

WBNP #2

Good Evening, and welcome to the Wild Boar News Broadcast.  
I'm Matthew McMahon.

Geneva, Switzerland - city of reform, or ridicule? The year, 1538.

Geneva was primed and ready for a kind of relationship based on the history of a Swiss confederacy for the good of the political-religious state under the guidance of a reformer who could shape a theological-socio-economic influence. Many of the same reformation principles other Swiss cantons had already implemented, Geneva had already embraced under the leadership of William Farel, the city's "reformed" preacher.

But more was needed.

To bring the city to true biblical reformation, Farel cornered John Calvin while he was staying in Geneva. Calvin was on a trip back from tending to his father's funeral and affairs in France. While passing through, Farel convinced Calvin to remain and continue the work of reformation that had been started. Calvin refused the tenure, but Farel threatened him with God's displeasure if Calvin would not take the task. Calvin decided to go. Unfortunately, Calvin's first tenure there did not go well, and on April 23, 1538 he was exiled by the Magistrate (along with Farel and Courault) due to a practical difference in implementing the Lord's Supper to wayward and unruly members of the city, though the Council insisted they do so.

Think of it. John Calvin was expelled by the city Magistrate for not conforming to their desires in ecumenical unity. Calvin, Farel and Courault refused to hold hands around the campfire, singing *kumbaya* with the city's leaders. Instead, their unswerving loyalty to Jesus Christ and His Word pressed them to exclude wicked men from the Lord's Supper. It seems Calvin and his friends experienced much of what the prophets of old experienced, and what our Lord Jesus Christ experienced at the hands of wicked men. The Pharisees and Sadducees, for example, loved their kingdom more than Christ's kingdom and

crucified Him as a result. Calvin and his comrades were simply following their Lord, and the testimony is true, "If the world hates you, you know that it **hated Me** before it **hated** you." **John 15:18**

Calvin spent three years in exile (1538-1541) where he wrote a new version of the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, as well as a tract against the Roman Catholics for intruding into Geneva in his absence called "A Reply to Sadoleto".

*The Institutes of the Christian Religion* was the most widely read document of the Protestant Reformation, and is still one of, if not the most, beloved books ever to come out of the revival of the Reformation. Why? It was saturated with the Word of Christ. Calvin said that the Reformation was primarily the work of God through the Word of God. This is the heart of the ICR.

When Geneva lay exposed and vulnerable, the Roman Church descended upon it in a flurry to take it over theologically. The Genevan council, and the city to a great extent, had concerns for Calvin's return. While Calvin was gone the Magistrate could vividly see the ill repute into which the city plunged. There were political as well as spiritual problems after the expulsion of the Reformers, and the city now desired Calvin to return in order to help reform them. Calvin refused. He had no desire to return, and saw Geneva as the last place on earth that he would ever go. Though Calvin was resolved not to go, the Council was resolved to do everything in their power to have him return. They even acquired the help of Bern, Basel, Zurich and Strassburg for aid in attaining him. Farel's was also solicited, and he bombarded Calvin with letters urging him to return to the city. Farel again threatened Calvin with God's displeasure if he did not return. In 1541 Calvin returned to his duties in Geneva, continuing his preaching in the exact place where he had left off in the Gospel of Matthew when he was expelled. He labored under the presumed motto "eat little, sleep less, and study more." After some years of reformation toil, Geneva became, as John Knox said, like heaven on earth.

Today, no less than Calvin's time, and possibly even more, reformation is discarded and vanity is set in its place.

Churches all across the nation are continuing to bow down to will-worship, anti-Christian theology, and turning to unqualified spiritual leaders of every sort because religion is vogue. Reformation, however, is not.

Today, it is no less true than it was in Calvin's day: Reformation must be primarily the work of God through the Word of God. We may despise Geneva for expelling Calvin. But Geneva repented. And out of it God worked His special providence to deliver to us one of the greatest Reformed documents ever printed - Calvin's Institutes.

What bright star will come out of the modern churches' expulsion of reformation? With Geneva it was the Institutes. At this rate and this level of degradation in theological matters, one must say that the American church will give history, simply, a theological black eye. The modern church must take a lesson from Geneva. Repent, for your churches and leaders are falling headlong into ill repute and theological error to such a degree, that region has become like Bunyan's vanity fair where just a few souls make it through to the celestial city. Hosea 4:6, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children."

I'm Matthew McMahan.