans turned away from the Catholic calendar more gradually.

\textsuperscript{75} Gerald T. Moran, "Conceptions of Time in Early Modern France: An Approach to the

\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., 18.
On the flip-side, one could also argue that if the notaries and accounts continued to employ the traditional system, the Church or at least its familiar dating system and all that it represented did not lose its grip on the popular imagination. The evidence from Vaud then demonstrates that even for the urban and educated populace who kept records, and the officials for which they were intended, the traditional system influenced how they viewed time. The illiterate majority of the population demonstrated the continuing importance of the traditional system by continuing to attend the many, albeit forbidden, feast days and holy celebrations that their Catholic neighbors celebrated.

The Christmas Eve 1536 church ordinance reduced the number of religious holidays in Vaud. The reformed religious officials trimmed the plethora of Catholic celebrations, feasts, and times for celebration and veneration to four holy days: Christmas/The Birth of Christ, December 25th; the Circumcision of Christ, January 1; the Annunciation, March 25th; and Ascension Day a movable feast forty days after Easter. Sundays were days of rest and worship. Easter and Pentecost were also holy days in Vaud after 1536, but they already fell on Sundays. The Reformation mandates reflected the reformers’ desire to refocus worship solely on Christ and events that were founded in the Scriptures.

Grenus, *Documents* 205. Until 1539 when it was changed to December 25th reflecting the custom of Bern, March 25th was the first day of the New Year in Vaud. After 1544, all the possessions of Bern began the New Year on January 1.
Regardless of the edicts outlawing traditional feasts in Vaud, the people continued to celebrate them. They crossed the confessional borders that separated Catholic from Reformed territory. In January 1538, 29 men and women stole into Catholic parishes to celebrate the Feast of the Three Kings. 78 They came from the Vaudois district of Chillon-Vevey, which is near Fribourg. They celebrated and danced. They beat drums and played flutes. The also participated in the Mass.

The holiday they celebrated, Three Kings’ Day or Epiphany, was the most popular feast day for the Vaudois after 1536. Epiphany is celebrated on January 6 and was originally the day when Christ’s birth was commemorated. Epiphany remained as the last of the twelve days of Christmas, and by the twelfth century it had become the fete for the arrival of the Three Kings of the East, who visited the baby Jesus and family in Bethlehem. For peasants and farmers the date was one of the most important feasts of the year. According to Hans Bächtold-Staubli, “One can truly say that Epiphany is the oldest feast of the Christian Church for the peasantry. It was even more important than January 1.” 79

78 ACV, Bp 29, Chillon-Vevey: 1538.

The popularity of Three Kings’ Day for peasants and simple folk in Vaud may have stemmed from the miracles and supernatural events that were thought to occur on feast and the eve before. Everything from animals that could speak to the appearance of the Trinity in the night sky could be encountered. It was a good time to divine what would happen with crops in the upcoming year and for blessing water, chalk, and salt that could be used to heal sick livestock or people. Just as important as the religious and metaphysical reasons for marking January 6, it was also a time for social gatherings, hearty eating, celebrating, dancing, and drinking.

_Herrgottstag_ or Corpus Christi appears frequently in the account books. Men and women across Vaud sneaked into Catholic Fribourg to celebrate this important holiday that not only had religious meaning but integrated religion with the agrarian cycles. The holiday, which dates from the High Middle Ages, not only demonstrated devotion to the Host, the spiritually powerful body of Christ, but was also the occasion for blessing, sanctifying, and protecting the elements of the agricultural economy. The processions made their way through the fields, where in some cases four altars were constructed for the reading of the opening lines of the four Gospels. Also plants and flowers were blessed which were afterwards thought to have medicinal properties for humans and farm animals. It was also a day to divine and predict the weather as it related to the rest of the year.

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agricultural cycle.\textsuperscript{81} The Vaudois who went to Fribourg parishes undoubtedly joined in the processions.

\textbf{Kirchweih, Kilby and Benichon}

Along with official feast days, the Vaudois celebrated with their Fribourgeois neighbors at the many local festivals dedicated to each parish’s patron saint. More than Three Kings’ Day and Corpus Christi, \textit{Kirchweih} or \textit{Benichon} were the most popular festivity. Alternately called \textit{kilby} and \textit{kirchweih} in German and \textit{benichon} in French, everything about this celebration made the Bernese authorities uneasy. Religiously, it smacked of idolatry. It was a time for honoring and venerating the local saints who were important to the local parish. Thus processions of relics and Masses said in their memory were frequent. The 1536 Church ordinance stated that all papal ceremonies were banned. “We have also ordered that you stop attending the Mass and other papal ceremonies . . .”\textsuperscript{82} This prohibition included the local celebrations for patron saints.

But \textit{benichon} was not just a holy day—not just a time for worship and veneration. Feast days had multiple meanings.\textsuperscript{83} For the rural population of Vaud, the local


\textsuperscript{82} Grenus, \textit{Documen[t]s} 205.

celebrations were opportunities to indulge in food and drink, to dance, and to renew contact with their friends, neighbors, and family in Catholic. Peter Breugel the Elder in his work the *The Dance* captures the essence of the *Kermess* (another German variant of *benichon*) among the peasants in Brabant.\(^4\) The people’s revelry and fun is clear, and the artist provides a visual description of what may have occurred at similar celebrations in Switzerland.

Particularly frightening to the Bernese, who first strove to mold an obedient and docile population, was that these the festivities stretched over several days. Sometimes an entire week was set aside for *benichon*. Furthermore, they were easy for the Vaudois population to attend. There was no shortage of Catholic parishes close to Vaud where a benichon could be in progress. It is not surprising, then, that the account books are full of entries for those who had attended church festivals. Nearly eighty percent of the penalties handed out by the authorities for having attended Catholic festivities concerned *benichon* or *kilby* celebrations. Interestingly, although perhaps insignificantly, most of the violators originated from two districts: Chillon-Vevey and Lausanne, both of which shared extensive borders with Catholic Fribourg.

