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INTRODUCTION

It could be said that the seed of globalisation was sown when Moses declared to the Hebrew people that there was one commandment to be obeyed above all others. That commandment, the first of ten, was: 'I am Yahweh your God ...You shall have no gods except me'¹.

This was the beginning of monotheism as we know it today. Monotheism created the necessary container, or myth, that has facilitated the development of globalisation. The god of Moses, who ended up living in the heavens, has a global vision of the earth. From this perspective, the earth is seen as one unit. In economic terms, the earth is one market.

Monotheism is like a cuckoo's egg in the nest of another bird. If there is only one god, then belief in all other gods must be rejected. The existence of other gods cannot be tolerated. They must be thrown out of the nest. If there is only one god, then the correct way of seeing things is this god's way. All other ways of seeing things are anathema.

The relationship of this god to the earth is that of creator-created. According to the Genesis story², the earth was created and everything on it in six days. On the seventh day 'God'³ rested. The implicit presumption in this story is that, after the creation, this god's work was done. He retired to the heavens and left the earth

1 *Genesis 20:2*. All Biblical quotations in this book are from *The Jerusalem Bible*, standard edition, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1966.

2 *Genesis 1:1-2:4*

3 In this book, the god of monotheism is referred to as 'God', in parentheses and with a capital 'G'. All other references to a god use the lower case 'g'.

to fend for itself. While distant, he would be available if called upon.

Monotheism sets this god in the heavens as the ideal towards which we should all strive. We are invited to take a journey to the heavens, to be with 'God'. The journey it calls us to make is one that disconnects us from the earth.

Society has established this journey for us. The paths are already there for us to traverse. Many people have travelled this journey before us, including probably our parents. If we follow the path that society has laid out for us, consciously or unconsciously, we will journey towards disconnectedness.

We start this journey by removing ourselves from the local and the particular. We leave the land that we are familiar with, that we identify with. We deliberately leave behind the sense of belonging, of local community, of communal identity. We become individuals, disconnected from our roots, floating, as it were, above the surface of the earth.

As we continue this journey, we begin to see ourselves as separate from nature. We live in cities where we are removed from nature. We are on the earth but not of it. Nature then becomes an object, something other than us, a resource that we can use. We lose all sense of the sacred in nature. The old ways of seeing mountains as holy, lakes as the lairs of demons, trees as carrying special meaning, animals as spirit carriers, birds as mediators of the divine, wells as entrances into the womb of mother earth, are all gone. According to this monotheistic myth, the gods, the spirits, the divine energies, have removed themselves from the earth and now live in the heavens as one entity, leaving behind a spiritless land of products, resources and waste.

On completion of this journey towards 'God', we believe we will achieve the ultimate perspective – a detached view of the world from heaven or outer space. There we will become like this

god⁴. We will lose our material dependence on this earth. We will lose any remaining connection with this earth. We will become one with 'God'.

Modern Economic Globalisation

Globalisation, as we know it today, is a movement towards oneness. All humankind is moving towards the hegemony of one point of view, of one way of doing things, of one style of living on this planet. The diverse ways in which humans have lived on this earth in the past are being discarded and now 'one size fits all'.

In the Western world, it is easy to see that most people no longer have a connection with the land. Garaged in cities and towns, they have lost the sense of community and local belonging that living on the land engendered. Their lives are deeply immersed in products and services. Like the god they believe in, they are creators. Their connection is not to the earth but to products of their own making.

The developed parts of the world have arrived at this state of total immersion in production and consumption. But in the less developed parts of the world, we can still witness the process of dynamic transformation that has to take place for people to reach this point. In these countries, people are being uprooted from their indigenous and subsistence ways of living. They are migrating to the cities, where they look for paid work. Their lands are being transformed into large-scale industrial food-producing units. Their markets are opening up to the multinational corporations.

In this process, people leave behind their deep-rooted connection to nature, to place and to community. Their loneliness at the loss of this connectedness is artificially eased by an attachment to products – an attachment that is encouraged by the global market and especially by advertising.

