

# The Politics of Jesus Christ: Part 2

By Ken Aitken 11.01 – 01.06

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## The Christian Church Sequence:

I recently received an e-mail query from a woman in America regarding an e-mail broadcast I had sent around the world called: '**The Value of People ..... NEW CRIMES ON THE ROAD TO "PROGRESS"**'

She said: '**I ESPECIALLY NOTICED THIS CREDIT FOR FIRST CENTURY CHRISTIANITY: Woman Received Freedom and Dignity**

*'Off the top of my head ---Seems to me the role of Christian churches (Catholic and Eastern Orthodox in particular) then worked diligently to keep a woman in her place. At one point the Catholic Church performed marriages on the church steps to keep woman from defiling the buildings. Remember things like the hierarchies devised to keep Kings in power. Can't see much difference between early Christian women and her Jewish counterparts. For a religion to survive it must be both adaptable and encompassing. Look at all the old ones that have died from inflexibility and inability to assimilate other cultures. The truth is Gods of Rome, Greece, Egypt or Norse were made for those cultures and acted as part of those groups identity. Take a look at Paganism -- one would have thought the religion had died out except for a few folks. but it seems to be re-inventing itself as an earth friendly belief system and shedding all nearly all the pagan deities except by poetic connotations. Then again, for centuries Native American or Native Peoples elsewhere have had a cultures that assimilated Christianity to blend with older myths.*

*I wish I could recall the Gnostic and other early sects better, Dan Brown rants in his books how the Roman church in particular re-wrote the role of women from a mystical elevation to a subservient partaker. Perhaps the message is that Christianity would be revealed over the years and its messages be refined to reflect and be part of any society by appreciating the will and efforts of its citizens'.*

**.... ANY COMMENTS?' ..... my comments were these:**

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Note the Christian churches (Catholic and Eastern Orthodox in particular) didn't emerge until the 3rd and 4th Centuries as Christendom in the Western World. This paper documents how the Christian Community became the Christian Church with an emphasis a Christian Philosophy with good Christian Principles ie. not a Christian Spirituality but as Christian Religion. The Church changed from being Community to one of being a Corporation. This began to emerge in the 3rd and 4th Centuries as Christendom in the Western World. The Apostle Peter came to be seen as the earthly successor to Jesus Christ on Earth .... the first Pope. Therefore all Popes had a right to direct the form and strategy of the Church because they alone heard from God. The Church Community in becoming a Corporation led some of these changes:

- Jewish Church becomes a Gentile Church (Gentile is any position which wasn't Jewish ie. Greek, Roman etc.)
- Gentile Converts steeped in Greek Platonic philosophy began to predominate in the Church
- The Church becomes the gateway to God and the spirit realm

- The priest represents this removed spirit realm
- The Church became the gateway to Heaven with the Church very much at the centre
- The Church: The priest + the mass + sacraments = The way to Salvation into the spirit realm
- These were the key mediators
- There came about a separation of common life from the spiritual realm
- This view increasing became the status quo across Europe
- It extinguished the lamp of Celtic Christianity in Ireland and Britain it forcibly caused the abbeys and churches to become part of the Holy Roman Empire ..... see the following websites:
- [www2.gol.com/users/stuart/celtihs.html](http://www2.gol.com/users/stuart/celtihs.html) (Celtic Christianity)
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- [www.esatclear.ie/~dougheff](http://www.esatclear.ie/~dougheff) (Celtic Prayer Centre)

A marriage of Rome and Empire led to:

- Launching of the Crusades
- Saved Europe from Islam
- Made the nations and rulers subservient to the Pope under the threat of excommunication
- Kept the masses confused by Latin

It further meant that three realms emerged:

Neoplatonism was at work in the Church (The New influence of Plato .... Greek Philosopher from 600 B.C.)

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**1. God in the Spirit Realm:** the perfect realm .... forever removed from life .... the ideal dimension found the eternal realm .... Detached from the temporal .... Known only vaguely through concepts and possibly available after death.