Most often large number of people from the same districts and villages were cited for attending benichon. It is impossible to know whether these individuals and couples

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\(^4\) Peter Bruegel, *The Dance*, 1568, Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna.
went to the same celebration at the same time, or if those mentioned attended different celebrations. Although the records are not clear, it would be useful and interesting to know if large groups of people traveled together, across confessional borders, to attend the same party. For instance, in the year 1555, eight individuals from the local area of Saint Saphorin paid 80 florins into the coffers of Lausanne for attending church fairs. It is possible that all eight traveled together to Fribourg.

It is impossible to ascribe only an overarching interpretation of what these festivals meant to the Vaudois who continued to participate. Once the Bernese authorities banned the celebrations from Vaud, they not only forbade such religious occasions and rituals, but also bestowed new meaning on them. For the native population, what had once been a common and ubiquitous religious and social festival, part of their daily lives, was now rare. No longer was their participation simply an expression of religious belief or a chance to interact with family, friends, or fellow believers, but also an opportunity, consciously or not, to defy the Bernese authorities and their new religious mandates.

Celebrations that combined religious rituals such as the Mass or processions with dancing, abundant food and drink, the possibility of witnessing, encountering or manipulating the supernatural, along with good fun and conviviality drew hundreds of

85 ACV, Bp 32, Lausanne: 1555.
Vaudois to Catholic territory. On the one hand, this rural population may have been unaware and ignorant of the theological reasons why the Bernese forbade such events. Most undoubtedly did not understand why honoring local saints was to some in Bern idolatry. They may not have comprehended that overindulging in food and drink and dancing not only displeased God but also made them unruly and arrogant subjects in the eyes of their Swiss-German overlords.

Historians such as Ernst Walter Zeeden and Gerald Strauss point out that much of the rural population in early-modern Europe was unaware of the theological differences between the emerging confessions. On the other, they may have consciously rejected the new religious and social paradigms Bern was thrusting on them. As Susan Karant-Nunn states of common men and women in Germany, “. . . Many ordinary people rejected the elite solution. In short, they refused to internalize their superiors’ judgment that they and their lifestyle were bad. Not a few of them had to endure government-imposed penalties for their cultural self-esteem.” This was true for the scores of people whom the Bernese called to account for having celebrated traditional feast days and venerated parish saints. Generations later they continued to cross into

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Catholic territory to celebrate feast days and holidays that had not been celebrated in their own parishes for decades. Certainly by this point, after they had heard years of sermons and mandates, the common men and women in Vaud realized that there were religious and social reasons why such holy days did not take place in their own parishes. To state simply that the peasants of Vaud were somehow ignorant or unaware of the differences between the creeds and therefore continued to engage in activities that felt good, such as dancing and drinking, belittles their intelligence and perceptiveness. By the late 1560’s celebrating Three Kings’ Day or kilby and benichon was not just a chance to worship according to an older tradition or a chance to indulge in forbidden fruit; it was a political statement of defiance of a distant and foreign authority.

Pilgrimages

The Vaudois sought comfort at popular destinations that were near to their villages. One of the most often mentioned in the account books and most popular shrines of the region was located in the Haute-Jura, which is now in France. The town, named after the medieval bishop and abbot Saint Claude, is nestled in the rugged Jura Mountains and is only a few kilometers away (approximately 20 miles) from Lausanne and Geneva. Here reposes the body of the saint. Whether or not these were the actual remains of the
holy man is open to speculation since the body was found centuries after his death, but such concerns were unimportant to the pilgrims.

Saint Claude and his relics were popular. Miracles attributed to him circulated throughout the region. Visitors to his shrine sought protection for their crops, especially against hail, which was a common summertime problem in the Pays de Vaud. This is an indication that many who undertook the pilgrimage were farmers. Aside from agricultural miracles and protection, Saint Claude purportedly protected the faithful from highway robbers, performed miraculous rescues on the Lake of Geneva, and healed the sick.

Rich and poor, noble and farmer visited Saint Claude. Many of those whose stories or miracles were recorded derived from the Geneva and the Pays de Vaud. The inhabitants of Geneva and Vaud continued to attribute miracles to the local saint up to the eve of the Reformation and beyond. One tale concerned the resident of Geneva, Humbert Moniyre and his wife Jeanne. Jeanne became ill one day around four or five in the afternoon. She lost consciousness. Doctors were called, but they were unable to do anything for the dying woman. They prayed for her soul. At the same time, her son arrived home from a long journey. Upon seeing his ill mother, he kneeled down and with tears in his eyes vowed to make a pilgrimage to Saint Claude and to offer a candle there for her healing. He also pledged to fast each Wednesday and Friday until he had carried
out this vow. Behold, his mother regained her consciousness and was healed. Such stories of miraculous healings attributed to Saint Claude were common.

In another instance, a story of rescue makes direct reference to the recent change of creed that had occurred in Geneva. The opening lines read, “Know too, residents of Geneva, that Saint Claude, of the religion you have recently abjured, protected your citizens on your lake.” The miracle was a rescue from Lake Geneva. Several men, Nicod Girod, a carpenter from Thonon, and Pierre Destrue a notary from Morges, were making their way in a boat with four other passengers when a storm came up in the afternoon. It became so violent that the vessel overturned. Both Destrue and Girod cried out to heaven for divine assistance. According to the story, they were crying particularly to Saint Claude. They were able to climb out of the now capsized boat, and they floated one half-hour while praying on their knees. At that same time, the Virgin appeared in the skies, along with the saints they had called upon, most especially Saint Claude. They were rescued, but only Pierre and Nicod survived. They fulfilled the promise that they had made to go to Saint Claude, where they swore to the validity of their story.