4 Cf. *Col.3:1-4; 1Thess.4:13-18*

Products and Services

Products are materials of all descriptions that have been taken out of their natural setting and processed in order to be made useful to people who do not live in that setting. People in the developed world do not hunt for their food, nor do they grow it in their own gardens and farms. They buy their food in shops and supermarkets. All of their food comes in the form of products. As globalisation increases, these food products are becoming homogenised and available globally.

Today we live in a world of products and services. Our food, our entertainment, our means of transport, our education, our health care – all are now products or services, human creations, that we pay for and consume. It is hard to imagine living in a world without them. This is because it has been made impossible to live in any other way. Yet this world of production and consumption is only a recent phenomenon. Less than one hundred years ago, the people of the island of Inis Mór, where I now live, had virtually no modern products or services. They lived off the land and the sea and they cared for each other as best they could.

The word ‘globalisation’ has entered our vocabulary at this time because the availability of products and services has reached a critical mass worldwide. As this book illustrates, the journey towards globalisation began with the creation of the monotheistic myth. The first global products and services were created by corporate Christianity. Only in more recent times have multinational corporations become the main drivers of this process.

Progress, Development and Globalisation

It has taken from the time of Moses to today for changes to take place in the world to the point where it is now possible for nations to negotiate the opening up of their markets so that products and

services from anywhere in the world can be sold there. From this steady progression we have coined the word 'progress'.

Progress means the achievement of steps in the direction of globalisation. Development is a word used to describe the creation of the necessary conditions for that progress to take place. Progress and development are key words that make sense only in the context of globalisation⁵.

Globalisation is a snowball that has been rolling down the snowy slopes of the centuries and has now reached so massive a size that it is unstoppable. We can point to Moses as being the one who took the first handful of snow, squeezed it into a ball and set it rolling. It has been kept rolling by powerful people within the human family who furthered the potential of global power, global influence and global dominance throughout the centuries.

At this point in time, globalisation is no longer controlled by any one group of people or by any one nation. It is a world movement which has reached a massive scale because enough people across the globe subscribe to its vision and invest in its achievements. While the snowball continues to roll and gather further weight and volume, these people will be happy. However, they are not looking at the bottom of the mountain, towards which the snowball is hurtling.

Global Infrastructure

Globalisation is not just the trading of global products and services. It is also the transformation of the earth's surface so that it has the necessary infrastructure to facilitate this trading. A land without proper roads, bridges, harbours, airports, electrical and communication networks, fuel supplies, factories, shops, banks and

5 Cf. Wolfgang Sachs, 'On The Archaeology of the Development Idea'. Published in 6 parts in *The AISLING Magazine*, Issues 1 - 6. Aisling Publications, 1991-92.

so on, cannot accommodate globalisation. The traditional lands of indigenous, polytheistic peoples do not have this infrastructure.

Globalisation, above all, is the harnessing of human energy worldwide into a lifestyle of production and consumption. The modern human relates to the earth as that of creator to created. All material things are either human products, resources for human creativity, or waste. Humans no longer live at one with nature but relate to nature as creators, planners and managers.

In summary, globalisation transforms the physical landscape and the lives of all humans living on that landscape. Ultimately, everything living on this planet is affected.

As humankind today reaches the penultimate stages of this journey towards globalisation, it is significant that the photograph of the earth from outer space has become an icon of our time. This photograph is a declaration that humanity has arrived at a place where it can view the earth from outer space. Humanity now has the perspective of 'God'. The monotheistic vision is almost fulfilled. Humankind is in the final stages of becoming one with 'God'.

This Book

This book takes a binocular look at the influence of monotheism and particularly Roman Christianity⁶ on the spread of globalisation as we know it today. The phenomenon is looked at from two perspectives, which give the book two distinct halves.

