

# *The Wittenberg Times*

1526-1550



All the news that's fit to print with some editorializing by Martin Luther  
Editor: Hank Bitten

## **1549 August 15 - Francis Xavier Opens Jesuit Mission in Japan**

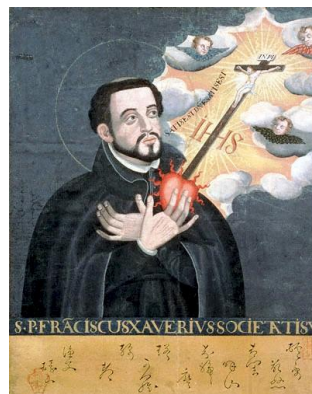
Brother Xavier has been ministering to the lepers, impoverished, and unchurched in western India and Malacca for the past seven years. Today, we have received a report that Brother Xavier has brought the Roman Catholic and Christian faith to the island of Kyushu in Japan. He landed at the port of Kagoshima, the city of one his assistants.

The ministry of Xavier, along with Father Torres, Anger (Paul), and John Fernandez has met many physical challenges and constant dangers. His faith in God is very strong. In one of his recent letters to Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Jesuits, he said, "The dangers to which I am exposed and the tasks I undertake for God are inexhaustible springs of spiritual joy, so much so that these islands are the places in all the world for a man to lose his sight by excess of weeping; but they are tears of joy. I do not remember ever to have tasted such inward delight; and these consolations take from me all sense of bodily hardships and of troubles from open enemies and not too trustworthy friends."

The local daimyo was not receptive to Xavier and threatened to punish any Japanese who became a Christian. Some of the converts declared they were ready to be exiled or killed rather than to deny Jesus Christ as their savior.

There are reports that Xavier traveled to the Japanese fortress of Ekandono, north of Hirado and near Nagasaki where many were baptized. The local prince and his wife are very interested in the new Christian teachings. Reports of Xavier's missionary work in the imperial capital of Kyoto were not encouraging. In Kyoto, Xavier changed his style to appear more as a distinguished professor and representative of Portugal's government with attendants. As a result he was provided with an empty Buddhist temple for his residence and as a place of worship.

According to the records released by Xavier to *The Wittenberg Times*, 762 persons have been baptized in Japan.



**Rev. Francis Xavier**

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## **1549 Agreement on Holy Communion in Zurich**

John Calvin made significant compromises with Heinrich Bullinger, the successor of Ulrich Zwingli who was killed in 1531. The Zurich Agreement, officially titled The Consensus Tigurinus, unite the two largest Reformed Churches in Switzerland. The document comes at a time when the Roman Catholic Church is meeting at the Council of Trent discussing the religious differences between it and the Lutherans.

The document, written by John Calvin, contains 26 articles, affirming that Jesus Christ is spiritually present in Holy Communion. The major division with the Lutherans and Roman Catholics is the rejection of the actual physical presence of Jesus Christ in the bread and wine. The Zurich Agreement refers to this as a “perverse and impious superstition” in Article 21.

***“We must guard particularly against the idea of any local presence. For while the signs are present in this world, are seen by the eyes and handled by the hands, Christ, regarded as man, must be sought nowhere else than in Heaven, and not otherwise than with the mind and eye of faith. Wherefore it is a perverse and impious superstition to inclose him under the elements of this world.”*** (Article 21)

Although there are several areas of agreement with the Lutherans on the role and necessity of faith, work of the Holy Spirit, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the seeking of Christ in heaven, and the rejection of the adoration of the sacrament, transubstantiation (bread and wine are changed into the body and blood), and consubstantiation (the Lutheran position that the bread and one coexist with the body and blood).

The new Agreement reached in Zurich explains in clear language for the common man the

### **Article 22. Explanation of the Words "This Is My Body."**

***“Those who insist that the formal words of the Supper, "This is my body; this is my blood," are to be taken in what they call the precisely literal sense, we repudiate as preposterous interpreters. For we hold it out of controversy that they are to be taken figuratively, the bread and wine receiving the name of that which they signify. Nor should it be thought a new or unwonted thing to transfer the name of things figured by metonymy to the sign, as similar modes of expression occur throughout the Scriptures, and we by so saying assert nothing but what is found in the most ancient and most approved writers of the Church.”***

Note: The Lutherans will debate the doctrines in the Zurich Agreement for the next 30 years until officially rejecting them in the publication of the Formula of Concord in 1577.