89 “Sachez, vous aussi, habitants de Genève, que S. Claude – dont vous avez récemment abjure la religion—protégea vos concitoyens sur votre lac.” Ibid., 91.

90 Ibid., 91-92.
Although historians admit the problems inherent in using collections of miraculous stories as historical evidence, they also provide a window into the minds of Catholics and Protestants and reveal the importance of local holy men and women in particular regions. Like so many other regional shrines and holy sites across Europe, Saint Claude was not only a regional magnet for pilgrims but also a stopping point for Europeans on their way to both Rome and Compostela.\footnote{Diana Webb, \textit{Medieval European Pilgrimage c. 700-1500}, ed. Jeremy Black, European Culture and Society (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 61. Webb notes that many saints operated within a strict geographical setting} Owing to it popularity, Pope Sixtus IV (1471-1484) authorized a staff of six monks to care for the pilgrims at Saint Claude.\footnote{Paul Benoit, \textit{Histoire de l'abbaye et de la terre de Saint-Claude}, 2 vols. (Montreuil-sur-} Mer: Imprimeur la Chartreuse de Notre-Dame des Prés, 1890-92). Moreover, he bestowed an indulgence of twenty years upon those who visited the shrine and assisted at or made donations to the hospital for the poor. These moves also indicate that the popularity of the shrine and pilgrimage was growing by the end of the fifteenth century and that the papacy was encouraging that growth. This development at the end of the Middle Ages was in keeping with similar trends across Europe that demonstrate the flowering of piety that historians note was occurring at this time.\footnote{J. Stopford, "Some Approaches to the Archeology of Christian Pilgrimage," \textit{World Archaeology} 26, no. 1 (1994): 57. Stopford cites these well-known statistics. For instance, 40,000 pilgrims purportedly arrived daily in Rome in 1450; 142,000 in a single day in Aachen in 1496; 130,000 pilgrims badges were sold in Einsiedeln, Switzerland in 14 days. See also Bernd Moeller, “Religious Life in Germany on the Eve of the Reformation,” in \textit{Pre-Reformation Gemany}, ed. Gerald Strauss (London: Macmillan, 1972) 13-42.
According to the evidence of the account books, Saint Claude remained a sacred
destination even after the Reformation. The number of people cited for having gone to
Saint Claude was increasing nearly fifteen years after the introduction of the Reformation
in the middle of the 1550’s. This suggests that either the authorities cracked down on
pilgrims and therefore cited them more, or that there was an increase in the sheer number
of pilgrims. It also means that Saint Claude remained a sacred and important site in the
minds of the Vaudois. Finally it became even more important as similar sites were either
destroyed or closed in Vaud. The faithful were forced to seek the solace of the saints
outside of their native territory and the frontiers of the land.

Recent work on pilgrimages reminds us that they were not simply religious
activities. Although religion and religious sentiment played an important role, both from
the point of view of the pilgrim and those who maintained the holy site economic, social,
and religious factors were at work. For pilgrims themselves, the very act of making
the voyage involved considerations that were outside of religion itself. The length of the
journey, the difficulty in making the trip, and the threats posed by highway robbers and
nature were all factors that not only made it impossible for some to undertake, but

94 Esther Cohen, "In haec signa: Pilgrim-Badge Trade in Southern France," Journal of
Medieval History 2, no. 3 (1976): 193.
increased the effectiveness of the ritual of the pilgrim in forging a common identity among the participants.  

After miracles had occurred, some pilgrims to Saint Claude made vows that bound them to journey to Saint Claude, but social factors also motivated them to travel to the Franché-Comte. Curiosity, the prospect of indulgences, and the enjoyment and conviviality involved in traveling with other believers from a particular location all motivated the Vaudois to go to Saint Claude. Not surprisingly, then, most often multiple pilgrims from individual villages are listed in the accounts, such as the eight people from Nyon who were fined for traveling to Saint Claude in 1560-61. Although this is not absolute proof that those listed went at the same time, it seems likely that most pilgrims went in groups. Groups provided greater protections, especially since the voyage could not be made from most places in Vaud in a single day. Pilgrimages were also social events.

From the records, it appears that pilgrimages may have been opportunities for families to travel together to the sacred site. One might speculate that common prayers

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95 Marshall, "Behavior, Belonging, and Belief: A Theory of Ritual Practice," 371. In his study of religious rituals, Marshall finds that the sense of belonging and belief increase as the difficulty of performing the ritual increases. In the case of pilgrimages, the more difficult the journey the fewer the people could go and the greater the prestige of the pilgrims when they returned to their homes.

96 Webb, Medieval European Pilgrimage c. 700-1500, 78.
had been answered or, as Webb notes, that the voyage had become a family tradition.\textsuperscript{97}

This may have been the case for Jean von Brens and his in-laws. They both visited Saint Claude in the same year. Likewise, Vincent Masson’s wife and son both went to Saint Claude from Chillon-Vevey in 1550-1551.

For the reformers and pastors in Geneva, the saint and his shrine were just as troublesome. There they insisted that children could no longer be named Claude, which had been the third most popular name for boys. In some cases, fathers who wished to name their boy babies Claude, even when to do so was to name them after themselves, were called to account before the Genevan consistory.\textsuperscript{98} Clearly for the pastors in Geneva, naming a child Claude was demonstrating ongoing Catholic sympathies.

From the standpoint of the reformers and the Bernese authorities, pilgrimages were another form of idolatry and worship of the saints. They were immediately abolished by the edicts of 1536. The edict stated, “We have also ordered that all religious voyages and pilgrimages end. No one is to undertake them in this region. Violators will be punished.”\textsuperscript{99} Similarly it is not surprising that the account books describe the

\textsuperscript{97} Ibid., 79.


