

Italy
Italian Republic
(*Repubblica Italiana*)

Introduction

Italy is a diverse country with a colorful history. Its culture, languages, and peoples make it a growing yet struggling country. Italy boasts a breathtaking landscape and a region of art, fine cuisine, and historical treasure. However, it also houses the underworld of the Italian mafia, a nation of religious but not relational believers, and a population in which less than 5% have an evangelical witness in their community.

Name

The short form of the country name is Italy, locally called *Italia*. The long form name is Italian Republic, or *Repubblica Italiana*. The country has previously been known as the Kingdom of Italy.

www.cia.gov

Population

The July 2002 population was estimated at 57,715,625. The population age breakdown is 14.1% between the ages of 0-14, 67.3% between ages of 15-64, and 18.6% age 65 and over. The population growth is .05%. The average life expectancy is 79.25 years, while for a male the expectancy is 76.08 years and 82.63 years for a female. Two-thirds of the population lived in urban areas according to a 2001 estimate.

www.cia.gov

Worldmark Encyclopedia of the Nations, *Europe*, 2001, p. 261.

Area

Italy, located in southern Europe, has an area of 116,306 square miles (301,230 square km.). Italy, which is slightly larger than the state of Arizona, borders the countries and sovereign states of Austria, France, Switzerland, Slovenia, Vatican City, and San Marino.

Italy is quite mountainous except for the Po River Valley. The *Alpine mountain area*, located in northern Italy, stretches from east to west and contains the famous Lakes Como, Maggiore, and Garda. Six small rivers in the Alpine region flow into Italy's largest river, the *Po River*. The *Po* is located at the foot of the Alps and flows from west to east. The *Po River's* drainage plains extend from Italy's central area of agriculture and industry. The *Apennine Mountains* stretch from north to south and form the backbone of Italy as well as the southern border of the Po Plain.

Southern Italy is much lower in altitude than northern Italy and contains fertile *coastal plains*, as well as extensive *lowland areas*. The cities of Naples, Rome, and Livorno are located in these

lowland areas of Italy. The eastern and western coastlines of Italy vary from mountainous to low-lying areas which form both natural harbors and port cities including Genoa, Savona, Venice, and Brindisi.

Sardinia and Sicily are the *island areas* of Italy. Sardinia, located in the Tyrrhenian Sea, has a mountainous terrain. Sicily, separated from Italy's mainland by the Strait of Messina, is home to Mount Etna which is one of the country's four active volcanoes. Southern Italy and Sicily are the areas in which three tectonic plates converge and create significant geologic activity. Severe earthquakes and volcanic eruptions have occurred as recently as 2001.

www.britannica.com

www.visibleearth.nasa.gov

WEN 2001, p.260-61

Economy

Italy has the world's sixth largest economy with an economic output comparable in size to those of both the United Kingdom and France. It is a capitalistic economy with a distinct division between the private-company domination of industry and the underdeveloped agricultural system.

The northern portions of Italy are the basis for the country's industry, while the southern areas focus on agricultural production. Only about 28% of the land is suitable for farming, and permanent crops occupy only 9% of Italy's total land area. Agriculture comprises just 2% of Italy's GDP (gross domestic product) while industry covers 30%. The largest component of Italy's economy, however, is its services totaling 68%.

Italy's exports include production machinery, motor vehicles, chemicals, minerals, and engineering products. Italy imports items, such as transport equipment, energy products, food, textiles, and chemicals. Today, Italy's major trading partners are Spain, Germany, France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Italy is rich in natural resources of mercury, marble, fish, coal, natural gas, and sulfur. Italy's forestry resources are a large portion of the industrial economic segment, also.

Worldmark Encyclopedia of the Nations, *Europe*, 2001, p. 267-69;

www.cia.gov;

<http://web.bhs.se/personal/suzuki/o-English/Italy.html>

Government

The Italian president is elected by an electoral college for a term of seven years and serves as Italy's chief executive. The *president*, with the confirmation of the Parliament, appoints a prime minister to serve as the head of government. The prime minister, with the president's approval, nominates members of the cabinet, also referred to as the *Council of Ministers*.

Italy's *parliament* consists of two houses, the *Senate* and the *Chamber of Deputies*. The senate is comprised of 315 members who must be at least 35 years of age and a small number of senators-for-life nominated by the president and including former Italian presidents. The chamber consists of 630 members who must meet the minimum age requirement of 25. Members of both

houses serve five-year terms in office. All Italian citizens 18 years of age and older are allowed to vote.

