

The looming dichotomy of an aggressive and ambitious Rome-centred Churchoid of Satan and a deteriorating Roman empire became personalized in the fourth century with the emergence of two men who would articulate the spiritual and political contradictions involved. The Emperor Constantine not only initiated the evolution of the fading Roman empire into a “*Christianized State*”, a “*Pagan Rome*” into a “*Holy Rome*” empire, but opened the way for the growth of Byzantine and Western medieval culture—a Satanic mixture which would affect world religion, culture and politics for all time. On the other hand, Bishop Augustine of Hippo in Roman Africa was the dominant personality and reputedly greatest Christian thinker of the fourth century who would also influence the world politically, culturally and spiritually for all time.

As the Roman Empire was being devoured internally by its own excesses and externally by the rampaging barbarian hordes, Constantine, after a series of internal conspiracies and external battles, gained control of what remained in 312 AD, became Emperor, and immediately issued an edict to end the persecution of

Messiah believers. He attributed his rise to power to a "vision" in which he saw a "Christian sign" in the sky with the words "In this sign, conquer." Soon after his rise to power he met with his former adversary, Licinius in Milan, to extend toleration to the hitherto persecuted Church of the Messiah believers, freedom to pursue any religion of choice, and to restore personal and corporate property in an "Edict of Milan."

One legend associated with Constantine in relation to his creation of "Pagan Rome" to "Papal Rome" is that he was responsible for the building of the first basilica in Rome dedicated to "Saint Peter", which was to last for the next thousand years. Until that time Peter's body had been said to be buried in a shallow grave among the tombs near the Roman Circus. By the year 160 AD it had been identified by only a humble shrine until removed by Constantine to the *Basilica* which was constructed with a thousand tons of massive silver, and a century later the silver was removed and replaced by solid golden sheets, golden statues with precious stones, on top of the pre-existing tombs. This was the birth of what would become the institutional and ecclesiastical but mythical "Churchoid of Satan" localized around the dead body of Peter in the doomed city of Rome by the murderous Constantine in association with the devious Bishop of Rome, Sylvester, claiming the authority of the Apostle Peter.

But the Emperor Constantine also retained the previous imperial designation of "chief priest of Pagan religion" and began to issue laws governing the conduct of the emerging institutional Churchoid of Satan and its clergy, claiming for himself the title of "Bishop of those outside the Church." At the Churchoid's first "Council of Nicea", summoned by him in 325 to discuss the contentious doctrine of Arius, bishop of Alexandria, that the Son of God was a created being not equal with the Father God, over three hundred representative bishops were present with their attendants from all over the contracting Roman empire. From this *Council* the *Nicene Creed* emerged to express the divine nature of the Son and his equality with God the Father. Two years later Constantine changed his view, pardoned Arius, and promoted all Arians to be bishops in the

Churchoid of Satan. Only Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, maintained a sole witness to the divinity of Jesus with the immortal designation: *Athanasius contra mundum*: "If the world is against me, I am against the world."

Constantine connived with the Bishop of Rome, Sylvester, to make "Pagan Rome" into "Papal Rome", by combining the activities of Churchoid and State through a forged document by a papal official, Christophorous, transferring the temporal crown from the emperor to the pope. Later, in a mysterious dispute within his family, the emperor's wife and son were murdered, Constantine broke with "Papal Rome" and went into permanent exile to Byzantium in the east of the empire, which he renamed "Constantinople" as a "second Rome". This effectively divided the Roman Empire into two segments of West and East, with Rome in the West restricted in political importance, while it strongly increased the status and power of what was to become the Byzantine Empire in the East centred in Constantinople, both politically and religiously. The result was that the Churchoid of Satan was now divided into Western "Roman Catholic", and Byzantine "Eastern Orthodox" segments.

Helena, the mother of Constantine, made a highly publicized pilgrimage to Jerusalem, visiting places named in the *Gospels*, donating money to found churches and monasteries, and eventually bringing back with her relics she claimed were taken from the cross of Jesus. Garments and bones from noted followers of Jesus followed, with pictures, images and icons, until there was a world-wide trade in spurious "Christian" memorabilia supposedly validating the supernatural authority of the Churchoid of Satan.

Meanwhile, seventeen years after the death of Constantine in 337, Aurelius Augustinus, or Augustine, was born in 354 of middle-class parents in Hippo in the Roman province of Numidia. His father was pagan but his mother, the saintly Monica, was a true Messiah believer who prayed constantly for her wayward son, a maternal influence that never left him even during his licentious youth. He became a Messiah believer through a mystical experience in which he heard the voice of an unseen young girl repeating insistently, "Take up and read, take up and read". He opened a copy of Paul's

Letter to the Romans and the first words he read were: “. . . not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof.”

It was the late summer of 386 and Augustine resigned his chair of philosophy and went with his mother, son and some pupils to a discussion group, from which he later wrote his famous *Confessions*. It was the beginning of a remarkable career as Christian philosopher, systematic theologian and bishop in 395. The Roman Empire was in a state of chaos, both politically and religiously, due to the impositions of the Emperor Constantine and the looming catastrophe from the advancing eastern barbarian hordes. From distant China the Huns were moving westwards, together with the Eastern and Western Goths, Germanic tribes such as Franks, Vandala, Burgundians, Suevi, Heruli and others, against the boundaries of the Roman empire, wiping out armies and cities in a rampage of destruction of the glories that were the pride of Rome. Rome itself was captured and plundered in 410, and in 476 the Roman Empire came to a humiliating end.

While all this was happening Augustine was preaching four hundred sermons resembling *Treatises*, writing *Scripture Commentaries*, *Homilies*, *Expositions of the Psalms* and the *Writings of the Apostle John*. But it was in his masterpiece *De Civitate Dei*, or “*City of God*”, that he presented a majestic as well as appalling, vision of the “*beginnings, cause and destined ends*” of the two invisible societies, or entities, of the elect and the damned. The two “*cities*” of Augustine’s famous work were not the contemporary Churchoid and the secular State, but the more symbolic representations of the two spiritual powers of good and evil, God and Satan, elect and damned, that had been in contention since the creation of the world.

In his greatest work, *Confessions*, Augustine explained:

“Though there are very many and great nations all over the earth, whose rites and customs, speech, arms and dress, are distinguished by marked differences, yet these are no more than two kinds of human society, which we may justly call two cities, according to the language of our Scriptures.

The one consisting of those who wish to live after the flesh, the other of those who wish to live after the spirit . . .

“Thus the things necessary for this mortal life are used by both types of men and families alike, but each has its own and widely different aim in using them. The earthly city, which does not live by faith, seeks an earthly peace, and the end it proposes, in the well-ordered concord of civil obedience and rule, is the combination of men’s wills to attain the things which are helpful to this life. The heavenly city, or rather the part of it which sojourns on earth and lives by faith, makes use of this peace only because it must, until this mortal condition which necessitates it shall pass away . . .”

The full title of “*City of God*” explained his aim: “*Though the greatest city in the world has fallen, the City of God abides for ever.*” It was the confrontation between faith and unbelief: “*the love of self extending to contempt for God, and the love of God extending to contempt of self.*” Neither of these, he maintained, were evident in any earthly institution; in this world they were inextricably locked in conflict with each other. Yet for all his zeal for the unity of the existing Churchoids in both Western and Eastern forms, and his genuine abhorrence of all divergence from the widely accepted apostolic doctrine and difference in form, Augustine failed to discern the true unity in the Apostle Paul’s “*Church of the Messiah*” as a spiritual *organism* distinct from the Churchoid of Satan human *organization*. His outward view of the Church as an earth-based organization led him to seek material means for preserving, and even compelling, a visible spiritual unity.

The Churchoids did not know how to deal with Augustine’s theories: on the one hand, his wide-ranging intellectual genius appeared to give credence to the best theoretical writings and teachings of the leading bishops of the time; but, on the other hand, he seemed to give validity to both *Old* and *New Testament* Scriptures without clearly endorsing the existing institutional Churchoid system. At one point soon after Augustine’s death a Vincent of Lérins (who had defied Catholic orthodoxy in his famous phrase: “*What is everywhere, what is always, what is by all people believed*”) hinted that Augustine was close to heresy, in his opinion. Yet, undeniably, it was

the clearest articulation of an unbridgeable gulf between the divinely provided Church of the Messiah and the earthly-conceived Churchoid of Satan.