\textsuperscript{99} “Nous avons aussi ordonné que toutes bénitions de voyages et pèlerinages soient ôtés, et que nul soit si hardi d’aller en icheux sous piene, l'homme de dix florins, la femme de cinq florins.” Grenus, \textit{Documen[f]ts} 207.
pilgrimages as “abgoterÿ” or “idolatre.” In other cases, the authorities note as well that the pilgrims engaged in other forbidden religious activities while in Saint Claude such as partaking of the Mass or dancing. Indeed, for the Vaudois after 1536, pilgrimages took on another dimension of meaning. After this date, they also become a vehicle for expressing dissatisfaction with and resistance to the imposition of new religious beliefs.

Regardless of the efforts of the Bernese, the Vaudois continued to make their pilgrimages to Saint Claude. Decades after the first Reformation edicts, men and women still appear in the account books for having committed “idolatrous” behavior. Even after the generations that had witnessed the conquest and forced conversion had passed, Saint Claude, his relics, and the notion of pilgrimage to his shrine remained important for the Vaudois.

**Wearing the Rosary, Caring for the Dead and other Acts of Popery:**

In their efforts to reform morals, practice and belief, the Bernese ecclesiastical authorities forbade even the less noticeable Catholic practices. The Christmas Eve mandate proscribed carrying or wearing the rosary. This more private act did not involve crossing frontiers or engaging in more noticeable forms of Catholic devotion. Nevertheless, it is an infraction that occasionally appears in the account books. For instance, an old woman from the district of Chillon-Vevey was fined in 1538 for carrying
her rosary. The entry demonstrates that not only were the authorities not content to
punish the more public offenses, but also such quieter acts, and even when the elderly
committed them. It was not necessarily the threat of converting others or engendering
resistance among large groups which concerned the Bernese; they were determined to
curtail religious behavior of young and old that manifested allegiance to the old faith.

Interestingly Jeffrey Watt has determined from consistory records in Geneva that
women were more likely than men to be cited over concerns that they were continuing
“popish” practices such as wearing the rosary. He writes, “The consistory convoked 24
women but only two men for possessing a rosary. . . .” Yet contrary to Watts’ finding
in Geneva, nearly equal numbers of men and women carried rosaries in Vaud. Indeed,
based on the overall rates of indictment in Vaud, it is difficult to transfer to Vaud Watt’s
conclusion that “women remained much more closely tied than men to Roman Catholic
practices.”

Men engaged in other forbidden Catholic practices. William Ruchonet was cited
by the authorities because he continued to pray at the graves of the dead, and he advised
Johan Paschoud that he commended himself to the Virgin Mary. Watts states that since
the Virgin was a female saint it should come as no surprise that twice as many women as

100 Jeffrey R. Watt, "Women and the Consistory in Calvin's Geneva," Sixteenth Century

101 Ibid.
men were charged for venerating her in Geneva.\footnote{Ibid., 434.} However, men had long been devoted to Mary, from the time of Bernard of Clairvaux forward. Certainly the Reformers sought to rid the Pays de Vaud of all worship and veneration of saints and focus believers’ attention on the male figures of Christ and God the Father. Yet, without further evidence, it would be only speculative to claim that more women than men continued to seek solace in the Virgin Mother. Ruchonet may, in fact, not have been the exception in the Pays de Vaud. Of course, both the account books and the consistory records in Geneva are limited and as Watts notes, “skewed toward the negative.” It is important, however, to note the differences between records from nearby regions. The evidence from Vaud demonstrates that devotion to the saints or practicing the rosary was not an inherently feminine form of devotion in the sixteenth century.

Some continued to keep Catholic devotional items in their homes. Nearly 25 years after Catholicism quit the Pays de Vaud and the treasures of the church were either destroyed or returned to those who families that had donated them, five men in the district of Moudon secretly possessed forbidden idols and implements of the Mass. They each paid twenty florins to the district treasury. In the same year, the families of Pierre and Jean Landery, Pierre Rossier, Umbert Rod, and Bernhart Gry faced the authorities for possessing Catholic pictures and idols. The records are not specific: we do not know
which saints were represented or which implements of the Mass the accused still had. Behind the walls of their own homes and outside of public view, some continued to keep forbidden items that the authorities considered dangerous and unholy. The behavior of these men and their wives demonstrate that they had not internalized or accepted the new definitions of saints and their images. Whether they were kept as family treasures, objects of devotion, or both, they had escaped the attention of the ecclesiastical authorities for over a generation.

In a few cases, the account books mention that some continued to practice Catholic death rituals after 1536. They are not mentioned as often as violations concerning the Mass or baptism. The Bernese did not introduce new burial or death rituals. They simply forbade but did not replace the old Catholic rites with new procedures until much later.103 Likewise, the mandates themselves do not mention burial or death rituals or beliefs. In the Pays de Vaud as in other Catholic territories, the presence of the dead and concern for the hereafter was of primary importance. Yet the scanty documentation of popular practice in the countryside indicates that people were punished when their behavior concerning death was deemed clearly superstitious or popish or when it involved going to Mass. Thus, the Christmas Eve mandate forbade the

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ringing of churches bells when someone passed. It is unlikely in the early years, before Bern had even enough taught men to staff the parishes, that this was a top priority.

William Ruchonet prayed at the graves of the dead in 1538. Although he was punished for the prayers, he also received a penalty for admonishing another man to commend his soul to the Virgin. It is unusual that two infractions are listed. One wonders if the prayers merited punishment. Behavior that is more unusual provoked punishment as well. Johan Burtin was fined after he placed candles in the street as was done when someone died under Catholicism. Pierre Seamons and his sister took Pierre’s deceased child to Romont in Fribourg for burial. The records do not state whether this was done for religious or social reasons, but their behavior demonstrates the ongoing concern about the deceased that would become less pronounced in Reformed territory. Pierre Murisier paid eight florins because he threw earth on the dead, as opposed to holy water. Since the record specifically states that he threw earth instead of holy water it appears that authorities believed that Murisier realized that this was no longer proper. Under the Catholic ritual the body was asperged with water, and dirt was thrown onto it. Interestingly Murisier could not pay the full ten florins and spent two nights in prison in lieu of the full amount.
Reforming Morals

The Bernese authorities punished the Vaudois far more often for playing cards, dancing, drinking, and sexual debauchery than they did for religious violations. The morals legislation that comprises the December 24 mandate was important for the Bernese and their vision of reform. Good subjects and members of the body of Christ were to act in an upright, pious, and self-restrained manner. Dancing, loud singing, and drinking in the local tavern displeased God and endangered the whole community. Both improper moral and religious behavior provoked the wrath of God; bad harvests, wars, pestilence, and the threat of infidel invasion manifested his anger to all.

