

The Wittenberg Times

1526-1550



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

1531 *The Return of the Comet*

Today we are observing for the first time in the northern sky the brightest star with a tail that stretches for some distance. The mathematicians are using their abacus to calculate the elliptical orbits based on the research of Nicolaus Copernicus. There is talk that this is the famed comet that is celebrated in the Bayeux Tapestries marking the end of Anglo Saxon control of England. William of Normandy celebrated this star with his victory over Harold at Hastings in 1066.

Our Renaissance scholars have produced documented reports of this star dating back to the Greeks. The star is considered a sign from God of future changes and is said to have appeared 300 years ago when Genghis Khan sent his armies to the west into southeastern Europe.

We asked the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther in Wittenberg what he thought of this historic comet that appears every 75 years, *"The heathen writes that the comet may arise from natural causes; but God creates not one comet that does not foretoken a sure calamity."* Dr. Luther called the phenomenon a 'harlot star!' Pastor Andreas Celichius of Magdeburg made a statement that *"the thick smoke of humans sins, rising every day, and becoming gradually so thick as to form a comet, with curled and plaited tresses, which at least is kindled by the hot and fiery anger of the Supreme Heavenly Judge."*

No one knows the name of this comet that some call a star. However, its importance is noted by everyone as a precursor of changes to come in our history. The comet, may have been the star of Bethlehem and the beginning of Christianity. It is interesting that the comet appears at this time because this year, 1531, marks the beginning of the new Lutheran Church.

If our mathematicians are correct, the next sighting will be in 1606 -07. I wonder what historical event will appear at this time.

The Wittenberg Times

1526-1550



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

1531 October 12 – Zwingli Dies at the Battle of Kappel

News spread quickly that Zwingli fell to the ground as the Catholic forces advanced and he took a spear in the chin. Reports of his valor were how he had been thrown to his knees three times in trying to hold the line for the Protestants and that he stood up and charged each time. It was reported that his final words were, "They can kill the body but not the soul." About 500 men in Zwingli's forces died. There were minimal losses for the Catholics.

Zwingli was called a heretic by the Catholic victors and there was talk of dividing his body and sending it to the five Swiss states supporting his beliefs along with those of Martin Luther. However, the Catholic leaders decided to quarter his body and burn it. The executioner was from Lucerne.

The battle began on October 9 as a result of the food embargo against the five Catholic Cantons. Zwingli organized a group of 2,000 from Zurich and the three Protestant Cantons. The recently adopted Augsburg Confession emboldened the Protestants in their faith and territorial ambitions. Hans Jauch, led 5,000 Catholic men in the attack against the Protestant forces.

There are reports that Protestants from Bern are headed towards the unprotected city of Zurich and that the reaction to the new Protestant churches will spread throughout Switzerland to southern Germany and France.

Zwingli started the foundations for what was at first called the Reformed Church in Switzerland His congregation was in Basel. After his untimely death, [Johannes Oecolampadius](#), continued the doctrinal teachings of Zwingli in the city of Bern. Later, the Reformed Church will become the United Methodist religion in Switzerland and Europe. The evangelism of John and Charles Wesley in America during the period of the Great Awakening (1740-1760) led to the growth of the Methodist faith in the colonies. One of the many famous hymns written by Charles Wesley is *Hark the Herald Angels Sing* (1739)! (This year marks the 275th anniversary of this popular carol and hymn.