With the catastrophic defeat of the Roman Empire in the West, and the emergence of the Byzantine Empire in the East, the theological division between the Roman Catholic Churchoid and the Eastern Orthodox Churchoid widened in extent and intensity. A major difference between the two Churchoids was that, whereas the Roman Catholic Churchoid remained oligarchic, the Eastern Orthodox Churchoid developed the principle of independence for each national Churchoid. During the fifth and sixth centuries there emerged the Syrian Orthodox patriarchate in Antioch; the Ancient Church of the East, or Nestorian Church, in Assyria; the Armenian Apostolic Church; the Coptic Orthodox Church in Egypt; and the Ethiopian Church.

The period of history known as "*the dark ages*" began with the fall of the Roman Empire in the fifth century, and lasted for the next thousand years in the West. Eastern and Western barbarian nations and tribes over-ran Europe in rampaging destruction of magnificent buildings, cathedrals, museums, libraries, amphitheatres, and churches. When Rome was under siege the Bishop of Rome, Leo I, was a key figure in representing the city as chief negotiator with Attila "*the Hun*" in 452. Leo became known as "*the Great*" and "*Pope*" after compiling a definitive volume establishing Rome's claims to pre-eminence as the centre of the institutional and universal Roman Church based on the theories of "*Peter's key to the kingdom*" and his related claims that Peter's and Paul's bodies were buried in Rome.

But, inevitably, the removal of Rome as the capital of the Roman empire to Constantinople altered the religious as well as the political centre of gravity as Byzantine Greeks occupied critical positions of influence, with the Greek language becoming predominant instead of Roman. It was infuriating to the Bishop of Rome, as well as the multiplying princes and dukes, to be summoned to Constantinople for authorization of their submissions. Throughout the sixth century there were endless religious and political intrigues as both East and West Churchoid pontificates fought for dominance.

At the close of the sixth century Gregory I—also called “*the Great*”—became Pope and Prefect of Rome at the age of thirty-three. He created a papal patrimony for the State of Italy, and extended this interpretation of Church and State to the surrounding nations by means of personally authorized monks from wealthy monasteries who were emerging as influential representatives. He developed a taxation system on large estates held under the patrimony of the existing Roman Churchoid, and also taxed peasants for occupation of farmlands, marriage and death duties. He enlarged his papal authority over the existing colleges for lawyers and seminaries for clergy into the neighbouring provinces and regions, and stipulated a standard form of dress for the clergy based on the distinctive requirements for senators and magistrates.

Instead of the Church of the Messiah changing the world with the Gospel of Jesus, it had become the Churchoid of Satan self-appointed ecclesiastics integrated by the hubristic imprimatur of the demonic “*prince of the world*”. Instead of the Church of the Messiah being a “*light to the Gentiles*” it had become “*hidden under a bushel*” as the “*dark ages*” engulfed the world. But Satan was still not satisfied with the corrupt decline of what had been Paul’s glorious vision of the Church.

In the East a significant event had taken place when the Byzantine Emperor Theodosius II appointed Nestorius, a preacher in the Antioch church in Syria, to the bishopric of Constantinople. He became involved in growing dispute over giving to Mary, the mother of Jesus, the title of “*Mother of God*”. The rivalry between the two bishoprics of Constantinople and Alexandria over the question led to the deposing and eventual banishment of Nestorius to an oasis in the desert in Egypt. A large number of bishops supported Nestorius and they took refuge in Persia, where Nestorianism became known popularly as the “*Church of the East*”, with bishoprics extending beyond Persia to India, Central Asia and China.

During his exile Nestorius wrote an account of his beliefs in a work entitled “*The Bazaar of Heraclides of Damascus*” in which he wrote of the obedience of Christ:

“He took not honour and glory, nor worship, nor yet authority, though

He was Son, but the form of a servant was acting with obedience in the person of the Son, according to the mind of God; having His mind and not its own. Nor did it do anything it wished, but only what God the Word wished. For this is the meaning of the "form of God", that the form of a servant should not have a mind or will of its own, but of Him whose the person is and not the form . . ."

While the Nestorians were being persecuted in Persia there were many churches, sometimes called Nazarenes by others, where the unsullied teachings of Jesus and Paul were being preached and observed without fanfare or organizations of any kind. This was evident from a collection of *Homilies of Afrahat*, known as the "*Persian Sage*". These *Homilies* ignored the debates being held over various disputed doctrines in a variety of official Churchoid "*Councils*". One *Homily* on "Faith" stated:

"This is Faith. When a man shall believe in God the Lord of all, that made the heaven and the earth and the seas and all that in them is, Who made Adam in His image. Who gave the Law to Moses. Who sent of His Spirit in the Prophets. Who sent moreover His Messiah into the world. And that a man should believe in the coming to life of the dead. And believe also in the mystery of baptism. This is the Faith of the Church of God".

In the sixth century the Eastern Emperor Justinian, with the help of his clever wife, Theodora, defeated Persia, re-codified the Roman laws with the *Code of Justinian*, and built the architecturally magnificent Hagia Sophia Cathedral, the recognized wonder of the world of its time and since.

At the close of the sixth century, in 570, there was born in a well-known trading centre and religious sanctuary called .Mecca, in Arabia, a man whose name and religion would be remembered throughout history as much as that of Jesus and Paul. The founder of this new religion, based on a claimed revelation from the same God as that given to Moses and Abraham, was Mohammed, who early in life became concerned about the poverty and misfortunes of his neighbours. When he was forty years of age, in 610, he had a vision of an angel, who he thought was Gabriel, saying to him, "*You*

are a messenger of God", and from that time to his death he had a series of these "revelations".

In 650 these were compiled into the *Quran*, or Koran, the sacred Scriptures all later followers of Mohamed believed were divine revelations from God, and in the Middle East Mohammed became known as the "Prophet of God" in succession to, and with pre-eminence over, all the other prophets listed in the Hebrew *Old Testament*, and to Jesus in the *New Testament*. The name of the new religion was *Islam*, meaning "obedience" or "submission", and it was a call to return to the true religion from God given through Moses and later prophets and was now being proclaimed by Mohammed, servant of "Allah", or the Hebrew *El Elohe*. The fundamental tenet of Islam was that the will of Allah is made known through a series of revelations provided in the Koran. The Koran, meaning "Reading", was claimed to be the Word of God given to Mohammed by the Angel Gabriel, and contained 114 chapters of varying length.

With the death of Mohammed in 632 the communication of the Divine was said to have ceased making Mohammed's revelations immutable. It took another two centuries before a form of Islamic law would be developed and termed "*Shariah*", meaning "understanding", and this was also immutably linked with the Koran as a rigid static system which must be observed by all Islamic individuals and governments. Islam's religious contribution to its military and imperial expansion was the fundamental *Five Pillars of Islam*: (i) the profession of faith, "*There is no God but God; Mohammed is the prophet of God*"; (ii) prayer five times a day; (iii) a "*purification tax*" making one's wealth "*pure*"; (iv) fasting, during the month of Ramadan from sunrise to sunset; and (v) pilgrimage to Mecca once a lifetime, if it could be afforded.

The Jews, naturally, refused to recognize Mohammed as a prophet, although at the time Mohammed was facing Jerusalem in his daily devotional prayers. So Mohammed had a new revelation that all Islamists had to face Mecca while praying, towards the shrine of Kaaba. Mohammed then launched a series of armed attacks against neighbouring Arab clans and tribes, and made it a condition of alliance that they must convert to Islam. In 630 he invaded Syria,

where the predominating religion was Orthodox Churchoid Christian, and established the first Islamic state there. Jews and Christians were then assigned a special status as "*Children of the Book*" and allowed religious autonomy. Islam was now more than a new religion in competition with Judaism and Christianity; it was also a State, a Law called *Shariah*, with other institutions governing society in rivalry with the Eastern and Western Churchoids of Satan as a form of integrated religious world rule.

The first impressive Islamic victory in 636 was achieved when twelve thousand Christian Arabs surrendered to them. This was the start of a flood of converts as Copts, Jacobites, Syrians and others preferred the militantly monotheistic Islam to the polyglot trinitarianism of Western Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy. This was to have devastating consequences as Mohammed's religious fanatics continued to defeat the chaotic and confused nations of the Byzantine and Roman empires, occupying the vast territory from Libya to Persia and creating an Arab, or Islamic religious, Empire, which not only dominated the world for the next thousand years, but in diminished form continues to the present.