The account books do not disclose whether the assessors were religious or secular officials or a combination of the two. Their focus on both moral and religious behavior demonstrates that church discipline had become a mechanism of secular power and was no longer strictly concerned with religious matters and changing the hearts and minds of individuals. According to Heinz Schilling, this became typical across Europe. Indeed, Schilling writes that the “degeneration of church discipline was not rare in the early

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104 Heinz Schilling observes this dual aspect of confessionalization and states, "For Reformed confessionalization the connecting link between ecclesiastical and theological changes and political and social ones was forged through the assumption that the 'Reformation of Doctrine' should be complemented by a 'Reformation of Life.'" Schilling, "Confessionalization in the Empire," 236.

105 ACV, Ba 21/1, fol. 1.
modern period. It can be said that it constituted the rule and that the implementation of ‘pure’ church discipline was the exception . . . .”

In every case, violating the Reformation mandates was met either with monetary penalties or, on rare occasions, prison time. Schilling concludes that fines and prison sentences are “unmistakable signs” of the criminalization of sin, which is in contrast to strictly church discipline, the objective of which was “saving the sinner, and the purity of the congregation . . . .” After the conquest in the Pays de Vaud, the religious and secular authorities did not clearly distinguish between state and religious communities. According to their lights, God treated the two as inseparable. The mandates and punishments endeavored to reform church and lifestyle.

Dancing was common in Vaud. At festive religious occasions, the Vaudois danced. They danced at weddings. On New Year’s Day, Three Kings’ Day, Brandons (six weeks before Easter), and benichon, they celebrated by dancing in the round. They

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107 Ibid., 304.

108 Ibid., 300.

danced in public squares, taverns, on the street, in woods and fields, and in other public places. They also danced at home. According to Jacques Burdet, dancing was a ubiquitous means of expressing joy, pleasure, and happiness.\textsuperscript{110} Beginning with the mandate of December 1536, the Bernese proscribed dancing, although for a time they permitted three “honest” dances at weddings. Men and women were punished continually for dancing in connection with holy days and festivities in Catholic territory. Small groups and families were punished by the authorities for dancing alone.\textsuperscript{111}

Singing went along with dancing. The Bernese tried to put an end to lewd and bawdy songs.\textsuperscript{112} Some men and women entertained crowds and facilitated dancing by making music. In some cases, the Bernese held the musicians even more responsible for misbehavior than the dancers. In 1579/80, Estienne Foniallaz, for instance, paid four florins for having played the bagpipes. The ten men who danced to his music paid only two florins a piece.\textsuperscript{113}

Drunkenness is another pervasive moral lapse in the account books. Hundreds of Vaudois suffered punishment for overindulging in alcohol. The authorities issued edicts

\textsuperscript{110} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{111} ACV, Bp 32, Lausanne: 1567-1568.

\textsuperscript{112} ACV, Ba 21/1, fol. 1.

\textsuperscript{113} ACV, Bp 32, Lausanne: 1579-1580.
to their francophone parishes that warned the people against the evils of alcohol and the behavior that often accompanied drinking such as card playing and gluttony. ¹¹⁴ They also advised against spending money on frivolous wedding banquets where eating and drinking in excess would occur. ¹¹⁵ Other edicts encouraged parish and community leaders to set good examples for the common man by avoiding such immoral behavior as drunkenness, card playing, and the singing of bawdy songs. Local authorities who did not lead upright lives risked losing their positions and the confidence of Bern.¹¹⁶

Drunkenness provoked God’s wrath and contributed to idleness, poverty, and other social ills. The archival records often state that the accused had committed other sins or engaged in debauchery while under the influence of drink.

It is difficult to separate resistance to the Reformation from indifference, ambiguity, and the plethora of reasons that may have motivated some to participate in Catholic rituals and ceremonies and break the new moral mandates. We cannot know, based on the slim records of the account books, whether some were purposely resisting or simply practicing age-old traditions and beliefs. Other occasions afford glimpses of what


¹¹⁵ ACV, Ba 21/1, fols. 128-29.

¹¹⁶ ACV, Ba 21/1, fols. 99-102.
may have been true acts of resistance and displays of disapproval. In a humorous incident, an official from Lutry was called to Lausanne to explain why there was a dog in the town named Viret. Apparently, this was one means of mocking the local Reformer.\textsuperscript{117}

Others, however, were far more blatant in their resistance to the Reformation. This was the case for Pierre Piguet. In 1558, he said something offensive while the pastor was reading the mandates from the pulpit. This earned him a fine of ten florins.\textsuperscript{118} The following year Claude Girard was fined for speaking against the pastor.\textsuperscript{119} Anthoine Trolliet was bold enough to slander the pastor on Easter Day.\textsuperscript{120} In other cases, men and women spoke against the consistory that had summoned them. Although these acts give us better evidence that some tried to openly resist the introduction of the Reformation and the religious changes that Bern was implementing, they are rare.

