

KIT KAT PAPER

When is this, this?

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This paper is not intended to be one side of a debate. This paper contains thoughts important to me. I do not intend for you to hear what I say as the truth. This is my truth at this moment and these truths assist me in my secular and spiritual journey.

Feel free to use the pads of paper before you to note some of your truths that may come to mind during this presentation. There will be no request from me to report what you note.

When is this, this, or when is it the truth? I will use the Protestant Reformation to illustrate the difficulty in knowing when this is really this. Let me give you some examples of when this is not this. When did the earth become round? For thousands of years people on earth managed their life knowing the earth was flat. When did it change from flat to round? It is too easy to say it was always round and we just woke up one morning and found it to be round. The earth was considered flat for thousands of years. Stephen Hawkins, the renowned physicist who has Lou Gehrig's disease uses this story to illustrate how some people still consider the earth flat.

A well-known scientist (some say Bertrand Russell) once gave a public lecture on astronomy. He described how the earth orbits around the sun, in turn orbits around the center of a vast collection of stars called our galaxy. At the end of the lecture, a little old lady at the back of the room got up and said: "What you have told us is rubbish. The world is really a flat plate supported on the back of a giant tortoise." The scientist gave a superior smile before replying, "What is the tortoise standing on?" "You're very clever, young man, very clever," said the old

lady. "But it's turtles all the way down." Indeed, to her she had justified that the earth was still flat.

Another more serious example of when this was something else. For years humankind worshiped many gods. In the last 2000 years Christians and for 4000 years the Jewish faith has decided there is only one God. It is interesting to me how we change truths flat to round and many gods to one god. Are we today telling the truth when we say the earth is round when 600 or so years ago we were telling the truth that it was flat. Will the earth ever be something other than round? Are there any eternal truths including than death and taxes?

Perhaps this is actually a paper about evolution. It could also be called a discussion of the impact of change. I find it very difficult, but very interesting, in discovering when this is actually this. What truths will be changed in our lifetime? Will we even know that they have changed? Will we ever think in terms of the earth and sun rotating around each other or will we continue to speak of the sun rising and setting? Will we ever speak in terms of gravity rather than weight? Will we think of us being perpendicular to an arc segment as a pin extends from a pincushion, or will we consider ourselves standing perpendicular to a flat plane?

I was taught that there is truth. I am not as sure of the truth I was taught as I used to be. I was taught that through science or math we could find the answer. I was

taught that Martin Luther started the Protestant Reformation. I was not taught that Waldo started the Protestant Reformation.

The 16th Century was filled with miraculous people. Leonardo Da Vinci 1452-1519, Michelangelo 1475-1564, Andrea Palladio, William Shakespeare 1564-1616 and Decartes 1596-1650.

I was taught that in the early 1500's there were primarily three men responsible for starting the Protestant Reformation, Martin Luther 1483-1546, Ulrich Zwingli 1484-1531 and John Calvin 1509-64. They are the recognized founders of the Protestant Movement. They were Roman Catholics. They each confronted the Roman Catholic Church. Luther of Eisleben, Germany nailed 95 treatises on the door of Wittenberg's Schlosskirche or Castle Church in 1517. Zwingli of Zurich, a forefather of the Congregationalists and a supporter of Luther's ideas taught that it was preaching that was important to the laity. Zwingli believed that the word was central to worship and the adornments and music were distracting to the preaching so he and his followers white washed the Romanesque Grassmunster Church in 1519 and trashed the organ. Calvin of Basel and Geneva was a great preacher and supporter of Zwinglianism. Calvin is the forefather of the Presbyterian Church. These men not Waldo were given credit for beginning the Protestant Reformation.

The Webster's definition of reformation is the act to reforming in this case reforming the Roman Catholic Church. Protestant is defined as a Christian

denying the universal authority of the Pope and affirming the Reformation principles of (1) justification by faith alone,(2) the priesthood of all believers, and (3) that the Bible is the only source of revealed truth. Waldo preached these principles 300 years before Luther, Zwingli and Calvin, but has not yet been given the credit for starting the Protestant Reformation.

To understand why there was a Protestant Reformation, I will give a brief chronological history of Christianity in the Western world.

The Roman Catholic Church dominated Christianity in the Western world before the Protestant Reformation.

Roman Emperor Constantine declared Christianity the state religion of the Roman Empire in 300 AD. Prior to that the Christian Church was organized under Bishops. St. Peter was the first Bishop of the Church. Constantine moved the capitol and the center of Christianity from Rome to Constantinople. With this move began the Byzantine Church. The Roman Catholic Church remained in Rome. The Roman Catholic Church developed through the next 800 years in an environment of Individual City – states and territories controlled by individuals and families. The concept of a country such as Italy, France or Germany would not exist for hundreds of years. Rome the world's greatest city lost its population and fell from 2,000,000 in the first century to 25,000 to 40,000 in the fifth century. Family controlled territories sought to increase their holdings through force. In these barbarian and brutal times many men and women of faith chose to retreat to the mountains or the desert and live apart from the warring way of life. For

example Benedict (480 – 547) formed the Benedictine monastery in the 6th century.