By the end of the seventh century Syria, Judea/Palestine, Egypt, and North Africa had been brought under the domination of Islam and become the nucleus of the Byzantine Empire, eclipsing previous empires. With this Islamic addition of a third religious segment to the Churchoid of Satan, all deriving authority, it was claimed, from the same God, and the same *Old* and *New Testament* canons of Scripture in one form or another, the whole world was now threatened by subjection to the religious Churchoid of Satan through his demonized surrogates—the Pope of Western Catholicism, the Patriarch of Eastern Orthodoxy, and the Prophet of Islam, all ruling in the name of God with human-conceived but satanically-inspired pseudo-religion.⁷

While Islam was spreading westwards from the Middle East, Nestorian Christianity was spreading to the east, across India and into China. Tablets from that time still exist which read: "*In punishment by the cross (was) the suffering of this One, He who is the true Messiah and God alone, and God ever pure*". There were many churches

⁷True religion by definition, religare, (meaning "to bind" or "tie back") is the restoring, or bringing together, what had become separated or alienated, that is, sinful creatures with a holy God, just as a surgeon "ligatures" the two sides of a wound. It is restoring a ruptured personal relationship with God.

scattered across India especially in the south in Madras and Travancore, reaching across the north-west into Tibet and Samarkand in Central Asia.

In the eighth century an Indian called David was appointed metropolitan of the bishoprics in Peking in China, with other bishoprics in Ceylon, Kashgar and Peking in China.

But Christianity in the West was being threatened as the militant Islamists swept across Europe to the Atlantic, north to Russia, south to Africa, with their enforcing battle-cry of “*convert or die*”, the Islamic—“*People of the Sword*”—Churchoid looked like winning the universal religious battle for the hearts and minds of the nations of the West over the “*People of the Book*” Churchoids. Paradoxically, it was Islam that became a “*beacon of light*” for a time in the West, with its central doctrine of total obedience to God, social discipline and cultural brilliance, although this was dimmed by its fanatical monotheism and coercive militancy.

When Mohammed died there was a competition for the succession as *caliph*, a status used for “*successor*”. It was derived from a term used in the Koran for both Adam and David as vice-regents for God on earth, holding both spiritual and temporal authority. For a century following Mohammed’s death in 632 there were disputes between relatives and descendants regarding the *caliphate*, primarily between the two dominant Islamic factions of *Sunnites* and *Shi’ites*. By the tenth century the last remnant of the Islamic caliphate state was Iraq where *Sufism*, an Islamic ideal of a disinterested love of God, was widely practiced and which became an institutionalized form of Islamic piety.

The Eastern Patriarchate Churchoid fared better than its Western Papal counterpart as, by the end of the seventh century, Islam had become the nucleus of the Byzantine Empire, eclipsing previous empires with the magnificence of its culture, arts, architecture and literature, as well as its politics and religion. A series of tolerant Byzantine emperors allowed the “*Messiah believers*” of different kinds to spread across the empire under different leaders and different practices—*Kilbossians*, *Paulicians*, *Nazarenes* and others.

One of the best and most successful of the Byzantine emperors

was Leo III, "*the Isaurian*", who strengthened the region with his vigorous and wise reforms. He denounced the widespread idolatry and superstitions that were prevalent at the time and issued an edict against the worship of images, enforced destruction of images, and punishment for those who advocated them. Almost all the priests and monks were opposed to Leo, including the aged Pope of Constantinople, who was replaced by Leo. The Pope of Rome, Gregory II, and his successor, Gregory III, were also implacable opponents. In Greece a rival emperor was chosen who attacked Constantinople but was defeated. Leo's anti-image policy lasted for almost two hundred years, and then was removed by Theodora, the widow of the Emperor Theophilus, after his death.

The decision to permit and encourage the service and worship of images had been taken at the second *Council of Nicea*, and the question was raised again at a *Council* called and presided over by the Emperor Charlemagne at Frankfurt in 794. The primary motive for Charles "*the Great*" was his religious passion to expand writing and education in the nations under his rule, because of his personal spiritual beliefs. He was distressed by the erratic forms of the Mass being performed by a careless and illiterate clergy, books with corrupted texts, and pagan beliefs. He employed the best scholars in Europe to collect superior literature, to purify corrupted texts, produce multiple copies for wide distribution, and devised teaching methods to expedite learning through cathedrals, monasteries and sponsored schools.

During his reign he convened at least thirty-three "*Church Councils*" initiating a variety of official reforms of the Roman Churchoid. He officially endorsed the Latin liturgy, the so-called "*Gregorian Chant*", and financially strengthened the monasteries. Charlemagne the Great ruled the Roman Churchoid as he ruled his kingdom, paying little attention to the Bishops of Rome. During this period of Frankish expansion in the late eighth century the ruling Pope Sylvester of the Roman Churchoid had assumed the role of king-maker. When Charlemagne was to be crowned in 800 the Pope had manoeuvred himself into placing the crown on Charlemagne's head, implying papal superiority to imperial status. On the other

hand, Charlemagne saw himself as Head of the Churchoid as well as Head of State - the opposite of Jesus in the desert when Satan offered him the kingdoms of the world in exchange for acknowledging Satan's rule.

While the Roman Churchoid was concerned internally with its own survival and expansion in the face of the Moslem invasions, the monasteries either became centres of wealth and exploitation of their surrounding lands or, less common, places of spiritual calm and evangelism. These in turn became monastic "orders" founded by religious leaders within the parent structure of the Roman Churchoid. Many of the religious orders during the so-called "*dark ages*" became centres of refuge, sanctuaries where learning was preserved and spiritual values were experienced and taught. Itinerant monks often visited un-evangelized regions and established new offshoot churchoids and monasteries, and in the process created a cultural phenomenon of illuminated, or coloured, manuscripts of Scriptures and related commentaries. From some of the monasteries the monks organized the neighbouring farms, drained swamps, kept accounts, built homes and hospitals, and laid the foundations for what was to become an expanding commercial economy throughout Europe.

On the Western frontier of Europe Ireland had received the Messiah Gospel in the third or fourth centuries through Roman soldiers and foreign merchants, and by the sixth century it was considered a "*Christian*" country. It could be said to have begun with the arrival of Patrick in Ireland about 432 AD, and from that time until around 651 AD there sprang into being the founding of monasteries and churches by the historic Celtic "*age of saints*" — Brigit, Ninian, David, Columba and Aidan. From the early fourth to seventh centuries Irish monasteries and churches multiplied across Scotland, England and Wales into Europe until it was said that "*more saints seem to have lived on one island in two centuries than in the rest of the world in the entire period since*".

The rapidly developing "Papal Romanization" of institutional Christianity in Europe following the Emperor Constantine's integrating of "Pagan Rome" into "Papal Rome" in the fourth and

subsequent centuries had repercussions on the rapid proliferation of Celtic Christianity in Britain as well as in Europe.⁸ All it required to become a "saint" in the emerging Papal institutional and ecclesiastical Churchoid, it seemed, was to be the founder of a monastery or a church. In a "*Catalogue of the Saints of Ireland*" dated around the beginning of the eighth century there is listed: "350 holy bishops and founders of churches" from 432 to 544; and "100 bishops, priests and hermits" from 598 to 665.⁹

From Ireland and Scotland Celtic monks later became a remarkable exodus as "*evangelizing sailors*" travelling beyond Britain through Western Europe with their Messianic gospel, dressed in simple white robes, carrying staffs, with books in a bag slung around their necks, living mostly on fish, of whom it was said, "*these were men who in their rude simplicity loved God with pious intent*". Even their physical appearance was different from emerging Roman practice, as they had neither the claimed "*tonsure of Peter*" of a shaved top, or the "*bald top*" of Paul, but wore their hair long at the back and shaved at the front. Wherever they travelled their mission was to set up a "*missionary village*". In the centre they built a small wooden church around which huts were clustered for the monks, and school-rooms and dwellings for students and their families. From these centres twelve monks would go out into other areas as missionaries to establish similar communities. Some of the monasteries they established in their travels would later become famous universities.