In an act of violence, the people of Romanel killed a pastor who was on his way to Geneva.\textsuperscript{121} In retribution for this act, Bern assembled the men of the town who were

\textsuperscript{117} ACV, Bp 32, Lausanne 1536-1537.
\textsuperscript{118} ACV, Bp 34, Moudon: 1558-1559.
\textsuperscript{119} ACV, Bp 34, Moudon: 1559-1560.
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{121} Junod, ed., \textit{Pierrefleur}, 33-35.
over the age of 18 at the local castle. There they hanged a father and son. Two other suspects were able to escape and avoid punishment.

Antoine Froment, an active and well-known pastor in Pays de Vaud, was nearly killed for his faith. He was traveling home from Bern and went through Fribourg. He stopped in a hotel in that city and was recognized by a Catholic nobleman. Later that evening, the Catholic nobleman and his valet entered his room. With sword drawn the valet demanded, “Where are the evil men who say that the Mass is not good?” Another Vaudois nobleman entered and saved Froment from death.122

Some individuals like Vuillerme Guillet took matters into their own hands and protested the conversion openly.123 In 1537, Guillet entered a hotel in Avenche, a town just on the border between Catholic and Protestant territory. Apparently, Guillet had had too much to drink and began to denounce “Lutherans” publicly and violently. He stated that Lutherans and all those who followed their laws were evil. When several others entered the tavern/hotel to have a drink and rent a room, they heard Guillet and his “blaspheming.” The newcomers told him to stop and that he should kiss the ground to humble himself. He stated that if they asked him to do this, that they must be Lutherans, (a name for all Protestants) and he was not about to humble himself. In fact, he bragged

122 Vuilleumier, Histoire de l'église réformée.

123 Archives de l'Etat Fribourg (AEF), Geistliche Sachen (GS), #189.
that if he could, he would beat ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, even one hundred
Lutherans. Sensing that the man was inebriated, they put him in the nearby prison and
did not wish to take further action. Somehow Guillet escaped from prison and the next
day was throwing rocks at residents who were going to the market/fair in Fribourg.

Is this type of testimony useful for forming a better picture of relations between
opposing faiths in border regions? What value does the ranting of someone who has over
imbibed tell us truly about how people reacted to the forced conversion of their territory?
Guillet’s behavior under the influence of alcohol does give us a momentary glimpse at his
feelings about Lutherans living in his territory. Under the influence of drink, his lips
were loosened enough for him to express his fantasy of beating Lutherans. Certainly, his
intoxication caused him to state self-confidently that he would beat one hundred
“Lutherans” if given the chance. On this evening in the tavern, alcohol triumphed over
fear. Guillet was not concerned about possible punishment and belligerently rejected the
newcomers’ suggestion that he humble himself and stop his blaspheming. Guillet’s
diatribe allows as well to peer for a moment into his mental world, where the supporters
of the new faith were “Lutherans,” evil men supported by Bern. He defamed not only the
their faith but the Bernese authorities as well. For him, all who followed Bern’s rules
were evil and mean men. He does not offer a positive religious program designed to

124 “Lutheran” was a generic term used for Evangelicals.
combat the reformers. Instead, he resorts to the weapons to which he has access—verbal assaults and fantasies of beating a hundred Lutherans. In this imagined world, colored and strengthen by drink, Guillet dreamed of the day when one Catholic could subdue a host of invaders. It is in moments like these, rarely captured by the authorities, that historians are able to glimpse the hidden agendas of resistance that expressed only under extraordinary circumstances.\(^{125}\)

In the comfort of a tavern, Guillet shortly found a stage from which to make his true feelings known. Guillet probably assumed that he was safe from the surveillance of the Bernese authorities. Taverns were known sites of social protest. People gathered there to escape the sermon, they engaged in licentious and immoral behavior, and in this case, they vented their feelings against their superiors. Repeatedly Bern issued ordinances that forbade imbibing. It ordered local officials to police taverns during sermons to make sure that no one was passing the time in one when he should have been in church. Granted, Guillet’s feelings were exaggerated and his actions bold, but it was not until others had entered, who may have been reformed supporters of Bern that his actions were stopped and he was thrown in prison. Guillet miscalculated and may not have expected that some would enter who would take offense at his words. His rant is

\(^{125}\) Scott, *Domination*, 15.
evidence, however, that such feelings were probably being nurtured and fostered by others who felt the same way about the conversion. It is unlikely that he was the only one who harbored such resentments against the imposition of the new faith. Rather he was the only one who felt free to express himself in this manner.

Apparently, Guillet was so angry about the conversion that he threw rocks at those who were going to Fribourg and caused them to turn around and go home. Later he presented his case to the authorities in Fribourg where he may have told tales of being mistreated by the Bernese. The Bernese denied that they had beaten or tortured him and told Fribourg that Guillet was lying. Moreover, they wrote to Fribourg, they had treated him leniently and would have been within their authority to punish him even more than they did.

Such incidents, although rare in the public records, indicate that below the surface, even in the countryside, conflict between supporters of the Reformation and Catholics was brewing. In the safety of a tavern and under the influence of alcohol, the hidden transcripts of resistance are momentarily visible and once in a while captured for historians to decipher. If we read closely, we realize that discontent may have been far more widespread than it appears from the scanty records of resistance that survive. Within larger cities such as Grandson and Orbe or even Lutry, resistance was easier to
coordinate and express, especially when coordinated by Catholic clerics, whom Fribourg protected from Bern’s full wrath.

Conclusions

To describe the men and women listed in the archival sources as either Catholic or Reformed is to go beyond the extant evidence. To attempt a definition of the early years of the Reformation in Vaud in terms of success or failure is to discount the fact that the situation was in a state of religious flux. Indifference, ambiguity, resistance, and a genuine desire to remain Catholic were all at work in shaping behavior.