The judicial branch of Italian government is independent of the executive branch and consists of differing levels of courts with constitutional matters handled only in Constitutional Court. The final appellate court for any matter not pertaining to the constitution is the Court of Cassation in Rome.

Italy is divided into 20 regions and subdivided into 94 provinces. Italy's major political lobbyist and pressure groups include manufacturers and merchants association, farm groups, the Roman Catholic Church, and three large trade unions.

Italy maintains a large military of about 300,000 people serving in the army, navy, air force, and carabinieri. The carabinieri are the paramilitary national police in Italy. Military service is compulsory for all men 18 years old and older for a period of 10 months in one of the four branches of the Italian military.

Worldmark Encyclopedia of the Nations, Europe, 2001, p. 265-67;
www.cia.gov;
www.child-soldiers.org

Society

The family plays a key role in Italian society. The father is traditionally the leader of the home, but the mother in Italian families exercises a great amount of influence, as well. Family relationships and traditions affect decisions ranging from marriage choices and employment to business decisions and political affiliations.

Italians are known for their style in clothing and personal appearance is very important. Both casual and dress attire are expected to be of impeccable quality. The fashion industry also provides more exports than any of Italy's other industries, and it is the country's largest overall employer.

Food is another component of Italian culture for which the country is well known. Pasta is the national food and comes in a number of varieties. Preference is determined by region, and one regional dish is not a pasta dish at all but pizza instead. Wine is served at most meals, and Italy is the world's foremost wine producer.

Italians are passionate about sports, and their favorite is soccer. Bicycle and auto racing, boxing, tennis, and skiing are some of the other games Italians enjoy playing and watching. Leisure time is also spent with friends at a café or with family over a large meal.

The mafia and drug-related activities plague the Italian people, especially in the southern regions of the country. The Sicilian Mafia and Neapolitan Camorra have influenced every level and area of society. Numerous attempts have been made to destroy the power and influence of these groups, but there has been no true success. Murder and extortion have become a common occurrence which is no longer seen as unusual, and the lucrative drug trade money is used to

influence politicians, industry, and religious officials. These groups hold many Italians captive with bonds of fear and threats of retaliation. Medical problems also plague Italians, but healthcare is improving. However, hospital closures and medical personnel shortages are still of great concern to the Italian people.

The Italian population consists almost entirely of native-born people, many of whom identify themselves closely with particular regions of Italy. The country can be generally divided into the more urban north (the area from the northern border and the port of *Ancona* to the southern part of Rome) and the mostly rural south (everything below this line, which is called the “*Ancona Wall*” by Italians). The more prosperous north contains most of Italy’s larger cities and about two-thirds of the country’s population; the primarily agricultural south has a smaller population base and a more limited economy.

Language

Italian, one of the Romance languages of the Indo-European family of languages, is the official language of Italy. The overwhelming majority of the people speak Italian but each region has its own dialect. The *Tuscan* dialect is the standard Italian dialect. French is also spoken in the Piemonte and Valle d’Aosta areas. German is spoken around Bolzano, in the north near the Austrian border. Other minority languages include French (spoken in the Valle d’Aosta region), Ladin, Albanian, Slovenian, Catalan, Friulian, Sardinian, Croatian, and Greek.

Worldmark Encyclopedia of the Nations, Europe, 2001, p. 263.
Microsoft Encarta. 2004

Urbanization

It is estimated that 67% of all Italians live in urban areas. In recent decades the population has generally migrated from rural to urban areas. The largest cities include Rome, Milan, Turin, Florence, Naples, Genoa, and Palermo.

Operation World, Italy, 2001, p. 364
Microsoft Encarta. 2004

Literacy

Of Italy’s total population, 98% are literate. Of Italians ages 25 to 64 years old, 41% have at least an upper secondary education. This figure includes 43% of men and 40% of women who have attained at least an upper secondary education.

<http://web.hhs.se/personal/suzuki/o-English/Italy>
Operation World, Italy, 2001, p. 364.

Religion

The **Roman Catholic Church** (*Chiesa Cattolica in Italia*) is the largest and predominant religious denomination in Italy. It is estimated that 99% of Italians acknowledge Roman Catholicism as their denomination, *but only one-third of those attend mass on a regular basis.*

Since 1984, Roman Catholicism has no longer been recognized as the state religion. All religions have equality according to the law but not necessarily in practice. Roman Catholicism retains much political, social, religious power, and influence over Italy's people and government.