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**2. The Church:** The priest + the mass + sacraments ..... These were the key mediators = The way to Salvation

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**3. The Created Realm:** was seen to be not the real realm but one of dark shadows and imperfect forms ... Christians lived in a wispy land of shadows .... Was the temporary testing ground for the reality of the next worlds arrival .... Humanity was greatly devalued:

- Human sexuality denied .... Led to an emphasis on celibacy by priests
  - Everyday activities were considered to be in opposition to higher spiritual pursuits
  - Marriage, family and secular work were devalued (hence the marriages on church steps in case woman defiled the church)
  - This led to a view whereby other world things like celibacy, sacraments and obsessive moralism replaced a common view on humanity
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### **The Historical Outworking of The Christian Church Sequence:**

- St. Peter's Square itself, St. Peter's Basilica (<http://members.aol.com/Sokamoto31/vaticano2.htm>)

On this website is a vast impressive aerial view of St. Peter's Square in Vatican City which looks over Rome. You see on this website the following things:

- Obelisk is at the center of the square.
- You see the basilica of St. Peter's = Construction begins in 1506 and completed in 1626. You see the dome = Original designed by Donato d'Angelo Bramante, designed by Michelangelo Buonarroti
- You see the facade = Designed by Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini.

- Peter's Square = Designed by Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini.

When we had Week 4 of our Italy holiday in Rome in 2005, we stayed in a small convent on the edge of St. Peter's Square: Santo Spirito. In the two photos on the website above, the convent was one minute around the corner of Peter's Square .... circled by the big colonnade of columns .... the taller building in the middle of the photograph to the right of the circle of columns.

From there we walk downstairs after breakfast to see places:

- **St. Peter's Square itself, St. Peter's Basilica**
- **The Palatine plus the Forum Area (First Century)** see plus website at:  
<http://www.bigfoto.com/europe/italy/rome/> ..... includes general photos of Rome as well
- **Colosseum:**  
<http://www.bigfoto.com/europe/italy/rome>
- **The Catacombs** .... One of six around Rome (see [www.catacombe.roma.it/welcome.html](http://www.catacombe.roma.it/welcome.html))
- **The Vatican Museum** (see [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)) the Vatican Museum is something to be seen!! This website gives a tiny impression of the span of years which are covered in the Museum.

It was interesting to note even though Harriet and I have a Christian Spirituality which focuses on Jesus Christ alone vs. the Church, we have a real relationship with Catholic Christians .... even though we do not identify with the Pope as being the successor of Jesus Christ on earth + the worship of Mary being the mother of Jesus + the worship of all the Saints. We just arrived in Rome just one week after Pope John Paul II had died in April 2005. The chairs were still out in rows in St. Peter's Square from all the hundreds of thousands who come to pay their respect at his death. There were still hundreds of visitors around Rome.

We have a great focus on the value of people and not on organisational systems. We have met and shared together with Catholic Christians a wonderful sense of Christian Spirituality independent of their background. We looked through the impressive architecture of the basilica of St. Peter's, the dome St. Peter's, Peter's Square itself and circled by the big colonnade of columns. We went through many wonderful churches on our travels in our four weeks in Italy but then, would Jesus Christ have said to build all this? .... I hardly think so. This comes as a consequence of the three Pillars of Religious Christianity vs. Spirit-filled Christianity discussed in Part 1:

.... From [www.babylonthegreatisfalling.net](http://www.babylonthegreatisfalling.net) >>> **What is New** ... by Jack Hook

The three pillars of pollution that have overtaken a segment of Western Christendom today:

- **Militant Patriotism** (pride of this life) rooted in the "just" war doctrine of Constantine and Augustine. The main purpose of this pillar is to unify all of Christendom to then take "dominion" over the nations, even by military force if necessary. These men really think the Lord Jesus Christ has given them the power and authority to establish the Kingdom of God on this Earth "without" the Lord's bodily return and presence. These men have distorted the prophecies of the second coming of Jesus. The Papacy and Presidency are seen as the two offices of power that will help bring this pass.

Jesus says in comparison: '*You are to love your enemies*'

**Matt 5:39** But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

**Mat 5:40** And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.

**Mat 5:41** And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

**Mat 5:42** Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

- **2. The Prosperity Gospel** (lust of the eyes, love of money)

**1 John 2:15, 16** Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

- **3. The New Age Psycho-babble** (lust or love of self and fleshly pleasures) of the purpose-driven, possibility-thinking, and mega-church movements. See **1 John 2:16** above

When I look at what is happening on a global scale, I see that this form of Christianity is not growing very rapidly. There is growing evidence that the center of Christendom has moved. Africans are running to accept Jesus Christ. It is a scene playing out all across the developing world. Christianity is sweeping across the southern hemisphere and Asia like a tidal wave. The scale of Christian growth is almost unimaginable. Dr. Philip Jenkins, distinguished professor of History and Religious Studies at Penn State University ..... Jenkins shocked and probably panicked some of America's political and media elite with his acclaimed book, '**The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity**'. Jenkins argues the greatest movement of the past century was not communism or capitalism but global Christianity. This area is examined more fully with **Part 1 in "BACK TO THE FUTURE: "A TIDAL WAVE of Christianity"**

Read and meditate also on these scriptures:

**Galatians 6:7-8** "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

**Romans 12:19-21** "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

**Matthew 5:16** Jesus says, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

**1 Thessalonians 5:12-15** "And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake and be at peace among yourselves. Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men."