The most famous of these monks were Patrick in Ireland, Columba in Celtic Iona and Dalriada, and Andrew among the native Picts in the north of Scotland. Their evangelizing work in the fifth and sixth centuries became the "Celtic Christianity" in subsequent centuries as followers inflated their admirable efforts into ludicrous myths with imaginary miracles that none of the early "saints" claimed in their lifetimes.

Throughout the sixth and seventh centuries the original visionary Christianity became the victim of ecclesiastical and secular politics to establish the dominance of the Roman Churchoid in Britain. In 586 a Bishop Augustine with forty Benedictine monks landed in Kent, in England, with the blessing of Pope Gregory I, and

⁸ Celtic Christianity: Ian Bradley, published by Edinburgh University Press, 1999, p 6

⁹ *ibid* p4

began their Churchoid proselytizing which soon came into conflict with the earlier Irish and Scottish Messiah doctrine. The Pope then made Augustine “*Archbishop of Canterbury*” in England over all other bishops in the country in order to establish Rome’s secular and ecclesiastical superiority—and this created an increasing struggle between Irish, Celts, Picts and Welsh Messiah believers and the Anglo-Saxon Roman Churchoid newcomers.

In the eighth century there emerged in Northumberland in England the Venerable Bede of Lindisfarne, who became the key figure in defining Roman Churchoid Christianity in Britain through his monumental work, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, completed in 731. His work is a compilation of idealistic circumstances and miraculous works to substantiate an Anglican version of Roman ecclesiology, portraying Ireland and its “saints” as a spiritual standard to be emulated.

With the dramatic emergence of the Prophet Mohammed’s Islam in the previous seventh century, with its strict codes of obedience and observance of Scriptures against all forms of imagery, it had thrown into stark relief the multiplicity of idolatrous images introduced by successive Roman and Greek Churchoids. In 726 there was a major confrontation between the reigning Emperor, Leo III, and the Roman Bishop Gregory II. Emperor Leo III had issued an edict commanding all Jews to be baptized, and followed this with an edict demanding the smashing of all Churchoid images in the West as well as the East. In Rome, Bishop Gregory II was in the eleventh year of his pontificate and he was an enthusiastic believer in the Churchoid’s devotion to imagery. He issued two letters to Emperor Leo III countermanding the edict on imagery, and arguing that it was a threat against the great statue of St Peter in Rome which, he said, “*all the kingdoms of the West esteem as a god on earth*”. This led to a bitter dispute between the two world leaders, followed by a savage war, the outcome of which was a permanent breach between the Roman Churchoid and the Eastern Emperor in Constantinople. This was finally confirmed when a Roman synod officially excommunicated all those who opposed the imagery of saints. By the twelfth century Pope Innocent III was claiming “*We are the*

successors of the prince of the Apostles...and the Vicar of Christ himself."

Between the ninth and twelfth centuries there was a gradual, but very important, social revolution in Europe; from the previous two-fold division of nobility and serfs into the more clearly defined three-fold division of the "*three estates*", defined in parliaments as "*lords temporal, lords spiritual and peasantry*." In the English Parliament the "*lords spiritual*" were on the left, and the "*lords temporal*" on the right, with neither king nor peasants represented. By the twelfth century the three estates were increased by the emergence of a fourth, the "*middle class*" between nobles and peasants, such as lawyers, doctors, merchants, and so on. This social revolution would have a seismic political and ecclesiastical effect in the following centuries.

Meanwhile, in the final years of the ninth century while all of this was in its gestation, the papacy was in a state of crisis and even possible disintegration. In March, 896, there was held the notorious *Synod Horrenda*, when Pope Stephen VII initiated a trial of the previous Pope Formosus. Incredibly the body of the late pope was disinterred from where it had been buried for eight months, dressed in full regalia, and brought into the council chamber and placed on the papal throne as if still alive. The corpse even had a council to defend itself against the charge that he had dared to crown as emperor one of the illegitimate descendants of Charlemagne instead of the one proposed by Pope Stephen. One of the key participants in the *Synod Horrenda* was a Cardinal Sergio, who used the proceedings to acquire the papacy for a short time and then had to flee into exile.

Unbelievably, worse was to follow as the papacy spiralled downwards. One version is that a beautiful Anglo-Saxon young woman disguised herself as a monk, eventually went to Rome, and was elected pope as "*Pope Joan*", but ruling as "*Pope John*" for a stated period from 855 until 858. It was only when she had a child that she was unmasked and died soon afterwards. Over the following four years there were four popes competing for the "*Chair of Peter*"; and in just over six years there were seven popes and anti-popes until Sergius returned from exile to be the supreme pontiff. Two sister

prostitutes, Marozia and Theodora, and their offspring, dominated the papacy until the mid-tenth century. The bastard son of Marozia, her grand-son and great grandson of all became popes; while Theodora bore a male child to Pope Sergius who also became a pope

With the Papacy in the ninth and tenth centuries absurd to the point of burlesque, in the higher European echelons of the Papal Churchoid hierarchy there was gross indulgence, exploitation and sycophancy as abbots of monasteries competed for power and finances with both popes and monarchs in a blatant exploitation of religion and politics. Many abbots ruled over territories like small independent kingdoms, complete with social entertainment activities such as balls and hunting. Monks in the monasteries lived luxuriously, having private rooms, with rich meals brought to them by kitchen servants. Nunneries for women were also associated with this descent into hedonistic living, having “*upper class*” luxuries for aristocratic and wealthy women, and others with a variety of eccentric beliefs and conduct.

Inevitably there was a reaction against the Roman Churchoid, and related monastic abuses and noted reformers emerged, such as Bernard of Cluny early in the tenth century, and Stephen Harding of Citeaux in the eleventh century. In time, however, Bernard became Abbot of Clairvaux, famous for the spiritual hymns he composed, but more infamous for the religious and secular power he exercised ruthlessly on behalf of the Roman Churchoid above and beyond that of contemporary kings and popes.

Bernard was especially active in persecuting the proliferating breakaway groups from the institutional Roman Churchoid, such as the Waldenses and Albigenses, Cathars and Paulicians, but also the many loosely identified “*Good Men*” or “*The Perfect*”, or “*The Brethren*” who objected to any designation other than believers in God’s Word and Jesus as the Messiah. In a bitter attack against all such deviationists from the Roman Churchoid Bernard declared:

“Inquire of them the author of their sect and they will assign none. What heresy is there which, from among men, has not had its own heresiarch? The Manicheans had Manes for their prince and preceptor, the Sabellians Sabellius, the Arians Arius, the Eunomians Eunomius, the Nestorians

Nestorius. Thus all other pests of this stamp are known to have each a man, as their several founders, whence they have ay once derived both their origin and their name. But by what appellation or by what title will you enrol these heretics? Truly by none, for their heresy is not derived from man, neither through man have they received it...but from demons."

Beyond the religious ambitions, persecutions and conspiracies of the mother Roman Churchoid, a whole new world of commerce was developing as Byzantine and European monarchs and merchant-princes introduced and traded products from their increasingly wealthy territories. Fleets of privately owned sailing vessels were soon battling in the Mediterranean as they fought over new markets in both East and West regions. By the ninth century the unity of the Mediterranean culture had been split into three contrasting identities: Roman, Byzantine and Islam, with three distinct languages, Latin, Greek and Arabic. The contrasts were mostly apparent in three critical religious observances: in the West every Roman and Messiah church ritual was centred in the openly celebrated eucharist; in the Russian and Greek Orthodox observances the eucharist was observed behind a screen of images; in Islam, there was no sacrament, but public prayers were conducted facing Mecca.

In the eighth and ninth centuries the pagan Vikings of Scandinavia had first raided and then settled in northern Britain and France, and their descendants later conquered England and southern Italy. To the East the pagan Magyars ravaged Italy and settled in Hungary. The Islamic Saracens threatened all of Europe but settled mainly in Spain. In the ninth century the bones of Saint James were claimed to be discovered in Santiago de Compostela, and this became a popular pilgrimage creating roads and bridges as well as churches and hostels known as "*the Santiago Trail.*" The whole of Europe was filled with shrines, images, monasteries, mosques, and churches which were visited by increasing numbers of pilgrims seeking healing or other forms of supernatural aids.