The first half of the book looks at the macro picture – the roots of globalisation in monotheism and Christianity and the development of Roman Christianity as a global corporation. The

⁶ During the course of this book, I refer more to Roman Christianity than to Roman Catholicism. This is because, in the modern mind, Roman Catholicism is distinct from Protestantism and from Orthodox Christianity. Most of this book deals with a period before these distinctions came about.

second half of the book looks at the micro picture – the effect that an ambitious global, corporate version of Christianity had on a small, independent and indigenous Irish Christianity. It is hoped that the effect of combining the two perspectives in this binocular way will allow for a three-dimensional picture.

This book attributes the origin of monotheism to Moses. Monotheism emerged out of a milieu that was almost entirely polytheistic. Judaism became the first example of a sustainable society based on the idea of monotheism. However, it was not until Christianity began to develop its own institutional structure, having inherited the Judaic version of monotheism and adapted it to its own agenda, that the full possibilities of globalisation began to be imagined.

From the 4th century CE⁷ onwards, mainstream Christianity committed itself to building an institutional framework, to creating a worldwide infrastructure and to developing its sacraments and services in order to achieve worldwide dominance. It became the first global corporation. Chapters 6 to 8 chart Roman Christianity's gradual achievement of these goals.

In the second half of the book, the issue of ecclesiastical globalisation is looked at from a different angle. The perspective here is from the other side – that of the recipient of globalisation. Celtic society, in Ireland and in northern and western Britain, was one of those societies on the edge of the known world that had absorbed the Christian story and made it its own. As the Roman church developed at the centre of Europe into an authoritarian institution with a so-called 'orthodox' creed, the version of Christianity being practised by the Celtic people became intolerable to it.

This book pieces together the story of the gradual erosion

7 In this book, I use BCE and CE (Before Common Era and Common Era) instead of BC and AD. The dates are otherwise the same.

of Celtic Christianity from Britain, from mainland Europe and eventually from Ireland. The first confrontation between Celtic Christianity and Roman Christianity took place when the Celtic monk Pelagius challenged the teachings of Augustine of Hippo in the late 4th century. Despite the defeat of Pelagius in this confrontation, Celtic Christianity did not go away. It remained an irritant to Roman Christianity for a further seven hundred years and was, at one time, even a threat to its dominance. The matter was eventually settled when the Roman church, accompanied by the Norman military, overran Ireland ecclesiastically and politically in the 12th century.

This book spans four millennia. It tries to weave together the strands of history in a new way. The view taken is that of someone standing at the edge of Ireland, in the Atlantic ocean, looking east across Ireland, Europe and the world. This view facilitates the recognition of a solid connection between what commercial global corporations are doing today and what organised Christianity, with a global mission, was doing over a thousand years ago. The results have been and are the same: the destruction of diversity, the disconnection of human society from nature, from the feminine and from place and the imposition of a hegemony, or 'one size fits all' for all people.

Each chapter is written with the intention of being complete in itself. This has led, in some instances, to a certain amount of repetition. For example, the collapse of the Roman empire in the 5th century had repercussions not just throughout Europe but in Britain and in Ireland. In separate chapters, where I deal with these places and this event, I must of necessity repeat the essential aspects of this moment in history in order to set the context for what is to follow.

Overall, I hope that the reader finds that the book has a cohesiveness to it. It is attempting to question our certainties, our

hidden agendas and our unconscious attitudes. The thesis of the book is that we live in a bubble, a bubble that is four thousand years old. That bubble is defined by monotheism. Within it, the globalisation projects of religion and commerce find their home.

This book took many years to write. It is the result of a process of reflection over a lifetime. Much work has been required to clarify my thoughts and write them down in a linear and coherent fashion, for the purpose of producing this book. This has been the most difficult project I have ever undertaken. I owe deep gratitude to my wife, Tess Harper, for the love, patience and wholehearted support she has given me in so many ways throughout the project.