## A Brief Overview of the Focus of Jesus Christ ... from Part 1:

Jesus calls us into a new community with Himself initially as a vertical spirituality ..... He gives us a new identity as children in the Kingdom of Heaven. Through this new identity, we can then be in relationship with others of like mind in a horizontal spirituality. This is the final meaning of the cross with its two members, a strong vertical member with God and us and a horizontal member, us with everyone else linked together. Jesus set out a basic ground of verbal teaching in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5), for His new Kingdom Order where he taught His disciples principles like:

- Blessed are the poor in spirit
- Blessed are those who mourn
- Blessed are the meek
- Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness
- Blessed are the merciful
- Blessed are the pure in heart
- Blessed are the peacemakers
- Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteous sake
- Blessed are these who are reviled and persecuted

..... not strong qualities to take over the world ..... but when applied by Jesus followers, actually worked and turned the world upside down ..... when outworked with the preaching of the Gospel. Before He left us, He prayed for you and I in: John 17:20 *'Neither, pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe, on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.*

*And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:*

*I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.*

*Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.*

*O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.*

*And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.'*

In Jesus's prayer there are only two kinds of people: those for Him and those against Him. A few points in Jesus's prayer:

- that they all may be one: There is only one group .... His followers called from the world ..... not many different followers of all different churches ..... followers of Him alone as the Lord Jesus Christ
- as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: the degree of togetherness was to be the same degree that Jesus was with His Father = the standard
- that the world may believe that thou hast sent me: Our degree of unity would result in the world believing in Jesus Christ.

The present Christian is caught between the historical legacy of two alternatives, that of the early Christian Church and the influence of later centuries. There is a tension between Church as relationships and Church as a rigid organisation. The first leads to a warm, open and communal approach but not necessarily with organisational direction. The second leads to a

more corporate approach, more formal but not communal. It is Christ-ianity as God's Community with Spirituality versus Church-ianity as Religion or God's Corporation.

Jesus didn't start an organisation but developed relationships with a small core of people. These then multiplied around the then known world into small committed fellowships. In the New Testament Greek, 'Church' is translated from the word '*Ecclesia*' which is simply a gathering or community of relationships. It had no religious connotations at all ..... it could even mean a political gathering.

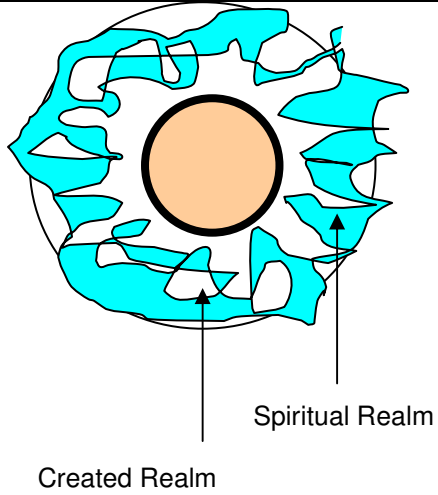
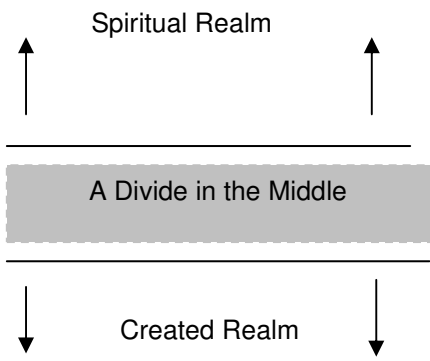
The one thing really missing in our Postmodern World is the loss of community. This is not a geographic community but a relational one. It is building people together into a new unity = New Earth Community (my application of it) and if necessary facilitating them into an appropriate fellowship. Rivers Community Church should be a localised regional relational gathering of such people.

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Century came a Christian heresy of Gnosticism. This was a synthesis of Christianity, Eastern Mysticism and Spirituality of various Roman Mystery Cults which led to a syncretistic approach. This belief system was firmly put to death by the real teaching of Jesus Christ in this period. Gnosticism lay dead for 1500 years then was brought to life again. It has become Neo-Gnosticism in this present century in New Age teaching. This began to occur in 1945 when 50 original Gnostic texts were discovered in Egypt in clay pots in the Nile delta. These were translated into English by very liberal Christian scholars who saw them as valid alternative to orthodox Christianity. This gave rise to the New Age Movement and the bigger groundswell of what I call the New Spirituality Movement.