By the eleventh century the "*Norman Conquest*" gradually subjugated the Scottish, Irish and Welsh "*Celtic Christianity*" into the

Roman Churchoid centralization and hierarchy, with territorial dioceses and parish churches under Episcopal control. In Scotland, the eleventh century Hungarian Queen Margaret married King Malcolm Canmore of Scotland, enthusiastically introduced strictly conformist Roman Churchoid practices, and made English rather than Gaelic the official language of Scotland.

It was in this climate of worldwide religious and commercial ambitions and turmoil in the eleventh century that the Roman Popes launched a series of "Crusades" directed against the Mohammedans—or Moslems, as they were now known from a derivation of Mohammed's name—from Western European nations in an attempt to recapture Jerusalem and the "Christian" shrine of the Holy Sepulchre. It was a ludicrous proposition at any time, but in the religious and political chaos of the time in Europe, and the resurgence of Moslem militancy in the Arab world, it was madness. The First Crusaders were hopelessly outnumbered and in danger of being overwhelmed as the earlier advance of the Islamic Moslem armies westwards had brought them the renewed knowledge of ancient Greek science and philosophy which had disappeared in the early stages of the so-called "Dark Ages". Their increased military and commercial contacts with Latin, Greek and Arabic peoples produced an explosive interchange of literature to affect Europeans especially with the Aristotelian literature brought by the Moslems to the West.

The confrontation between the Western Roman and Eastern Orthodox states, and Christian and Muslim religions, resulted in a crisis in the twelfth century. In the ninth century Pope Leo IV had built a wall around the area of the Vatican in Rome which came to be known as the "Leonine City", effectually excluding it from the rest of Rome. In this Vatican suburb within the city Roman Catholic nobles had emerged to form, or promote, religious hierarchy across Europe. After the Norman attack on the city in 1084, the later rebuilding, begun under Pope Leo IX, was financed by the Roman noble families such as the Frangipane and Pierleone, whose wealth came from commerce and banking. By the late eleventh century Rome and its Vatican, with a population of only 50,000, was beginning to

become once again a centre of power and influence, at least in its own estimation.

The rapid and extensive advance of the Islamists across Europe made the dissolute Roman Churchoid virtually helpless, pushed into a pocket in Central Europe and surrounded by Islamists to the east, west and south. In the north of Europe there was the Scandinavian bastion of post-Viking paganism, with England isolated in an island. In south-west Europe the Emirate of Cordoba occupied most of Spain, where the greatest scholars of that period were the Islamist Ibn Rushd, and the Jew, Moses ben Maimon, or Maimonides. From the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries the Islamists of various persuasions and the Roman Churchoid struggled for dominance until the King Ferdinand of Aragon and Queen Isabella of Castile combined to drive Islam out of Spain.

In all of the divisions affecting Europe the Roman Churchoid ludicrously continued to claim representation of both temporal and spiritual authority over the whole of Europe, although in reality it only consisted of what is now Germany and northern Italy. It claimed to have precedence above emperors of states, and the succession of popes to be superior to dynastic kings because of self-appointed powers acquired deviously over the previous thousand years. The conflicts between popes and emperors were threatened as their powers were diminished by alien forces they were unable to influence. The first of these clashes happened during the reign of Pope Gregory VII (1073-75) and became the prototype of later revolutions, such as the Lombard League victory over Emperor Frederick Barbarossa at the Battle of Legano in 1176. The consequence was a multiplying of independent and semi-independent States with a variety of dynastic kings.

From the twelfth century onwards the influence of Roman Churchoid's sub-structure bishops deteriorated as they occupied themselves increasingly with personal ambitions and inclinations, leaving their religious responsibilities to unpaid rural deans who were only paid by results and consequently were hated for their extortions. The clergy as a result became increasingly poorer as they were often dependent on charity of wealthy donors, or collections

from lay parishioners. England was the only nation to pay a special tax to support a distinctive English churchoid in Rome provided by the people, and this was made obligatory in the twelfth century, adding to the increase of disillusion with a voracious Roman Churchoid.

On his deathbed Pope Nicholas V reflected on the importance of cultural glorification of the Roma Churchoid through the Renaissance absorption with architecture:

“The mass of the population is ignorant of literary matters and lacking in any culture. It still needs to be struck by grandiose spectacles because otherwise the faith, supported as it is on weak or unstable foundations, will end in due time by declining to nothing. With magnificent buildings, on the other hand, monuments in some sense perpetual that appear almost to testify to the hand of God himself, the popular connection may be strengthened and confirmed in the same way as it is in the affirmations of the learned.”

But when Nicholas V died Rome was still not the cultural equal of Florence. It would be another fifty years and a new Pope, Julius II, who would bring Rome up to the architectural grandeurs of Florence. From the time of Pope Julius II the new Rome concentrated on external display rather than internal piety, on arrogant display of cultural extravagance and dominance, to intimidate the poverty and ambitions of emperors and kings. It was an abject surrender to Satan’s tempting of Jesus with worldly power, *“All these I will give you if you bow down and worship me.”* The Roman Churchoid of Satan became a testimony in stone to where its true allegiance lay.

But the twelfth century also brought to prominence Western scholars such as Anselm, Bernard of Clairvaux and Thomas Aquinas, who would be known as Rome’s great medieval *“Scholastics.”* Anselm, in a work entitled *Prologion* provided *“ontological proof”* by logic that God existed, using the methods of classical philosophy, which brought him the accolade of *“father of Scholasticism.”* He described his approach in an imaginative address to God:

“We believe that you are the greatest thing imaginable . . . And it is certain that this ‘greatest thing imaginable’ cannot exist only in the mind.

For if it exists only in the mind, we can imagine it existing in reality, too—but that would be something greater! . . .

“So there can be no doubt at all that the ‘greatest thing imaginable’ does exist both in the mind and in reality. Its existence is so real, that it is impossible to imagine it not existing . . . It is yourself, our Lord and God . . . For everything except yourself can be imagined as non-existent. You alone most truly exist; you are more completely real than anything else . . . You fill and embrace all things, you exist before and beyond all things . . . Lord, you alone are what you are and who you are . . .”

Bernard of Clairvaux began his religious life as a reclusive monk and ended it influencing the selection of a new pope. In between he enthusiastically encouraged converts to enter monasteries with strict disciplines, which included frugal possessions and only one fire a year. In his work, *On the Love of God*, he described the “poverty of riches.”

“It is natural for a rational being always to seek those things which, in his judgment, are better and more useful for his ends; and he is never satisfied until he has acquired the thing that he prefers. A man who has a pretty wife, for instance, looks around with roving eye to find a fairer woman, if he had a costly suit of clothes, he wants one even better; however rich he is, he will be jealous of anyone who is more wealthy still . . .”

Thomas Aquinas obtained a master’s degree in theology at the age of thirty-one, four years earlier than the norm at that time. He wrote eighteen volumes, the most famous of which was *Summa Theologiae* and *Summa Contra Gentiles*, providing a formidable systematic analysis of Christian doctrine. He described his approach in *Summa Theologiae*:

“The word ‘person’ is not discovered in the text of the Old and New Testament as referring to God. Yet what this word means is often present in Holy Scriptures, namely, that he is the peak of self-existence and most perfect in wisdom . . . The truth of the faith is diffused throughout Holy Scripture in various ways, and sometimes obscurely. Hence, to bring out the truth of the faith from Holy Scripture requires long study and training. But not everyone who needs to know the truth of the faith can devote

themselves to study. So a clear summary is needed of the truth set forth in Holy Scripture, so that everyone has the opportunity to believe it. This summary is not an addition to Holy Scripture; rather, it is drawn from Holy Scripture."

The predominant paganism of the Greeks to the east mixed with the religious militancy of the Islamists, and this impact of Aristotelian logic and dialectics on the understanding of man, nature and the divine, created turmoil in the oligarchic Roman Churchoid. The challenge was met by the Roman Scholastics in seeking to combine fidelity to Scripture and what had become known as "*the Traditions*", with a positive but critical attitude to secular modes of reasoning. The contribution of Thomas Aquinas was that the facts of nature which informed reason, combined with the facts of faith and reason, could be reconciled. This fusion of faith and reason was a landmark in both Western and Eastern wings of the Churchoids of Satan, and between secularizing religion and culture, in a polarizing dispute as to whether the State should rule the nation or the Churchoid, as one school believed in the concept of a "*Christianized*" society, and the other that it was a betrayal of both.