Islam, the professed religion of over 375,000 people in Italy, claims some 2.40 percent of the people and is growing at over 2.7 % per year. Most of these followers of Allah are immigrants to Italy. When considering the other religions, Islam is second only to Roman Catholicism in its number of adherents. This dramatic increase of Islamic followers has caused significant controversy with over 75% of native Italians voicing opposition to the presence of these immigrants.

Judaism is the religion of 35,000 to 50,000 people in Italy. While a very small number in comparison to Roman Catholic adherents, its rate of growth is 3.7% annually. Jewish adherents comprise 0.06% of the country's total population. The main areas where Jewish communities exist are Rome, Milan, Florence, and Trieste.

Buddhism exists in Italy as well. The estimated number of Buddhists in Italy reaches 51,600 or .09 percent. Buddhists in Italy claim a growth rate of 8.4 %. Buddhist Study Centers continue in Rome, Milan, on the Island of Murano (near Venice), and Turin. Several of these centers center on Zen Buddhism. The Buddhists remain a minority.

Baha'is, while comprising only .03 % of the Italian population still number over 17,000 and boast a growth rate of 8.4%.

Hindus also represent some 0.03 % of the Italian population numbering over 15,000.

Spiritism and **Occultism** continue and are increasing in Italy. The practices of Spiritism rest on the foundations of the pre-Christian religious rituals that go back over 2000 years and recognize a pantheon of immortals. These rituals centered in magic and spirit communication. Many Spiritists consider themselves Catholics. The rituals of Spiritism and Catholicism have been so intertwined that it is sometimes difficult to separate one from the other.

Some authorities estimate that over 100,000 full-time magicians serve the Spiritists. This number represents almost three times the number of practicing Catholic priests. Satanism is another rapidly growing concern. It is strongest in northern Italy where one of its global centers is located in Turin, where those involved in Satanism pray for the removal of all evangelical missionaries across Italy.

Protestant and other non-Catholic groups also serve in Italy. The great majority of Protestant type followers of Christianity in Italy are found within the *Pentecostal* groups and the *Waldensians*, who live in the *Piemonte* region. More about these Christian groups is included later in this profile.

Operation World, Italy, 2001, p. 364-65

Worldmark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life, Europe, 1998, p. 199. Barrett.

History of Italy

The history of Italy must begin with the account of the political history of Rome. Rome's political history unfolds in three periods. The first period (753–509 BC) saw the city develop from a village to a city ruled by kings. The second period witnessed the Romans expelling the kings and establishing the Roman Republic (509–27 BC.). After the republic collapsed, Rome came under the domination of emperors and flourished for another five centuries as the Roman Empire (27 BC–AD 476).

Microsoft Encarta 2004

Mythological Beginnings

Italy's history begins with the mythological origins of the country's capital, Rome. Twin brothers, *Romulus* and *Remus*, are the legendary founders of Rome. Roman mythology traces Rome's origins to *Romulus*, a son of the god Mars and also a descendent of the Trojan prince *Aeneas*, who brought his people to Italy after the city of Troy burned. According to the myths, *Romulus* and his twin brother *Remus* were grandsons of *King Numitor* of the ancient city of *Alba Longa* in *Latium*.

Numitor was deposed by his brother, who also tried to kill the twins by having them thrown into the Tiber. Instead, the infants washed ashore and were suckled by a she-wolf who became—and remains today—the symbol of Rome. When the brothers grew up, they restored *Numitor* to his throne and then founded a new city on the Palatine Hill above the river.

Roman mythology set the date of the founding of Rome by Romulus and Remus at 753 BC. In a struggle for ascendancy, Romulus killed Remus and declared himself the city's first king and gave the city his name. Another version of the myth has Romulus tricking Remus and taking over complete control of the city. He then invited his neighbors east of the Tiber River, the *Sabines*, to a festival and kidnapped the Sabine women—called the “rape of the Sabine women”—to provide the wives for the Roman population. Other legends about Romulus include his mysterious disappearance in a storm cloud, an event that led the Romans to proclaim him a god.