In the history of the Christian Church, there was a major change in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century from a Hebrew view of life to a view influenced by Greek thinking. The Hebrew view of life was very wholistic whereby all aspects of life were unified and were very important to God.

It is not a matter of saying that our worldview as Christians is biblical and that is that. The clear facts of history reveal that our reading of the Bible has always had the most to do with dominant worldview (our design specifications) of a particular period in history.

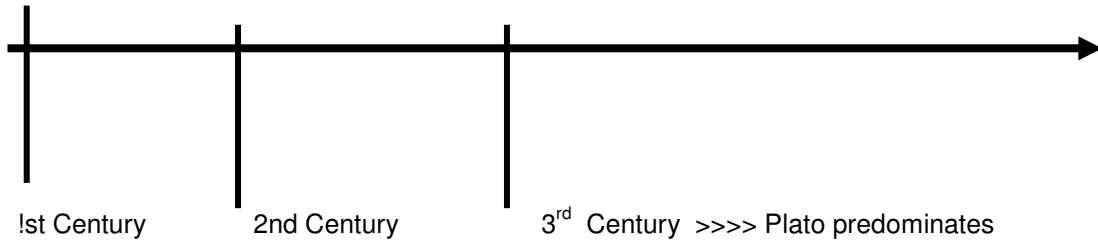
Down through the centuries, the Western and Christian world has for the greater part, drawn its worldview from the Greek view on creation. Some of the consequences of this influence are listed below in diagrams and a table format.

THE HEBREW WORLDVIEW OF LIFE	THE GREEK WORLDVIEW OF LIFE
<b>Unified Worldview</b>	<b>A divided Dualistic world</b>
 <p>The diagram shows a central orange circle representing the 'Created Realm'. This circle is surrounded by a complex, irregular cyan-colored shape representing the 'Spiritual Realm'. Two arrows point from the labels 'Created Realm' and 'Spiritual Realm' to their respective parts in the diagram.</p>	 <p>The diagram illustrates a dualistic world divided into two realms. At the top is the 'Spiritual Realm', and at the bottom is the 'Created Realm'. A horizontal line separates the two, with a grey shaded box labeled 'A Divide in the Middle' positioned just below the line. Two upward-pointing arrows are on the left and right sides of the line, and two downward-pointing arrows are on the left and right sides of the 'Created Realm'.</p>



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## The Christian Church Sequence: A Change in Focus



The early Christian started with a Hebrew world view with Jesus Christ as the fulfilment of the Old Covenant of the Old Testament

- Jewish Church becomes a Gentile Church
- Gentile Converts steeped in Greek Platonic philosophy
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## Neoplatonism at work in the Church

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The priest + the mass + sacraments .....  
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### Reference:

Thwaites, James 'The Church beyond the Congregation ..... the Strategic Role of the church in the Postmodern era' Paternoster Press

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## CONCLUSION:

When I speak about Christianity, I mean a Christianity which is focussed on the resurrected Jesus Christ. It is also focussed on the Holy Spirit who He gave to be His personal representative to each person here on earth. It is Spirit-filled Christianity and not a ritualised, hierarchal Christianity that has Corporation view of itself. Harriet (my wife) and I plus our two children personally share in this Spirit-filled Christianity. It is a focus on Spirituality vs. Religion. This Spirituality could be called a '**Spirituality from Jesus Christ**'. It is this life which has sustained us and our family of two children since my severe brain injury ten years + ago.

I cannot drive at the moment due to the severe accident I had ten + years ago in December 1995. However, when you let God into your inner life in an active way, you get healing, restoration and transformation of life purpose.

Even though I cannot drive at the moment, I have learnt to drive on the Internet and see hundreds of people at the same time. Since March 2001, I have started the following three e-mail broadcasts: See my story.... '**The Recycled Man**' on my website: '**Brain Injury Survivor Network (BISN) for Brain Injury People** ([www.braininjury-survivors.org](http://www.braininjury-survivors.org)) for details of these e-mil broadcasts..

**Statistics for brain injury in QLD :** There are apparently 11,000 people a year in Queensland who finish up with a brain injury from various causes. Of those who survive, 4000 of these people will be permanently disabled in some way with reduced brain function capabilities. Less than two hundred of these can expect to receive the quality of care and further rehabilitation they need let alone deserve.

Of those with a permanent brain injury, up to fifty percent of marriages and relationships will fold up. It is a big silent epidemic in our community. You can see someone in a wheelchair but you cannot see all the invisible changes that have gone on with a brain-injury.

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