This tense situation was brought to a state of crisis in England with the king's dispute with Thomas á Becket in the twelfth century. There were faults on both sides of the dispute between religious Churchoid and the secular State, but Becket's murder produced a cleavage between an autocratic religious Churchoid and a secular law-demanding State. After this twelfth century imbroglio other monarchical States of Europe became increasingly reluctant to work with the Roman Churchoid, both politically and economically.

Also in the twelfth century there was turmoil from Mongolia to Egypt. A charismatic Mamluk general—sometimes spelled "Mameluke"—called Saladin, had emerged in Egypt with a "slave army" of Kurds, Arabs and Turkmen to conquer and found a new dynasty in Egypt. He rose to fame in the West as the chivalrous opponent of the British Richard the "Lionheart" during the continuing Crusades, but Saladin's true claim to fame was to be in the East where he defeated the advancing Mongol hordes

sweeping across Asia into the Middle East.

But the two centuries of internecine struggle between the Western Churchoid and the States had weakened the papacy, with increasing demands for freedom from papal authority and for control of the countryside represented by both the aristocracy and the people. The chief attack was led by Arnold of Brescia, a priest and monk, against ecclesiastical property and Churchoid interference in temporal affairs. This precipitated the Roman revolution of 1143, resulting in a new republican constitution which Pope Clement III in 1143 conceded a communal government. In 1204 rivalry between Churchoid and State once again flared between Pope Innocent III and the Italian aristocratic family of Orsini and others which led to open rioting in the streets of Rome.

Meanwhile, two "*heretical*" religious movements had emerged to threaten the Roman Churchoid's hegemony in Europe, the "*Cathars*", also called "*Albigenses*", and the "*Waldensians*". The former restricted their demands to a purged and reformed Churchoid clergy, but wanted "*perfected*" bishops. The latter took Apostolic authority literally to mean targeting help for the poor instead of indulgences for the wealthy, and they evangelized outside the structures of the Churchoid, "*going about two by two, owning nothing, clad in simple woollen garments and holding all things common.*" The Roman Churchoid excommunicated them in 1182, but Pope Innocent III imitated their activities by approving the Franciscan and Dominican monastic orders, with their vows of poverty. However, the mother Churchoid was unable to sustain this change and became divided by the ensuing contradictions, so within two generations the monastic orders were as corrupt as the mother Churchoid.

Pope Innocent III was also responsible for one of the greatest blunders of the thirteenth century when he conducted a meeting between himself and the King of Hungary that would have consequences of war in Europe in later centuries. In 1203 his envoys brought pressures to bear on the Hungarian king to force the nation to submit to the Roman Churchoid. The cause of the dispute was because the Messiah believers in that region of Bosnia, Serbia,

Spalato and Dalmatia, variously termed *Paulicians*, *Thonraks*, *Bulgarians*, *Bogomils* and others, were becoming so numerous and powerful that they were endangering the authority of the discredited Roman Churchoid. The region ceased to be Roman Churchoid and in consequence had experienced growing prosperity without priests. Their churches were guided by elders who were chosen for their spirituality, and their meetings were held in houses. In suppressing these Messiah believers and coercing the nation into being Roman Churchoid the Pope established an "*Inquisition*" in 1229 that would become the terror of Europe, creating ethnic and religious bitterness and hatred that would explode in secret organizations, violent animosities and war in the region which would last for centuries.

Meanwhile, a "*Fourth Crusade*" was launched by Pope Innocent III against Constantinople, and this finally destroyed all hope of an alliance between the Eastern and Western Churchoids. Later, the eighteenth century rationalist philosopher, Voltaire, described the "*Fourth Crusade*" as "*less an attack on Muslims as against the Christians in Byzantium . . . The only fruit of the Christians in their barbarous crusades was the annihilation of other Christians.*"

Pope Innocent III was already involved in a disastrous battle with the Count of Toulouse on the basis of removing all "*heretics*" from France, promising his supporters the same "*indulgences*" given to the Holy Land Crusaders with the promise of plunder and license of every kind. The repercussions of this "*heresy hunting*" debauchery over the following twenty years gave birth to the notorious *Inquisition* in Narbonne in 1210 and, in 1229 at the *Council of Toulouse*; the *Bible*, except for the *Psalter*, was officially forbidden to the laity, with no part of either permitted to be translated into any language.

In the same year that Pope Innocent III was inaugurating his *Crusades* against all "*heretics*", Francis of Assisi, then twenty-five years old, had a vision of the words of Jesus sending his disciples into the world to "*preach the gospel*" and he took a vow of poverty and humility and founded the order of Franciscans which spread rapidly across Europe and the world. Francis was the playboy son of a wealthy cloth merchant who renounced his riches and began his service for God by kissing a leper. His dramatic conversion began

when he heard the voice of God in a ruined church, and this launched him on a remarkable life of dedication to the poor. Two of his "beatitudes" reflect his manner of life:

"Blessed is the servant who does not esteem himself as better when he is praised and promoted by men than when they look on him as vile, stupid and contemptible; for whatever a man is in the sight of God, that he is, and no more.

"Blessed is the servant who accepts rebuke with courtesy, obeys respectfully, confesses humbly, and makes amends gladly. Blessed is the servant who is not in a hurry to excuse himself but humbly accepts shame and reproach for a fault even when he is not to blame."

When the Mongols entered Palestine in 1260, led by a Christian Turkish warlord, they were decisively beaten at the Battle of 'Ayn Jalut by the Muslim Mamluks army, the historic consequence of which was the radical diminishing of Christian supremacy across the Asian region, and the rapid ascendancy of the Muslim conquests as they saved the Arabic-Islamic civilization from Mongolian-Christian destruction.. The Mamluks expelled the Christian *Crusaders* from the Levant and for the next three centuries consolidated their rule in Egypt, the Middle East and North Africa. The historical consequence of this disastrous episode has been described by a noted Christian historian:¹⁰

"Seeing glorious prospects, the Western crusaders allied with the Asian invaders. Christian hopes culminated during the Mongol invasion of Palestine in 1260, which was led by the Muslim warlord. This campaign ended though with the battle of 'Ayn Jalut where the Muslim Mamluk Turks won decisively. Inexplicably, 'Ayn Jalut has escaped the attention of those counterfactual historians who like to ask 'what if?' and who imagine alternative scenarios. Had the Mongols won, their victory could well have consolidated Christian power across much of Asia, virtually destroying Islam in the process. In reality, it was the Christians who suffered ruin. The Mongols were driven out, and the last crusader states perished shortly afterwards."

At the same time of increasing separation between the monarchic

¹⁰ *The New Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*, by Philip Jenkins, Distinguished Professor of History and Religious Studies, Pennsylvania University, USA. Published by Oxford University Press, p25.

States and the Roman Churchoid, the Churchoid itself was deteriorating from within with nepotism from the papacy, as family, relatives and favourites were promoted whatever their lack of competency or morals. Most bishops were either mediocre or worldly or outright criminals. Pope Innocent IV appointed the nineteen-year-old brother of the Count Gueldre to be a bishop although he was illiterate, and for forty years had clerks do the work of his diocese, slept with abbesses and nuns, fathered fourteen bastards in two years then gave them all benefices, and ended up as a bandit.

In the 1280s and 1290s Rome was being ripped apart by the bitter rivalries between the aristocratic families of the Colonna, the Orsini and the Annibaldi, a situation which was eagerly exploited by Pope Boniface VIII. Then in 1309 Clement V moved the papal residence to Avignon in France, leaving Rome to its uncertain fate. With all of this increasing dissolution of the Roman Churchoid there was little time for them to accomplish any evangelizing. The greatest enthusiasm was for the searching for “heretics” by their own definitions, especially those who looked like threatening the dominance of the Roman hierarchy by their Bible-centred beliefs.

This task of eliminating all forms of alternative spiritual beliefs was entrusted to the “Inquisition”, now an instrument of royal power which rapidly became an instrument of the Roman Churchoid for merciless persecution of those defined as “heretics”. Everyone from the age of fourteen was required to take public oaths of Catholicism and included enforced denunciations of known heretics. Torture became a common practice even on pregnant women “at least until the child is delivered”. Many countries denounced the *Inquisition*, but it became a common practice in Spain.