After Constantine moved the Church to Constantinople the Roman Catholic Church organized itself around a Pope and Bishops. The Bishops were representatives of the Catholic Church and scattered all over the barbarian governed western world. They were as far north as Wales and Scotland. These men of faith were the primary source of knowledge through this time of barbarian rulers.

During this time the Roman Catholic Church organized itself pretty much along the secular lines of families of power. Popes had wives, children, owned land, had armies. There was little separation of Church and state. There was little organization that allowed The Church to expand. However, when the Pope aligned with the Frankish King Charlemagne in 800 AD the Church was able to grow. “Two mighty swords employed the same holy cause, Church and Empire, the spirit and the state.”

Christianity is a message of hope that was useful to men of power who realized that people would fight for what you believe if you give them hope of a greater life and an eternal reward. With a message of hope and salvation Christianity grew. In the early 800's the church had spread to about the same boundaries in Europe as that of the Old Roman Empire, Vienna in the east, England to the north and northern Spain in the west.

But the barbarian life style returned through the Magyars or Hungarians, and not until 1000 AD this second wave of barbarians following the Huns become converted to Christianity.

With many individual bishops, monasteries and a lack of communication or authority from Rome, the Catholic Church was not as recognizable an authority as it is today.

In 1059 Pope Nicholas II issued a decree that Cardinals in Rome, priests of churches in Rome or Bishops of neighboring dioceses would elect future Popes. Men outside the clergy no longer elected the Pope.

Gregory VII known as Hildebrand was elected Pope in 1073. He dreamed of a reformed Europe under the Universal Guidance of the Pope. He believed that the Church should stand apart from the secular society. The Church should judge and guide human actions. The Pope should judge and punish kings. In order for the Church leadership to judge worldly or secular actions in a holy manner he required the priests to give up their wives, families, and their land holdings.

There were many such as Henry IV of the Holy Roman Empire who opposed the issue of church control of spiritual authority and the absolution of sin.

The issue of separation of church and state was resolved in 1122 with an understanding that you looked to Rome for Spiritual authority as at the same time the Bishops recognized the Emperors as feudal heads.

Pope Innocent III from 1198 to 1216 consummated Gregory VII's dream of a unified Christian world. He was a supreme arbitrator between the secular and the spiritual factions of society. As Kings struggled to repress civil rebellion, Pope Innocent III repressed the rebellion against the Church, which was called heresy.

In 1215 Innocent III called bishops and patriarchs from Constantinople, Jerusalem and throughout Europe to discuss and agree upon how to keep the clergy from worldly temptations, regularize the belief in the supernatural by controlling the superstitious traffic of relics, and establishing the sacraments as a channel of God. The acts of this Fourth Lateran Council were accepted throughout Latin Europe. Under Innocent III money began flowing to Rome. Of equal importance from a point of power, the Latin Christendom headquartered in Rome was being unified throughout Europe. The political power was still very diverse due to the unwillingness of Lords, Emperors, towns and churchmen to agree. The Catholic Church centralized its organization, and still Europe resisted a national unity. It would be hundreds of years before Europe would organize itself into countries. Everyone now had to go to church to get salvation and relief from sin. Nobody else was able to begin a different body of spiritual thought. The Popes got a little light headed with power and began to act like humans. There were two popes in 1378. The Roman Catholic Church had off and on Two

Popes, one in Rome and one in Avignon until 1414. During the absence of unity of the church and its unwillingness to be more accepting of new ideas it unintentionally sparked a secular interest in knowledge. Universities were formed in Oxford, Cambridge and Paris. The Arabs brought literature and math to Europe. Philosophy was discussed. In the 1200's to 1300's Secularism was born.

By 1414 and after several international conferences at Pisa and Constance the Church returned to one Pope.

While the church struggled to control its parishioners a "rebirth" or Renaissance began in Italy. The Renaissance marked a new era of thought and feeling.

Called Pagan Humanism it is evidenced in architecture, writing, science and painting. Outside of Italy it was called Christian Humanism and was studied in Spain, France, Scotland, Scandinavia and Germany. Unfortunately for the Catholic Church kings were actively building institutions of the modern state such as the Hapsburg Empire in Eastern Europe under a philosophy of humanism or renaissance.

In the early 1500's Luther, Zwingli and Calvin preached that the Bible was the source of truth not the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant Reformation began.

The Roman Catholic Church founded by Peter nationalized by Constantine, organized under one man who could control Kings. After 1500 years it found its major threat not from other spiritual beliefs, but from secularism. While these

differences occurred another spiritual movement, Protestantism was able to occur.