1

POLYTHEISM

A WORLD OF DIVERSITY

Polytheism and monotheism are two radically different perspectives on the world. The gods and goddesses of polytheism are to be found in the immediate natural environment; the god of monotheism is to be found in heaven. Polytheism of its nature embraces diversity; monotheism is essentially dogmatic. In this chapter, the polytheism of ancient Ireland is used to illustrate these differences.

Many people today experience a sense of the divine when they are out in nature. They take a walk in the forest or go down to the seashore or sit at the edge of a river. There they can feel a certain presence or energy or mystery. In ancient times in Ireland, the spiritual presence or energy or mystery to be experienced in these places of nature had the name of a specific god or goddess. One did not go there to talk to some abstract, general concept of god but to engage with a particular god or goddess associated with that place or object.

Polytheism, wherever one finds it in the world, is nature-based. Many of the gods and goddesses of polytheistic cultures are personifications of aspects of nature. To be more specific, they are personifications of the humanly experienced spiritual essence of a particular place or element of nature. These essences

2

MONOTHEISM

THE MOTHER OF GLOBALISATION

The change to monotheism, promoted under Moses, was a paradigm shift that separated Judaism from the prevailing polytheistic cultures of the time. What was new was not only a belief in a single god but a dogmatism that was not present in polytheism. This dogmatic approach facilitated the development of a hierarchical system of authority within Judaism which was different from surrounding cultures. In this system, 'God' was at the head. The result was a detailed system of laws, all of which were believed to come from this god. Israel became the first theocratic state. The success of Judaic monotheism opened up the possibility that one day all people on this earth would be connected to this one god, obeying the same laws and living the same lifestyle. Monotheism is the mother of globalisation.

When Moses came down from Mount Horeb in the Sinai Desert he brought with him the *Ten Commandments*, carved in stone. The first of these commandments stated that there was to be one god and one god only.¹ Monotheism is now the dominant form of belief in the world today. When one tries to find its source, one inevitably is led back to Moses.

One can argue that various forms of monotheism appeared in the world before the time of Moses. For example, the Egyptian pharaoh Akhnaton promoted worship of a single god Aton

1 *Exodus 20:1 - 3.*

3

JUDAISM A JOURNEY TOWARDS DISCONNECTEDNESS

Judaism was the first religion to disconnect people spiritually from earth-based gods and goddesses. It did so by connecting them to a detached male god in the heavens. This was a changed perspective on the world – a paradigm shift. Societies who adopted this perspective in later periods developed a more global vision than other societies around them. The possibilities within this new perspective only gradually emerged. That potential is still being exploited today through the process of globalisation.

Economic Globalisation

Economic globalisation, as we know it today and in its pure form, does not recognise, nor show any respect for, a spiritual presence within nature. It does not see the earth, or any part of it, as sacred. Nothing in nature, apart from humans, has either soul or spirit. Nothing has any value in itself – its sole value is in its usefulness to humanity. Words such as ‘resources’ and ‘exploitation’ belong to this way of thinking.

Economic globalisation today requires that the earth and all material things on the earth be available for exploitation as resources for the market economy. This perspective represents a materialist way of thinking. It is not the only way of thinking.

4

JESUS AND ORGANISED RELIGION

Among his fellow Jews, Jesus was an anarchist and a subversive. To the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the priests and the scribes of the time, he was provocative, challenging and, in the end, irreconcilably and fatally opposed. The consistency of the four canonical gospels in recounting Jesus's condemnation of the Jewish religious leaders of the time begs the question: would Jesus not be just as condemnatory of the religious leaders of today's Christian churches?

Jesus, it seems, is universally liked. His life and his teachings transcend his Judaism, his homeland and his historical time and continue to affect people of every generation throughout the world. No matter what people believe regarding his divinity, his miracles or his resurrection, his life and teachings still come across today as extraordinarily inspirational and relevant.

Were Jesus to come back today, what would he make of the Christianity now being practised in his name?