The political and religious turbulence of the “Middle Ages” produced disillusion as failures, disputes,—and increased taxes—multiplied across Europe. One oasis of quiet was in the south of France where the claims and pretensions of the Roman Churchoid, and the invasion of Moslem Islam, had been repelled. Three men emerged there who became famous then and later: Pierre de Brueys, an able preacher of the Messiah doctrine, and Henri, a deacon monk

from Cluny with a gift of oratory. They courageously opposed Bernard of Clairveaux, at the time the most powerful representative of the Roman Church. Bernard was able to muster sufficient military support to cause Henri to flee, but he was unable to fill the resultant empty churches of disillusioned believers who wanted nothing to do with the official Church. These rebellious Messiah believers spread rapidly outside the prevailing Roman Churches and were persecuted under various designations such as Henricians, Petrobrussians, Bogomils, Poor Men of Lyons, Albigenses, Waldeneses and other names:

Rome in the thirteenth century, despite the Church and State rivalries, was not an important or industrial city of any great consequence. Its citizens, from small shopkeepers to the great banking and commercial families, mostly depended economically on the presence of the Papal Curia and the large number of visiting pilgrims, prelates and litigants seeking preferences and influence. The population was around 30,000. A century later, after the ravages of the Black Death plague, this was reduced to 20,000 and described as "*a city filled with huts, thieves and vermin, where in the neighbourhood of St Peter's witches were seen at night!*"

In the thirteenth century Pope Boniface VIII issued a bull entitled *Clericus laices*, pronouncing that clerics were not to pay taxes; those who did so, and the officials who demanded these, were to be excommunicated from the Church. Universities who enforced taxation of clerics were to be interdicted, and none of them were to be given absolution except at death. Temporal authority should be placed under spiritual; salvation of the soul was subject to the Roman pontiff.

Because education was becoming a practice in several nations, led by Celtic monks and monasteries, such pronouncements created increasing pressures and protests from the laity who, educated for the first time, began to understand how the political and religious systems affected their societies and destinies on what authority. The papacy became dominated by lawyers, and it was complained there were "*twenty lawyers to every theologian*", until eventually the Roman Church not only became a secular world on its own but primarily

a legal organization run by the Papal Curia, or Churchoid court.

As the great Islamic invasion had first swept across the world from Asia Minor many Messiah believers were scattered or absorbed into Islam, especially in Persia, Syria and Arabia. In Syria Christians even became prominent in the Islamic imperial court as doctors, teachers of philosophy, science and literature. From the seventh to the thirteenth century the Eastern Orthodox Syrian Churchoid was as ubiquitous and important in the East as the Roman Churchoid was in the West. In the thirteenth century there even was a Chinese Nestorian, Yabha-alaha III, as Catholikos of the Syrian Churchoid.

The unholy combination of Roman Churchoid and monarchic States in Europe was in conflict with the militant "*heresy*" of Islam's fusion of religion and politics, Islam having the advantage spiritually with its primary emphasis on total obedience to God. This had been conspicuously evident during the Roman Churchoid's egregious "*Crusades*". At the same time the Byzantine Empire, with its capital of Constantinople (now Istanbul) was being threatened from within by the rising power of the Seljuk Turks, a breakaway faction of the Eastern Orthodox Churchoid, with a strong Moslem State centred in Mosul, which had captured the important region of Edessa.

By the thirteenth century Genghis Khan with his rampaging pagan Mongols had emerged to terrorize Asia Minor and Europe, but he was tolerant with the Christians, especially Nestorians, several of whom he used in important political negotiations with the western nations. In many places in Asia Christian buildings were as prominent as Islamic mosques and heathen temples. When the Roman Franciscan and Jesuit missionaries arrived in China in the thirteenth and later centuries they found many Syrian Christians already there. The Franciscan, John of Monte Corvino, who died in China in 1328, wrote:

"I proceeded on my journey and made my way to Cathay, the realm of the Emperor of the Tartars, who is called the great Cham. To him I presented a letter of our Lord the Pope, and invited him to adopt the Catholic Faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, but he had grown too old in idolatry . . ."

In the early fourteenth century a new religious movement called

Beguines emerged in France which involved women only, devoted primarily to a form of mystic union with God. The name of the movement is of unknown origin but they were known as *mulieres sanctae*, or "holy women", and by the middle of the century it had spread through France, Germany and the Low Countries. It began with upper class women and gradually worked its way downwards as their work among women of all classes involved them increasingly in social as well as spiritual activities.

One of the most remarkable of the *Beguines* was Marguerite Porete, burned for heresy in 1310, who wrote a book, entitled *A Mirror of Simple Souls*, about prayer in lyrical prose as an expression of knowing and loving God. She described the experience as like "climbing a mountain" in seven stages, the summit of which was union with God:

"The first stage is when the will is set to keep the commandments of God . . .

"The second stage is when God reveals something beyond His commandments . . .

"The third stage is to impose the will of the spirit over the will of the body . . .

"The fourth stage is when the will of the spirit and the body are united with the will of God . . .

"The fifth stage is for the spirit to perceive the will of God in the service of the body . . .

"The sixth stage is to bring the will of God and the spirit to direct the body in the divine task . . .

"The seventh stage we cannot know in this life but only when the spirit is returned to God . . ."

The *Beguines* movement took many forms as it spread across western Europe: mostly they lived in communities, but these varied in size from households, or small groups of sixty or so, or within the protection of walled enclosures, supporting themselves with caring, nursing, sewing, dress-making and similar community activities. At the Council of Viennes in 1311, a decree was issued ordering their dissolution but they continued to exist in smaller groups, mainly in

Belgium. The male counterparts, calling themselves *Beghardis*, never really flourished and disappeared during the French Revolution.

The thirteenth and fourteenth centuries produced a remarkable series of outstanding Messiah believers opposing the authoritarianism of the Roman Churchoid, given the name of "*medieval mystics*". Meister Eckhart was a German Dominican whose spiritual teaching was appreciated by ordinary individuals throughout Germany but led him to being condemned as a heretic. He described the impossibility of reconciling two different elements in his *Book of Divine Consolation*:

"No cask can hold two different kinds of drink. If it is to contain wine then they must of necessity pour the water out; the cask must become empty and free. Therefore, if you are to receive God's joy and God, you are obliged to pour out created things...In a few words, everything that is to receive and be capable of receiving should and must be empty . . . When nothing but God can console you, then truly God does console you, and with him and in him everything that is joy consoles you".

In 1307 the Vice-General of the Dominican order in Saxony was the celebrated Meister Eckhart attached to the University of Paris, who was considered the most learned man of his time. Eventually Eckhart's writings were condemned by the Pope, and the Emperor Charles IV instructed the Inquisitors to examine the books of all laymen and clergy, because laymen were not permitted to write about the Holy Scriptures and they would be tempted to be like the "*heretical*" Beghards and Beghines. Later he sent Inquisitors in greater numbers throughout Europe with the Pope's authority to seek out heretics and burn them, until the greater part of Europe became a hellish scene of cruel burnings and executions. Despite this, there was an upsurge of defiant spiritual individuals in different countries in Europe who taught and wrote about the Messianic gospel.

Jan van Ruysbroeck was said to be "*a quiet shabby street-preacher*" in Brussels who left the city at age fifty to found an isolated community devoted to prayer. He preached against "*false mysticism*" and "*one-fold simplicity which they take to be God*", saying:

"They would heed and know as little of all the works which God has wrought, and all that Scripture teaches, as though not one line had ever been written, for they believe themselves to have found and to possess that for the sake of which all Scriptures have been made, namely, the blind essential rest which they feel. But in fact they have lost God and all the ways which may lead to him; for they have no more inwardness, nor more devotion, nor holy practises, than a dead beast has."

In England a young woman called Julian, from the name of her church, St Julian's of Norwich, wrote about sixteen visions she received in her search for the knowledge of *"the Lord's meaning"*. After fifteen years of the vision she concluded *"Love was his meaning."*

Another "visionary" was William Langland, author of *The Vision of William Concerning Piers the Ploughman*, an allegorical poem satirizing both Church and Society, especially pilgrims in search of sanctity from supposedly holy places, images, and shrines of saints.

Then there was the unknown author of the influential *The Cloud of Unknowing*, rumoured to be a country parson in England. It was a popular record of how an individual may find God by loving and not by thinking, for those *"really and wholly determined to follow Christ perfectly."*

"For though we through the grace of God can know fully about all other matters, and think about them – yes, even the very works of God himself—yet of God himself can no man think. Why? Because he may well be loved, but not thought. By love he can be caught and held, but by thinking never."