The second king of Rome, *Numa Pompilius*, was a Sabine who was regarded as especially just and devoted to religion. Many of Rome's religious traditions were later attributed to *Numa*, including the selection of virgins to be priestesses of the goddess *Vesta*. He also established a calendar to differentiate between normal working days and those festival days sacred to the gods on which no state business was allowed. The peaceful reign of *Numa Pompilius* can be dated from 715 to 673 BC.

Etruscans

The *Etruscans*, a sea-faring people, invaded central Italy in 8th century B.C. and established a vigorous civilization based on commercial, artistic, and maritime endeavors.

The Etruscans lived in *Etruria* on the northwestern coast of the Italian peninsula before the rise of the Roman civilization. These people probably originated in Asia Minor and spoke an entirely

different language than neighboring Indo-European peoples. In southern Italy and on the large island of Sicily, colonists fleeing from famine and political conflict in Greece founded new cities between 800 and 500 BC. The city of Naples derives its name from the Greek words *Nea Polis* (New City).

The Etruscans adopted gods from the Greek pantheon, or family of gods, and many of these divinities became the gods of the Romans. *Zeus*, the Greek god of the skies, for example, had a counterpart in the Roman god *Jupiter*, while *Hera*, the wife of *Zeus* and queen of the gods, became the Roman goddess *Juno*. Other Greek gods who were adopted into the Roman pantheon included *Aphrodite*, the goddess of love, the Romans as *Venus*, and the Greek god of war, *Ares*, who the Romans called *Mars*. The Romans also continued the public pageantry of the Etruscans. These pageants emphasized the importance of devotion to the gods and included prayers, festivals, and sacrifices.

Etruscan kings, influenced by Greek culture, ruled Rome in the 6th century BC during the time Rome began to grow from a village into a city. The Etruscan empire peaked around 500 B.C., and soon after, disintegrated with the formation of the Roman Republic. Around 200 BC., Roman power and influence eclipsed *Etruria*, and the Etruscans were driven out of the region.

The Roman Republic

After the formation of the Republic, unification of Italy began and the country consolidated under Roman rule (272 B.C). The result of this unifying process occurred when Roman citizenship was offered throughout the country in 89 B.C. Rome had become a highly civilized society during the preceding centuries and its influence would greatly increase in subsequent periods.

The Beginnings of the Roman Republic

In 475 BC, the Etruscans threatened Rome forcing the newly independent city to recruit an army. The primary source for these soldiers was the *plebs* and this need gave these downtrodden people their first opportunity to secure power for themselves. Plebs refused to enter the military or perform agricultural work until the Senate recognized them as a distinct element within the Roman state and granted them rights to an assembly with their own officials called tribunes. The result was the *tribuni plebis*, or people's tribunes, who could veto decrees of the Senate or the proposals of magistrates.

Expansion During the Republic

Roman history recounts Rome's rise to domination over the entire Mediterranean world. These conquests began with the defeat of the Etruscans and Rome's other Latin neighbors, whose lands were placed under Roman rule. Eventually Rome conquered the communities in the central mountains, the Greek cities of the south, and the Gauls of the Po River valley.

Conquest of Italy (510-264 BC)

The aggressive military policy of the Romans conquered the peninsula, but they were not strong enough to become masters of the region immediately. They struggled for nearly a century to ensure their control of the Etruscans. They also faced invasion by the Gauls, a people of the Celtic language group who inhabited most of modern-day France and northern Italy. The disastrous sack of Rome by the raiders from Gaul (390 BC) could well have ended the city's history. Some Romans suggested that the people emigrate; instead, citizens made the momentous decision to rebuild Rome.

During the next century the Romans made the most of their advantageous geographical position in the center of the peninsula. The Etruscan cities to the north and Greek cities to the south fought amongst themselves. The Romans made their army more flexible by adopting javelins, using cavalry, and organizing the infantry in small groups (called *maniples*) which were superior in mountain fighting. These new military methods eventually allowed Rome to conquer all of Italy and achieve the first political unification of the peninsula.

Rome conquered the Latin League, some 30 cities that shared a common language and religious festivals. Rome increasingly dominated these cities and eventually dissolved the league and made subjects of both the Latins and the Etruscans. Once the Romans secured dominance over the Etruscans in northern Italy and the Samnites in central Italy, they then began to challenge the Greek cities that still controlled the peninsula south of the Bay of Naples. These cities requested and received aid against the Romans from *King Pyrrhus of Epirus* in northern Greece. Pyrrhus invaded Italy, but despite early victories against Roman armies, he was eventually defeated. By 266 BC Rome controlled Italy from the plains of the Po River valley in the northern part of the peninsula to its southernmost tip. The city on the Tiber River had vanquished all enemies within Italy and looked to the next step--crossing the narrow waterway, the Strait of *Messina*, to the fertile island of Sicily.