1994

In ~~1998~~ while in Rome on a tour of churches, I was surprised but excited to learn we were going to visit a Protestant church. I was interested for two reasons, one it was said to be a church that had been designed around the importance of preaching the word, which is of professional interest to me. Other than the Town churches that Christopher Wren designed in London in the late 1500's most Protestant churches are copied from the Roman Catholic design which was taken from the Roman Basilica. This church was in the heart of ancient Rome just across the Tiber River from the Vatican. I was amazed to find a church that was specifically designed around a Protestant principle emphasis on the word, and further amazed to find that it was located in the very midst of the Rome. This was a Waldensian Church. A church formed around the preaching of Peter Waldo. This is the story of the Waldensians who were the first Protestant Reformers. Peter Waldo lived from 1140 to 1218 well before Luther nailed the 95 treatises on the church door. He was born of fairly wealthy parents and became a wealthy merchant at Lyon at the head of the Rhone River in France. *That is why we had a Rhone wine during dinner. The Popes of Avignon are said to have planted vineyards of Syrah grapes from Iran, giving us the Chateau nu de Pape.* Lyon is at the ancient crossroads of two trade routes. Some identify him as Waldes. Most accounts character Waldo as a heretic and the movement he started as heretical. I have never thought this to be a particularly attractive word.

It means specifically to be “a baptized member of the Roman Catholic Church who disavows a revealed truth”, which comes from the Greek word *haireisis* meaning action of taking, a choice.

In an account by a Premonstratensian monk writing in 1220 it is said that Waldes' conversion occurred after seeking biblical teaching. He had heard the story of St. Alexius as being the surest way to salvation.

St. Alexius who died in 417 AD was the son of a distinguished Roman named Euphemianus. It is said that on his wedding night he left his father's house in Rome and went to Edessa in the Syrian Orient where he lived for the next 17 years. While there he spent his life as a poor beggar who collected money at the church door and gave it to the poor keeping only enough to subsist. He returned to Rome and is said to have lived the rest of his life as a beggar under the stairs of his father's palace unknown to his father or his wife.

The rich young Waldo after hearing the story of St. Alexius had priests translate the four Gospels and other books from the Bible. Waldo became attracted to the practice of Christian Perfection. He learned from reading Matthew, chapter 19 verse 21, “If thou wilt be perfect go sell what thou hast, and give to the poor”. Prior to verse 21 Jesus was saying that you must comply with the Ten Commandments. In the Bible verse the questioner persisted and asked Jesus “I have kept all the commandments, what do I still lack? To which Jesus responded “sell all you have and give to the poor”.

Well Waldes did, he turned his daughters over to the nuns of Fontevrault, gave some money to his wife and on the feast of Assumption in 1176, when he was 26, he gave the rest to the poor and took a vow of poverty.

As a result of this commitment his action encouraged others in Lyon to do the same and soon a practice of apostolic poverty was begun. They became known as “the poor” or the “poor men of Lyons”. The practice of wearing wooden shoes or sandals caused them to be called “Sandaliati, Insabbatati, Sabbatati, Sabotiers”. They went by twos into villages to preach the scriptures. They believed in order to purify the Church there needed to be a return to the simple life of the apostles. They believed in the 12 articles of the Apostles Creed. They believed there is one God (the Father, Son and Holy Spirit) and the scriptures of the Holy Bible. They practiced extreme poverty and emphasized the neglected practice of preaching. As the “Catholic Encyclopedia” points out, since they were devoid of theological training and lacking in education “it was inevitable that error should mar their teaching, and just as inevitable that ecclesiastical authorities should put a stop to their evangelistic work.” The Waldensians propagated the doctrinal errors of denial of purgatory; they denounced lying as a grievous sin and considered the shedding of human blood unlawful. Thus they condemned war and the death penalty.

They gained more followers as they preached in the streets and public places. Their preaching did not specifically follow the edicts of the Roman Catholic Church and so they were prohibited from preaching. To which they replied that obedience is due rather to God than to man. This as you might imagine did not

sit well with the Archbishop of Lyon. In 1178 they were ordered to cease preaching. Being disappointed that the main opposition to their preaching came mainly from the church two of Waldo's followers went to the Third Lateran Council held in Rome in 1179 to fight for their rights and obtain Papal approval. An English friar, Walter Mapes or Map questioned them. He asked if they believed in God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. They answered we believe. Then friar Mapes asked if they believed in the mother of Christ and they responded we believe. According to Scholastic Theology one could only use the formula "believe in" with reference to the Trinity. They had fallen for a trick question. Pope Alexander III decided that while the Waldensians devotion to poverty was laudable the "Poor of Lyons" were too ignorant to preach without a license from the local Archbishop. It is said they were denied the right to preach not on theological but political reasons as the clergy in Rome jealously guarded their ecclesiastical privileges. After the ruling in Rome, the Waldensians had a dilemma. They had read the words of Scripture commanding them to go out and preach the gospel and yet the Church was ordering them to disobey that command. Waldo decided that Jesus' command had priority over Rome's. We must obey God rather than men.