To make this judgement, all we have to go on are the written accounts of Jesus's life and teachings and primarily the four canonical gospels. These are not in the main first-hand accounts of eye-witnesses but compilations of stories gathered and edited for particular audiences between thirty and seventy years after Jesus's death. It is unavoidable that these accounts contain editorial bias,

5

CHRISTIANITY EVOLVING FROM JUDAISM

Christianity emerged out of Judaism but mutated from it. While remaining monotheistic, it was different from Judaism in that it replaced Moses with Jesus and disconnected itself from the Judaic 'Law'. Its disconnection from the 'Law' and consequently from a strong central authority structure, led to its diversification. Christianity, both geographically and intellectually, spread in all directions at once.

Christianity has its roots in Judaic monotheism. Jesus was a Jew, all his work was among the Jewish people and all his immediate disciples were Jews. While Jesus sought radical reform within Judaism, he never questioned its monotheism. To Jesus, the fundamental tenet of Judaism – that there was one god in heaven and that this god had spoken through Moses – was acceptable. As Christianity developed, the monotheism of Judaism was taken as a given.

After the death of Jesus, the followers of Jesus remained Jewish and were located mostly in Jerusalem. However, they suffered increasing persecution from the Jewish authorities, because their teachings were regarded as blasphemous. In the year 70 CE the Romans sacked Jerusalem. The followers of Jesus, as well as the Jews themselves, were scattered. They regrouped in Antioch, among other places and from then on began to see themselves as

6

ROMAN CHRISTIANITY THE FIRST GLOBAL CORPORATION

This chapter traces the development of the Roman model of Christianity as a corporate structure. The process began in the 4th century and has continued through to the present time. The papacy, once established, was always at the centre of this development. Key moments within the process were: the reign of Emperor Constantine, the collapse of the Roman empire, the great schism, the Gregorian reform and the Reformation.

Today, the world is filled with global corporations. These are multinational bodies that make modern products and services available throughout the world. Their primary objective is financial profit. For a significant number of them, their annual budget is larger than the gross national product of many countries.

These corporations are normally owned by shareholders who leave the running of the company to a chief executive and his or her professional staff. While these corporations have to respect the laws of any country in which they operate, often their power is so great, in terms of the amount of money they can pour into a country and the number of jobs they can create, that in reality they can operate with impunity. Today there are so many of them that together they constitute a dominant political force in the world – one which is non-democratic, unaccountable and non-transparent.

7

CORPORATE CHRISTIANITY DEVELOPING PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

The challenge facing the developing corporate Roman church of the 4th century was to fulfil its mandate to 'spread the good news throughout the world' without losing control of that 'good news'. To do this, it had to treat the 'good news' as a commercial company today would treat its product. Over the course of the following centuries, it developed the mechanisms to do that. It created uniformity throughout its jurisdiction and put structures in place to maintain that uniformity. Each particular element became standardised, packaged and controlled. In this respect, its operations were no different than any modern commercial company with global ambitions.

Let us imagine that a particular indigenous tribe of people were discovered to have, as part of their diet, a flat cake of minced meat. A Western male entrepreneur discovers this and sees in it an opportunity to create a worldwide business. He takes the recipe for the flat cake of meat from the tribe and in his kitchen he experiments with making it in different ways and with variations in ingredients, until he comes up with a formula he is happy with. He then sets up a commercial corporation and opens his first restaurant. He calls the new invention he has patented a 'burger'.

8

**THE GLOBAL AMBITIONS
OF CORPORATE CHRISTIANITY**

Every significant business today has its mission statement and an ambition to conquer the world. But before corporations had mission statements, the Christian church of Rome had missions and missionaries. Centuries prior to multinational corporations spreading their global products and services worldwide, there were Christian missionaries bringing their 'good news' to all nations. The methods that Roman Christianity developed to spread its message remain the template for global corporations today.

Today, mission statements are displayed in the public lobbies of all major institutions, from banks to schools to hospitals. It is well understood these days that without a clear agreed vision of where the corporation is intending to go, it will never get there. Small businesses are encouraged to develop an ambitious mission statement and to go out and conquer the world.