Conquest of the Mediterranean (264-133 BC.)

After subduing Italy, Rome came into conflict with Carthage, the most dangerous enemy it had ever encountered. Phoenician Merchants (modern Lebanon) had established the city of Carthage on North Africa's Gulf of Tunis about 800 BC. Carthage became the greatest military power of the western Mediterranean due partly to its armies of hired soldiers known as mercenaries. Carthage founded its own colonies, subjugated nearby Africans to gain access to their rich agricultural lands, and controlled trade across the western Mediterranean. The Romans used the adjective *Punic* to describe the people of Carthage, who were known as *Poeni* because of their Phoenician descent.

A series of wars (the Punic Wars) erupted between Carthage and Rome. The Romans suffered many setbacks, but their tenacity carried them through the war. A Roman commander boldly attacked a Punic fleet in stormy seas and achieved a significant victory (242 BC). The Romans sank 50 Carthaginian ships and captured 70 more. Carthage surrendered, and Rome received Carthaginian possessions in Sicily and significant payments—the equivalent of a year's pay for 200,000 Roman soldiers. With these victories over Carthage, Rome became the foremost power in the western Mediterranean.

Carthage, a city of fewer than 500,000 people, struggled to pay the enormous sum owed to Rome after the First Punic War. In 221 BC., Hannibal became commander of Carthaginian forces in Spain, and over the next 20 years became the most successful commander ever to face the Romans. When Rome made an alliance with the Spanish city of *Saguntum*, Hannibal regarded this action as interference in Carthaginian affairs and laid siege to *Saguntum*. In 218 BC., Rome declared war on Carthage for the second time.

The Romans expected to fight the Second Punic War in Spain, but Hannibal marched across the Alps and invaded Italy. He led a large army with its African war elephants across the *Rhône River* and over the Alps in icy weather to attack the Romans. At the Battle of *Cannae* (216 BC) Hannibal's forces inflicted one of the worst Roman defeats in their history.

The losses at *Cannae* led to a brief panic in Rome, but the battle proved to be a turning point in the Roman military effort. The rich contributed to the war through voluntary contributions and allowed their slaves to serve as rowers for the fleet. Enlistments rose and even slaves were drafted. The Romans soon had about 240,000 men under arms (212 BC). Rome regained the great cities of southern Italy and Sicily (214 to 210 BC).

Having secured Italy, Roman troops invaded Africa. Hannibal was recalled from Italy to defend Carthaginian territory. At the *Battle of Zama*, the Roman *Scipio* defeated Hannibal (202 BC). This victory earned Scipio the title, *Africanus*—the conqueror of Africa. Rome manufactured a reason for the Third Punic War. Although Carthage accepted the Roman demands after the Second Punic War, the conservative Roman senator *Marcus Porcius Cato* (known as Cato the Elder) was so obsessed with a fear of Carthage that for decades he ended every speech with the statement: “*And Carthage must be destroyed.*” Rome used a minor offense to wage another war against Carthage and after a three-year siege, *Scipio Aemilianus*, the grandson of the victor of Zama, captured Carthage.

Rome's involvement in the eastern Mediterranean grew substantially during and after the defeat of Carthage. Rome established a protectorate along the coast of *Illyria*, in present-day Albania (220 BC.). This action greatly annoyed King Philip V of Macedonia, who was the dominant power in Greece. Philip's enemies invited Rome to liberate the Greek cities under Macedonian domination. The Romans invaded Greece and achieve a notable victory at *Cynoscephalae* in the region of *Thessaly* (197 BC). Two years later the Roman general Titus *Quinctius Flaminius* granted freedom to all Greek cities and placed them under Roman protection.

The Greeks and Macedonians tried to rebel against Roman rule but failed. The Roman armies conquered the ancient city of Corinth, took its treasures to Rome, and sold its inhabitants into slavery (146 BC). Rome had destroyed both Carthage and Corinth. The Romans gave but one choice to territories under their control: obedience or annihilation. King *Attalus III* of *Pergamum* spared his subjects unnecessary pain by bequeathing his entire kingdom to the Romans (133 BC).