The new Pope Lucius III at the Synod of Verona excommunicated Peter Waldo in 1184.

In 1190 at a public debate in Narbonne the difference between the Church and the Waldensians was discussed. The two major points that were discussed were their refusing of absolute obedience to ecclesiastical authorities and maintaining

the right of men and women to preach. The Waldensians condemned the idea that certain places are holy. They also condemned lying and killing including military service and as said before capital punishment. That was too much for Rome, the Waldensians were declared Heretics and outcasts.

As an aside in this paper “when is this this?” St. Francis of Assisi lived at about the same time (1181 – 1226) also gave up all his wealth and wanderlust to serve the poor. He wore sandals and sack clothe, but he was canonized by Pope Gregory IX in 1228 AD. Francis was declared a Saint and Waldo a heretic.

Lyon at the cross roads of two major trade routes, one from Marseilles to Champagne and the other through the Alps to Lombardy in Northern Italy allowed the new Waldensian sect to spread. By 1199 they were as far north as Metz and as far south as Lombardy, where for a short time they united with a similar group, “The poor of Lombardy”. They spread as Far East as Poland and west into Spain. Initially the Roman Catholic Church which was not against the essence of their beliefs but their lack of acceptance of Church rule. The Church preached against them as heretics. But Pope Gregory III found that preaching was not effective and after a Papal edict in 1252 allowed physical torture to reclaim a heretic’s soul the Waldensians were physically persecuted. They were persecuted until the Reformation and as a result withdrew to the Alps of Italy in the valley of Pragela. They continued to be persecuted, the Papal inquisitor Borelli in 1400 made a surprise attack on them in the dead of winter driving them into the mountains where many died in the cold. In 1488 King Charles VIII of France and Duke Charles II of Savoy attacked the Waldensians unmercifully

forcing them from their mountain villages and into hiding in caves. On September 18, 1532 (or 1531 or 1544) a Waldensian synod adopted a short confession of faith, which incorporated the doctrines of Protestantism. They were now allied with the Reformation and received support from the Protestant world. They began to live in peace, but in 1685 during the Counter Reformation period the Waldensians were again persecuted and some fled to Switzerland. They endured as a ghettoized, scorned people living in mountain enclaves southwest of Turin until Italian emancipation in 1848. After WW II the Wesleyan and Episcopal Methodist streams which had been in Italy for 100 years united. In 1979 the Methodist and Waldensian churches entered into a federation. Today there are two sections of Waldensians. About 30,000 live in Italy and 15,000 live in Argentina and Uruguay. There is also a presence in America Founded in New York in 1906 The Waldensian Society is now located in the Lehigh Valley of Pennsylvania.

The Waldensians began around 1176AD when the son of a rich man committed to living his life as Jesus had commanded. Peter Waldo was an inspirational teacher and preached using the scriptures in the Bible. He attracted a great following which the bishop of Lyon thought threatened the Roman Catholic Church. Because the Waldensians had received no formal liturgical teaching they were found unable to represent the church. They continued to preach and were excommunicated and classified as heretics in 1184. The Waldensians

have been persecuted ever since. It is said that their length of persecution is third to Jews and Anabaptists.

This is another example of unnecessary persecution. Why is it necessary to beat and kill men and women who wish to serve others?

This story of Peter Waldo is another story about a man who loved his fellow man and was persecuted for it. Please let the persecution end.

When visiting Rome and finding a Waldensian church I had found a group of Christian Protestant believers that pre dated Luther, Zwingli and Calvin. I had found a different beginning of Protestantism. When is this this?

In closing I want to read one of my favorite poems that illustrates the difficulty of knowing where you are or when you are there. A.A. Milne wrote

Halfway down the stairs
Is a stair
Where I sit.
There isn't any
Other stair
Quite like
It.
I'm not at the bottom,
I'm not at the top;
So this is the stair
Where
I always
Stop.

Halfway up the stairs
Isn't up,
And it isn't down.
It isn't in the nursery,

It isn't in the town.
And all sorts of funny thoughts
Run round my head;
"It isn't really
anywhere!
It's somewhere else
Instead!"

Hawkins wrote at the end of his first book, "A Brief History in Time" while speaking of a unified theory " It (Unified Theory) should in time be understandable in broad principle by everyone, not just a few scientists. Then we shall all, philosophers, scientists, and just ordinary people, be able to take part in the discussion of the question of why it is that we and the universe exist. If we find the answer to that, it would be the ultimate triumph of human reason – for then we would know the mind of God.

And I would add we would know when this is indeed this.

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