However, only a few generations ago, mission was a word used solely in connection with Christianity. A priest went on the missions. Mission stations were set up in the poorest parts of Africa. Money was collected for the missions. People who went abroad to work with the poor on behalf of Christianity were missionaries.

Christianity had a mission long before there was ever talk of a mission statement. That mission, according to Jesus, was to spread

9

CELTIC CHRISTIANITY

Celtic Christianity has its roots in a pagan indigenous spirituality that was panentheistic¹ and polytheistic. One could say that these pagan roots are its 'Old Testament'. It is a Christianity that is indigenous, organic, inculturated, non-dogmatic and anarchic. Celtic Christianity is not reconcilable with a global form of Christianity, no more than one can reconcile a McDonald's restaurant with one which serves local food and local recipes. It is non-transferable. Those who are inspired by Celtic Christianity, but not living in a Celtic region, can use that inspiration to root their spirituality in their own place, their own heritage and their own history.

When Christianity developed in Ireland, it spread in a natural, organic way. By this I mean that Christianity did not come to Ireland via an invading colonial army or large bands of foreign missionaries. Christianity came to Ireland, one could say, by a process of osmosis. Irish people absorbed from Europe the aspects of Christianity that were attractive to them and gave expression to these in an inculturated way.

While all Christianity spread in this way in the first few centuries, there are few, if any, other examples of Christianity surviving so independently for so many centuries anywhere else

1 Panentheism is a belief that the divine is to be found everywhere in nature but is distinct from it. Pantheism is a belief that elements of nature are actually divine.

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PELAGIUS AND AUGUSTINE

By the end of the 4th century CE, Christianity had become the religion of the Roman empire. Christian leaders were in a privileged position. The church's power was becoming centralised and its theology dogmatic. The dominant voices on behalf of Christianity during this period were those of Augustine and Jerome. Together they promoted a model of church that was authoritarian and misogynistic and a theology that was sin-laden. From the Celtic regions, a single voice rose to oppose them – Pelagius.

The crowning of Constantine as Roman emperor in 313 CE was a turning point in the history of Christianity. From this until the death of Constantine, Christianity was transformed from a minority religion, that had been subject to many persecutions, into being the official religion of the empire. Constantine was instrumental in not only giving Christianity this official status, but in encouraging the Christian leadership of the time to come together and establish a common platform. From this platform, a body of orthodox teaching began to emerge and the bishop of Rome gained recognition as the primary leader.

This transformation was itself a serious threat to the integrity of the gospel message, with state patronage almost guaranteed to use Christianity for its own ends. Christians who understood this felt more comfortable being persecuted than being privileged. But at the same time, the two great figures of Augustine and Jerome

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CELTIC CHRISTIANITY CONFRONTED IN BRITAIN

Pelagius travelled from the Celtic isles to Rome to confront the dogmatic theology and the authoritarian model of church that was emanating from Rome and north Africa. He was defeated in that confrontation. Then the tide turned. The Roman church began to send missions to the Celtic isles to stamp out the Pelagian and Celtic influence entirely. The first successful mission to Britain was that of Augustine of Canterbury at the end of the 6th century.

In the 5th century, Pelagius had brought the Celtic tradition to the attention of the Mediterranean church. His influence had spread throughout the Christian communities, so that, even after his condemnation in 418, he still had supporters in Jerusalem, Italy, parts of Africa and in Gaul, as well, of course, as in the Celtic isles.

Pope Celestine, who took over the papacy in 422, was vigorous in his attempts to stamp out the Pelagian influence. In 429 Celestine sent Palladius to Ireland and a Gallic synod sent bishops Lupus and Germanus to Britain. These expeditions were specifically anti-Pelagian but were not very successful. However, Patrick's mission to Ireland, which began three years later, does not seem to have had an anti-Pelagian theme¹.