The Decline of the Roman Republic

The ascendancy of the Roman Republic had gained unprecedented power. The expansion was not, however, without its costs. Many soldiers had seen the luxuries of Greek cities and willingly

gave up their harsh rural lifestyles to work in an urban setting. The influx of slaves drove many peasants from the countryside to the cities and swelled the size of the urban proletariat, or laboring classes. The wealthy bought property from impoverished farmers and occupied huge tracts of public land that the government had seized from conquered Italian cities. These fields were farmed by hundreds of thousands of prisoners of war brought into Italy as slaves. Over time, the Roman landlords became greedy and began to misuse the slaves. The slaves responded by launching a series of terrifying revolts which began in 135 BC with 200,000 slaves under arms in Sicily, and culminated with the rebellion of Spartacus in 73 BC.

The spoils of war provided funds for a great deal of construction, so initially jobs were plentiful. Senators commissioned private palaces and public memorials, while the state built roads, aqueducts, and temples. Craft workers and laborers could easily find work and enjoy the subsidized amusements of Rome and other Italian cities. However, they also became dependent on an expanding urban economy and the generosity of politicians. Since Rome spent all of its income each year, the urban population was vulnerable to an economic downturn and a potentially explosive situation existed in the capital itself.

In two centuries Rome transformed itself from a small city-state to the ruler of the Mediterranean. A poor agricultural community had become a commercial giant whose conquests poured gold, grain, and slaves into Italy. Rome had permanently altered its economy, society, and culture, as well as the surrounding Italian countryside. Problematically, the political institutions of the republic were not strong enough to satisfy the demands of the political and economic changes.

Yet, after almost four centuries of successful adaptation, the political institutions of the republic were not sufficiently flexible to accommodate these changes. The Roman elite no longer retained their traditional values as evidenced by laws against electoral bribery and provincial corruption, luxury, and excessive victory processions. Rome had no adequate financial system and relied on annual income from tribute and taxes as operating capital. Income and attendant expenditure declines spawned severe economic crises. Roman senators responded only to crisis, and they would soon be confronted by the greatest internal crisis in centuries.

The Roman Republic was a dynamic and flexible political organism that was a noble system of government for a small city-state. It made Rome a world power, but it was unsuitable for a large and diverse empire. These Romans created a civilization that has shaped world history over the last 2,000 years. Cities throughout Western Europe stand on Roman foundations. Rome also exerted enormous cultural influence. Their language, Latin, gave rise to languages spoken by a billion people in the world today. The Roman legal system remains the basis of continental European law and many forms of government in the world reflect Roman origins. They brought to art a lifelike style that forms the basis of the realistic tradition in Western art. The Roman Catholic Church still uses symbols and rituals derived largely from the ancient Romans.

Gaius Julius Caesar, who had held many of the highest political offices in Rome, marched into Italy to challenge the leaders of the republic. After defeating his enemies, he ruled the Roman Republic as a dictator (49 BC). *Julius Caesar* was assassinated on the Ides of March (March 15 by the Roman calendar) in 44 BC. Caesar's assassins, *Marcus Junius Brutus* and *Gaius Cassius*

Longinus, hoped to restore the republic, but it was no longer possible. Neither the urban masses nor the military would allow the old aristocracy to regain control.

Rome experienced over ten years of civil war and political upheaval. After Caesar's heir *Gaius Octavius* (also known as *Octavian*) defeated his last rivals, the Senate proclaimed him *Augustus*, meaning the exalted or holy one (27 BC). In this way *Augustus* established the monarchy that became known as the Roman Empire. The Roman Republic was dead after 500 years. The Empire would arise and endure for another 500 years (until AD 476)

The Roman Empire

Historians usually date the beginning of the Roman Empire from 27 BC when the Roman Senate gave *Gaius Octavius* the name *Augustus* and he became the undisputed emperor. Rome had expanded into other parts of Italy and neighboring territories during the Roman Republic (509-27 BC), but made wider conquests and solidified political control of these lands during the Empire. The Empire lasted until Germanic invasions, economic decline, and internal unrest in the 4th and 5th centuries AD ended Rome's ability to dominate such a huge territory. The Romans and their Empire contributed cultural and political shape to the history of Europe from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance to the present day.