Individuals may have been unclear about what the religious and doctrinal differences meant. Part of the confusion may have stemmed from a simple lack of knowledge or understanding of the new creed and the Reformation. At first Bern lacked French-speaking pastors who could be a first line of contact in spreading the new religious expectations and rules, and who might teach the tenets of the new creed. At the close of the Disputation of Lausanne, only a handful of men were installed into parishes that were empty in Vaud. Without enough men in the pulpits, it is unlikely that many in the countryside even understood fully what the changes meant or what was expected of them.
Historians Ernst Walter Zeeden, Gerald Strauss, and others have pointed out that much of the rural population in early-modern Europe was unaware of the theological differences between the emerging confessions. Once pastors had been preaching in the parishes for several decades, early ignorance may have evolved into religious acceptance or outright rejection. As Susan Karant-Nunn states of Germany, “... Many ordinary people rejected the elite solution. In short, they refused to internalize their superiors’ judgment that they and their lifestyle were bad. Not a few of them had to endure government-imposed penalties for their cultural self-esteem.”

Many Vaudois clung to Catholic practices and beliefs long after 1536. They continued traditions that had shaped every aspect of their lives. The rituals of the church marked the stages of life. The liturgical and agricultural cycles were interconnected. Most popular and most often cited in the account books were those events that provided protection for crops, livestock, and family members. This included processions that blessed fields and feast day celebrations that included the transformation of everyday items such as water and salt into medicines for themselves and livestock.


127 Karant-Nunn, The Reformation of Ritual, 71.
The majority of the population in early-modern Vaud was peasants, farmers, and craftspeople. These simple folk were dependent on the natural forces of the weather and buffeted changes outside of their control. Among many functions, these rituals continued to offer solace and contact with the divine. In rare instances, when parishioners interrupted the pastor while he was reading the Reformation mandates, for instance, we get a clearer glimpse of what may have been true contempt for the religious changes Bern was attempting.

Bern seized Vaud and drew a confessional boundary across a territory that had been integrated on more levels than simply religion. Economic and kinship ties continued to exist, even as part of the religious and ritual glue that held those families and relationships together was being threatened. For those who wanted to maintain their Catholic faith, the option of leaving the territory existed, but that was a remote possibility for the peasant or rural people.

The introduction of the Reformation in Vaud tested Bern’s ability to implement religious change in a frontier region that differed from its own linguistically and that shared a long border with Catholic lands. Living in proximity to Catholic territory meant that reminders of the old faith were never far from view and that finding a Mass or going on a pilgrimage to St. Claude was easy for the determined. It also ensured that even fifty years after the conquest, some men and women who were living in Reformed territory
would continue to practice aspects of Catholicism and popular traditions as had been done for generations before them. Indeed, long after the generation that had witnessed the conquest had passed, Vaudois continued to attend the Mass, visit Saint Claude, dance, play cards, and identify with the Catholic community that spanned the border.
CONCLUSION

In the summertime, busloads of tourists visit the great cathedrals in Bern and Lausanne, and the ancient monastery in Payerne. They encounter the creations of the high and late Middle Ages and confront the permanent changes that the Reformation wrought. The Catholic opulence and ornate splendor of the churches are lost forever. The “cleansed” sacred spaces silently bear witness to transformations that Bern imposed on its newly-won territory, the Pays de Vaud, in the sixteenth century. It is easy to inventory the physical traces of the Reformation, but neither the tourist nor the historian will fully experience or comprehend the mental, interior negotiations, or the social, economic, and political dealings that city councilors, city dwellers, and common men and women conducted to cope with and benefit from a religious conversion imposed from without. We recover only partial glimpses of the human impact from the sporadic documentation; however, regardless of the obscured view, it is clear that men and women at all levels acted creatively and purposefully to preserve their interests.

It would be easy to assume, as some historians have, that the people’s outward compliance and even cooperation with Bern is evidence that they accepted the
Reformation and sometimes embraced it. The historians who have posited these theories point to the existence of anticlericalism and dissatisfaction with the Catholic Church before the conquest and the gradual diminishment of the vestiges of Catholicism afterward. However, it is not clear that the common folk in the rural parts of Vaud interpreted the Reformation as a solution to these problems or that anticlericalism would have sparked a Reformation from below.

Similarly, some Catholic historians have challenged this view and demonstrated convincingly that the Catholic Church and its institutions were strong and beloved by the people. They point to the great number of confraternities, religious houses, and charitable institutions that existed before 1536 to support their point. Moreover, they note that at the conquest, many villages surrendered on the condition that they could keep the traditional faith. However persuasive and accurate this description is, it does not account for the fact that very few Vaudois were motivated to openly protest the destruction of their faith and complied, even cooperated with, Bern’s religious mandates.

Previous generations of historians interpreted the population’s behavior according to their own confessional biases. Aside from the great fruits their research produced, their confessional lenses yielded a one-dimensional image of the past in which the behavior of the majority of the population is distorted and placed within a religious trajectory whose limits are defined as “Catholic” or “Evangelical.” In reality, most
people moved across a religious spectrum and their positions changed over time. Ironically, the Bernese broadened that spectrum with the introduction of Reformation and thereby provided fresh tools and rhetorical strategies that the Vaudois used to accomplish local objectives without necessarily adopting Bern’s religion wholesale.  

Throughout this dissertation, I have asked two questions: first, how did Bern convert the people who lived in Vaud? What means did the city-republic employ to bring Catholic, primarily rural people into the Reformed fold? Second, I have sought to uncover how the people who occupied the middle of the religious spectrum, between the poles of open, vociferous resistance and expressive support, react to Bern’s religious changes. Specifically how did they accommodate the spiritual changes, the loss of a faith that bound them to their ancestors and peers, and the imposition of new pastors who preached a foreign faith devoid of familiar practices?