1 Cf. footnote 9 in previous chapter.

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CELTIC CHRISTIANITY CONFRONTED IN EUROPE

In its Augustinian mission to Britain, Rome had found a successful strategy for its confrontation with Celtic Christianity and Pelagianism. It now needed to apply that strategy throughout Europe, where hundreds of independent Irish monasteries had established themselves – even in Italy itself. Boniface, a Benedictine monk from Britain, was the man appointed to lead the campaign.

The battle to curb the expansion of Celtic monasticism, initiated in Britain in 597 by the mission of Augustine of Canterbury, was now taken into mainland Europe. The papacy began to promote the spread of Benedictine monasticism throughout its jurisdiction. The Benedictine monastery of Monte Cassino in Italy was rebuilt. It was reopened at the beginning of the 8th century, one hundred and fifty years after it had been sacked. The rebuilding was commissioned by Pope Gregory II, Gregory I's successor.

With the Benedictine rule in one hand and the support of the political powers in the other, Rome began a campaign to convert all existing monasteries in Europe to the rule of Benedict. That campaign was led by Boniface, a British Benedictine.

Boniface the Benedictine

Boniface was born in Devon in 672. He became a Benedictine monk in his homeland before embarking on a mission to the Frisians on

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ROMAN CHRISTIANITY IN IRELAND

By the 7th century, Irish monasticism had established itself in every corner of Ireland. It had transformed Ireland into an island of scholarly monks. Irish Christianity was vigorously independent and Rome had no foothold on Irish soil. In order to create that foothold, the bones of Patrick the missionary were taken out of the cupboard, the founding of the monastery of Armagh was backdated to him and the flag of the Roman church was hoisted on Armagh hill.

Saint Patrick¹

The collapse of the Roman empire took place during the lifetime of St Patrick. Alaric the Visigoth sacked Rome in 410. Patrick spent six years as a young slave in Ireland around this time. In 431, the city of Hippo on the northern coast of Africa was under siege, as St Augustine lay there dying. In 432, Patrick began his mission to Ireland.

Patrick had been reared a Christian in Britain. His father was a deacon. However, during the period of his upbringing, the Romans were withdrawing from Britain, leaving a vacuum that was to be filled by the Angles and Saxons. As a result of this, Roman Christianity was dying in Britain. In contrast, the beginnings of

1 St Patrick and St Colmcille have already been written about in Chapter 9. I begin this chapter by presenting this material from a slightly different perspective, in order to set the context for what is to follow.

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BETRAYAL

FROM WITHIN IRELAND

Both ecclesiastically and politically, the 12th century was a watershed in Irish history. The ecclesiastical transformation took place first, with a series of synods beginning in 1101. The presence of the Vikings in the major towns of Ireland and their influence as Christian converts, were pivotal in this process. But the key people in this transformation were the abbots and bishops of Armagh. Of these, Malachy of Armagh became the central figure. Years before the Norman military arrived in 1167, a shift of power was taking place in the Irish church as the leadership was transferred from the Celtic abbots and their monasteries to the Irish bishops and Rome.

As we saw in earlier chapters, the power of the papacy was at a new height in the 12th century. This power was both ecclesiastical and political and even included power over military armies. The Gregorian reform, as it became known, was effectively centralising and enhancing papal power beyond what it had ever attained before. During this century, the Norman empire expanded throughout western Europe, and Rome had its first Norman pope.

The intensity of the process of church institutionalisation on the continent of Europe in the 12th century was sufficient to send tidal waves towards Ireland that were to swamp it, despite its

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ECCLESIASTICAL CONQUEST IN IRELAND

The Norman conquest of Ireland took place on two fronts, ecclesiastical and political. The ecclesiastical front began its operations twenty five years before the political front. The Cistercian monks, who arrived in Ireland in 1142 to set up the monastery at Mellifont, were the first Normans to set foot in Ireland. When the military arrived in 1167, the two fronts worked side-by-side and hand-in-hand to complete the subjection of Ireland both politically and ecclesiastically.