Towards the close of the fourteenth century a thirteen-year-old Thomas á Kempis was sent to one of the increasingly famous *"Brethren of the Common Life"* communities spreading across Europe. The members were dedicated to serving God without taking monastic vows, and were known for their piety and commitment to education. In addition to his teaching Thomas wrote *The Imitation of Christ*, a book that would not only be famous at the time but would become the second most popular book in the world after the *Bible*. It

could be summed up in his words: *“Let Jesus be loved first and above all. Love all men for Jesus’ sake, but Jesus for himself.”*

While the monastic orders and spiritual communities were developing missionary outreach in foreign nations in the fourteenth century, in Europe the Roman Churchoid was increasing its dictatorial hold by claiming sole direct access to God. Alvarus Pelagius, a Spanish Franciscan, carried the Thomas Aquinas doctrine to a logical conclusion by declaring that, since all power in heaven and earth had been given to Christ, his representative on earth, the Pope, had been given the same authority:

“The Pope seems to those who view him with the spiritual eye to be, not a man, but a God. There are no bounds to his authority. He can declare to be right what he will and can take away from any their rights as he seems fit. To doubt this universal power leads to being shut out from salvation. The great enemies of the Church are the heretics, who will not wear the yoke of true obedience. These are extremely numerous in Italy and Germany, and in Provence, where they are called Beghards and Beghines. Some call them ‘Brethren’, others ‘the Poor in Life’, others ‘Apostles’. The Apostles and Beghards have no fixed dwelling, take nothing with them on their journeys, never beg, and do no work. This is the worse in their case because they were formerly builders, smiths etc . . .”

This deification of the Pope from Spain gave new impetus to the Inquisition in its pursuit of heretics who would not submit to the Roman Churchoid’s claims to divinely approved status and the related claims to power over the monarchic States. When Pope Boniface VIII was enthroned at the close of the thirteenth century, the kings of Germany and France noted the decreasing support for the Roman Churchoid—there had been eleven Popes in the previous forty years – and they now asserted their authority over the Churchoid, rejecting the Pope’s claims to universal power.

King Philip of France and Edward I of England needed money for their wars so they demanded money from the clergy in their respective nations. Pope Boniface VIII resisted, but had to retreat when the king of France cut off bullion supplies to the papacy. A few years later, when Boniface threatened Philip with

excommunication, Philip sent his soldiers to arrest the hubristic Pope and a month later he died in exiled humiliation in Avignon in France. From that time the centre of papal influence became predominantly French, with most of the curia's cardinals being Frenchmen. Thirty years later the papacy and curia returned to Rome under Pope Gregory XI with greatly reduced influence.

During the fourteenth century the nations of Europe enjoyed an expansive period in populations and economy. New agricultural lands had been cultivated outside the jurisdiction of the monasteries, frontiers had been extended, new trades and industries were being developed, standards of living had risen, and a strong bourgeois middle-class was emerging with the weakening of the Papal Roman Churchoid and its associated monasteries with their feudal domination of peasantry. This new political middle class phenomenon provided the resurgent monarchic States with an instrument to counter the former powers of the aristocracy. In response the Roman Churchoid launched a counter-attack to destroy all "*heretical*" literature, and an edict was published in Strasburg condemning all such works as well as their authors and that all such had to be surrendered and burned.

In England, Henry IV was in the midst of his dispute with the Roman Churchoid regarding the issue of interference with his State rule. He was also in dispute with his English Messiah believers, known as "*Lollards*" (meaning "*babblers*") which had become so prevalent that Henry introduced death by burning as punishment. One of the most prominent of Henry's opponents was John Wycliffe, an eminent Oxford scholar, who was the leader of the movement to return to following divinely authorized Scripture and Jesus the Messiah. In his treatise *The Kingdom of God*, and other writings, he affirmed: "*the gospel of Jesus the Messiah is the only source of true religion*" and that "*the Scripture alone is the truth*". He denied the Roman Churchoid's doctrine of transubstantiation and the claims of the papal office, equating the pope with the Antichrist. He was ordered to appear before the pope but he refused, declaring:

"The Messiah during his life on earth was of all men the poorest, casting from him all worldly authority. I deduce from these premises, as a

simple counsel of my own, that the Pope should surrender all temporal authority of the civil power and advise his clergy to do the same”.

One of the foreign students who listened to the lectures of John Wycliffe at Oxford University was a Jerome of Prague, and he returned to Prague full of enthusiasm about the truths of Scripture. He was a preacher of great power and one of those who came under his influence was Jan Hus, a doctor of theology and confessor to the Queen of Bohemia. Between them, and others who soon followed in both Czech and German languages, they incurred the wrath of the Archbishop of Prague and the Pope, and they were excommunicated and their writings burned in public. One influential book that survived was *The Net of Faith*, by a Peter Cheltschizki, in which he stated:

“Nothing else is sought in this book but that we, who come last, desire to see the first things and wish to return to them insofar as God enables us. We are like people who have come to a house that has been burnt down and try to find the original foundations. This is the more difficult in that the ruins are grown over with all sorts of growth, and many think that these growths are the foundation, and say, ‘This is the foundation’, and ‘This is the way in which all must go’, and others repeat this after them . . . So that in the novelties they think they have found the true foundation, whereas they have found something quite different and contrary to the true foundation . . .”

The world-wide advance of the militant Islam peaked between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries due to the combination of the devastating “Black Death” plague in both Eastern and Western nations; and the increasing limitations of the 5000-year-old agrarian system in competition with the new forces of wealth: sea-faring technology, new economic and political systems emerging in Europe and Americas. The clash of these systems on existing cultures and age-old beliefs and practices produced unprecedented tensions on the Muslim Empire as their agrarian and Koran based systems were not equipped to withstand the cultural consequences of this new “Commercial Revolution”.

The thousand years following the Prophet Mohammed's death had seen Islam spread from Arabia westwards to the Atlantic Ocean, and eastwards to the Pacific Ocean to predominate in over thirty countries, mostly in North Africa and Asia to the borders of Russia. It gave birth to the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires, integrating the secular with the spiritual, observance of performance over correctness of doctrine; which meant that decisions were not made in terms of religion and politics, or church and state, but between obeying God's (Allah's) will, and rejecting every other alternative. The classical Islamic languages had no equivalent expressions for "religion" and "politics", so there were no internal frameworks to create tensions or rivalries such as existed in multi-fractured Europe. In Islam's military and imperial expansion this was summed up in its slogan: "*Convert or Die*".

In the fourteenth century a natural catastrophe occurred which accelerated the decline of the Roman Churchoid, the "*Black Death plague*" which ravaged the whole of Europe. As thousands, and then millions, died with the mysteriously raging and uncontrollable disease, the Roman Churchoid was demonstrably helpless except for its incredible support for "*flagellation*" with whips—often with pieces of bone or metal attached – as their proposed solution to the crisis, producing more disillusion and loss of belief. There was little distinction made between alleged heretics and Black Death victims, and the horrendous combination of persecutions and imminent plague death only served to multiply defections from the Roman Churchoid to the spreading Churches of the Messiah. An anonymous writer of that period in a document preserved in Strasbourg, stated:

“. . . God did great things for the fellowship. Severe persecution broke over the servants of Christ; they were driven from land to land, and to the present time this cruelty continues. But, since the Church of the Messiah was founded, the true believers have never been so far reduced that in the world, or in at least some countries, some of the saints have not been found. Also, our brethren, on account of persecution, have at times crossed the sea, and in a certain district, have found brethren, but because they did not understand the language of the country, intercourse with them was difficult

and they have returned . . . We believe that the Church of Christ will be raised again in greater numbers and strength. The founder of our covenant is Christ and the Head of our Church is Jesus the Son of God”.

At the close of the fourteenth century the accession of Henry IV in England precipitated a wave of heresy hunting, especially against the *Lollards*. In 1401 the first English statute was passed for the burning of heretics, and the first Lollard martyr was a William Sawtrey. A century later there was a Lollard revival which contributed to the spread of the Protestant Reformation and influenced Henry VIII's anti-clerical legislation.

Chapter 7

will be available on this site on the 1st April 2012