Most Vaudois accepted Bern’s political and religious directives quietly. The majority neither converted spectacularly and suddenly to the new faith, nor resisted

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128 Ethan H. Shagan, from whom this dissertation draws much inspiration, has noted a similar phenomenon in the historiography of the English Reformation. His interpretive model has provided solutions for understanding the sometimes-paradoxical nature of the Reformation in Vaud. He states of his own study, “Rather than beginning and ending with the few sixteenth-century English people who experienced the Reformation as a coherent battle between two incommensurate worldviews, this [his] analysis concentrates on the majority who neither wholly accepted nor wholly opposed the Reformation. For these people, ideas were not always solid objects stacked like bricks in coherent ideologies, but rather were rapidly shifting modalities that could have different meanings in different contexts.” *Popular Politics*, 7.
fervently when Bern banned the Mass and dismantled the Catholic establishment. This does not mean, however, that they played no role in the conversion or that they were simply acted upon by outside forces. At the same time, their responses do not fit always fit neatly into the categories of resistance, cooperation, or acceptance, and their behavior does not always signal true conversion.

Instead, the people found ways of working with Bern to achieve or maintain important political, social, and religious aspects of their identity while at the same time avoiding punishment. Bern always stated that it did not intend or wish to convert its subjects at the point of the sword. This did not keep it from punishing those who violated its religious mandates. The threat of monetary fines and imprisonment hanged over the heads of the people like a sword that discouraged them from misbehaving.

Nonetheless, many common men and women remained loyal to their faith in a manner that did not entail publicly violating the Reformation mandates in their home villages. They plot a course around Bern’s mandates. Their understanding of their religious identity and their proximity to Catholic territory facilitated the preservation of the “faith of their fathers.” Others continued to carry their rosary beads—small physical objects that were easily concealed from authorities but which marked the bearer as belonging to the old religion. They did not defy Bern in boisterous demonstrations but
they negotiated the restrictions that the Bernese had placed upon them and found alternatives to achieve their own spiritual objectives.

Certain Reformation mandates that Bern imposed opened space for cooperation between locals and the authorities in the capital. In Lutry, for example, Bern required the destruction or sale of religious vestments and objects. Although the people in the town had protested certain religious changes to their new pastor, they also worked with Bern’s representatives to use the proceeds from the sale of religious items to fund a local hospital and school. In this instance, the Catholic residents acted in decidedly Evangelical ways. However, their willingness to sell Catholic objects does not indicate a conversion. Rather, the people managed Bern’s orders to their own benefit.

Bern imposed the Reformation but it also required some cooperation from the local people. Not surprisingly, when individuals, towns, and villages saw the opportunity to reap material benefits, they participated in acts that furthered Bern’s program. Local cooperation, though, also ensured that the Reformation would take root in Vaud. Once holy items and vestments had been sold or melted down, and the proceeds dedicated to other causes, the Reformation gained a stronger foothold. Shagan has made a similar observation about the Reformation in England. He writes that the time that Mary had
come to throne, so much had taken place that it would have been impossible to recreate what had once existed.\textsuperscript{129}

The Reformation introduced religious divisions that threatened to tear communities apart internally and disrupt important economic and social networks. Often times regional unity and peace trumped spiritually concerns. The population found ways of working around religious differences. Thus, in order to proceed down the road of confessional change in an orderly way, votations were held periodically. In other cases, communities shared parishes. Town councilors begged pastors to avoid heated rhetoric or intentional provocation. Largely these measures worked and the people adjusted themselves to living and doing business with members of opposing creeds, at least temporarily. Nonetheless these new ways of behaving became a part of residing within the confessionally mixed territories and fixed the reformed population within the Pays de Vaud.

The votations spawned “confessional politicking.” Priests and pastors lobbied locals for their votes. When assessors from Fribourg and Bern arrived to ensure that the clergymen were not bribing people, they discovered that many common folk were reluctant to vote one creed out of existence. These men had already adapted themselves

\textsuperscript{129} Shagan, \textit{Popular Politics}, 1-25.
to the idea that both creeds could co-exist within the same village and rejected the views of spiritual leaders who wished them to see the world as a battle between two faiths.

This behavior demonstrates one of the overarching themes of this dissertation. People in the sixteenth century at all levels, from peasant to the councilmen, priest to bishop were multifaceted individuals and not strictly religious creatures whose every decision was based solely on their interpretation of Scriptures or doctrine. Thus, peasants protested when their religious iconography was destroyed, but also jumped at the chance to get their hands on the proceeds from the sale of religious vestments, altar cloths, and statuary. Councilmen in Fribourg and Bern, although they were deeply religious, manipulated and employed confessional language to achieve worldly aims. The Catholic councilmen in Fribourg hid their desire for territorial gain from the duke of Savoy beneath a stated desire to preserve the faith; at the same time, when they negotiated with Bern for these lands, faith never entered the discourse. Similarly, Bern employed religious tolerance when it was convenient and useful for its military conquest, but it later reneged on its agreements.

Historians of the Reformations are used to the violence, destruction, and death that religious conflicts and battles left in their paths. One need only read of the bloodshed and despair caused by religious conflict in France and Germany to understand that the sixteenth century was also an age of violence. We are conditioned to quickly
spot similar manifestations and point to them to reveal religious opposition or resistance
in other parts of Europe. Largely the people in Vaud did not resort to such bloody and
violent means to protect their faiths, despite the efforts of preachers like William Farel to
divide communities and make the idea of living with heretics unacceptable. Of course
this should not imply that the Vaudois were some how more peaceful than their
counterparts in the rest of Europe--indeed other past events demonstrate that they were
not--but instead the paths that they chose to deal with Bern’s Reformation facilitated a
more peaceful conversion. Rather than resort to violence they occasionally cooperated
with Bernese officials. Rather than disrupt the peace of their communities they preferred
to tolerate heretics in their midst and find ways of living with them. Rather than
manifesting their discontent at home, they preferred to cross the border and practice their
faith. All of these reactions, while not evidence of conversion, are examples of how men
and women, at all levels, participated in, influenced, and negotiated the Reformation of
the Pays de Vaud.
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