While the ecclesiastical structure of the Irish church was being successfully transformed from monastic to episcopal, prior to the Norman invasion, this did not mean that all the Irish monasteries were closing down, nor that they were converting to a Benedictine rule. What it did mean was that power in the Irish church was transferring from abbots to bishops and that these bishops were no longer living as monks in monasteries.

Within these changing times, some Irish monasteries were continuing to hold their ground while others were succumbing to outside pressures. One Celtic monastery in particular that not only held its ground, but grew in status and power, was the monastery of Derry, which at this time had established itself as the primary monastery in the Columban federation.

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THE HISTORY OF GLOBALISATION

Globalisation is a modern word. Its usage is so recent that you will not find it explained in any but the most up-to-date dictionaries. This may give the mistaken impression that globalisation is a recent phenomenon. It is not. It has a history that goes back four thousand years. This chapter summarises the main thesis of this book.

Globalisation – the Offspring of Monotheism

Globalisation is the offspring of monotheism. Although monotheism initially manifested itself in one small Judaic nation and remained small and isolated for over a thousand years, it eventually began to flourish through the growth of Christianity and later Islam. Other monotheistic religions, based on the same originally Judaic god, also developed. Nowadays, monotheism is the belief of more than half of the world's population. It is also, by far, the wealthier half. It is this worldwide dominance of the monotheistic perspective that has created the mindset that enabled globalisation to occur.

In polytheistic societies, globalisation could not have occurred. Polytheism, in all its forms, declares that life is complex and that there are no straightforward answers. Polytheism celebrates diversity. There is a diversity of gods and therefore a diversity of ways of seeing and understanding things. Polytheism breeds tolerance.

In particular, there is no one divine source within polytheism

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SPIRITUALITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Monotheism has been the mythological container for the process of globalisation. The monotheistic religions of the world have contributed to the development of a human way of living on earth which is ecologically unsustainable. Any new spirituality which attempts to contain and support a more sustainable way of living will need to detach itself from these organised religions and grow from the grass roots up. Spiritualities of sustainability in the future will be diverse, rooted in a settled community and a local place and will be independent of organised religion.

The process which, since World War II, we have called 'development' and even more recently we called 'globalisation' is in reality a process that began with Moses and the monotheistic vision. It has taken thousands of years to pull humankind out of ways of life that were rooted in diverse forms of polytheism and into a way of life that is rooted in monotheism. That process is now reaching its culmination, as an homogeneous, uniform and monochrome human way of life intrudes into and tries to dominate most corners of the globe.

The process has accelerated exponentially in the last hundred years. Change has become rapid and unstoppable. The rapidity of the changes has allowed us as humans to see the effects of these changes within our own lifetimes. On the negative side,

APPENDIX II

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Since I was a young child, I felt drawn to spiritual things. To this day I remember a little book of gospel stories I had in primary school. It was my favourite book. From the time I began secondary school, I accompanied my father to Mass every morning.

One day, when I was about twelve years old, as our family sat around the table, my sister asked each of us to state a wish. When it came to my mother's turn, she wished that one of her sons would be a priest. I can remember the feeling I had as she said that. It was as if a knife went into my heart. I knew deep down that that was my calling. I would be that son. I said nothing at the time to anyone.

Of course, that was the Ireland of the time. I was born in 1949. Every Irish mother wanted a son a priest. Many an Irish son went into the priesthood with his mother's vocation. When I was ordained, I had to struggle with my mother's expectations of me. She not alone wanted me to be a priest, but to be a certain type of priest – one who wore the collar all the time and played the archetypal role of Irish clergyman. For my part, when I became a priest, I hated the collar, hated being called 'Father' and felt very uncomfortable when I was treated as somebody special or put on a pedestal.

While there is no doubt that my parents and Irish society in general influenced my decision to become a priest, I now know that my calling was deeper than that. I did have a genuine calling