Augustus Caesar

One of the Roman Empire's most notable rulers was its first emperor, *Augustus Caesar*. A military master, *Augustus*, kept the Roman armies along the borders for a two-fold purpose. Emperor Augustus reigned from 27 BC to AD14 and ruled with absolute power. He reestablished political and social stability and launched two centuries of prosperity called the Roman Peace (*Pax Romana*).

Under his rule the Roman state began its journey to become the greatest and most influential political institution in European history. During the first two centuries AD the Empire flourished and added new territories, notably ancient Britain, Arabia, and Dacia (present-day Romania). Augustus wanted the Romans to concentrate on external rather than internal affairs. He also deployed the armies at strategic distances from each other to avoid any uprisings. By controlling the frontier Augustus was able to control foreign affairs with ease.

Tiberius

Upon Augustus' death in AD 14, *Tiberius* took over as the emperor and allowed his administrator, *Sejanus*, to rule over much of the empire. *Sejanus* was a vicious man who sought the throne himself. *Tiberius* had retired to Capri in AD 26, but he later learned of *Sejanus*' intentions and had him executed in AD 31. *Tiberius* was murdered in AD 37 by his prefect, Macro.

Caligula

Caligula, Tiberius' nephew, became emperor in AD 37 and was given the title of *princeps*, or first citizen of Rome. This new ruler freed prisoners, pardoned exiles, and governed efficiently

for the first few months of his reign. Caligula became ill, and the illness left him mentally unstable. For the remainder of his time as Rome's ruler, he was a madman. One of his personal guards assassinated him in AD 41.

Claudius

The *Praetorian Guard* (the emperor's elite, personal guards) decided to nominate *Claudius* for the open emperor's position. Claudius was considered Caligula's weak-minded, mentally unstable uncle who remained in the shadows of his nephew. He had spent his years in the background reading and learning, and he became a very intelligent politician. Claudius is best known for his conquest of southern Britain and for his pardon of its leader upon capture by the invading Roman armies. His second wife, *Agrippina*, manipulated him to adopt her son, *Nero*. After Claudius adopted him, *Agrippina* poisoned her husband, and *Nero* ascended the throne.

Nero

Few Roman emperors' actions can be compared in infamy to those of *Nero*. He was a brutal tyrant who ruled with cruel and gruesome tactics. The 15-year-old *Nero* (AD 54-68) began his reign amid predictions of a new Golden Age for Rome. This "Golden Age" was, however, not to be, partially because fawning courtiers encouraged *Nero*'s despotic tendencies. He murdered both his mother and his wife at the urging of his mistress. His reign was marked by the *Great Fire of Rome* in AD 64 which he blamed on the Christians. In order to combat the popular suspicion that the emperor himself had a part in the fire, *Nero*, illuminated his gardens with burning Christians. According to some sources, his persecution of Christians resulted in the deaths of two of Christianity's most influential apostles, Saint Peter and Saint Paul.

In AD 67, a Jewish revolt broke out. The next year Rome was attacked, and *Nero* committed suicide. *Nero* had a childish need for applause, and he gave vocal concerts at Greek festivals. The spectacle of a singing emperor disgusted the Romans. The neglected legions became restless, and rebellions erupted throughout the empire. All four Julio-Claudian emperors lived in the shadow of Augustus, and none felt secure on his throne. Insecurity brought tyranny, which then provoked conspiracies in the Senate and in the palace. Finally, even the army turned away from the dynasty that had created the empire.

Galba, Otho, and Vitellius

Galba led the attack on Rome which led to *Nero*'s downfall, but his army placed their support in his opponent, *Otho*. *Galba* was assassinated only six months into his reign. *Otho* became emperor in AD 69 and ruled only for a few months before Roman troops changed allegiance once again in favor of *Vitellius*. *Otho* committed suicide when his troops were defeated by *Vitellius*. *Vitellius* came to power in AD 69, but was himself defeated by Roman armies along the Danube River. He was tortured, dragged through Rome, and thrown into the Tiber River.

Vespasian and Titus

Vespasian, who is known as a practical ruler, came to power in AD 70 just before the destruction of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem. He made decency a fashionable trait and restored law to Rome. He rebuilt the state treasury and maintained peace and order in the empire.

Titus, Vespasian's son, followed his father to the throne in AD 79. He only reigned for 2 years. One of the worst human catastrophes in Roman history, the eruption of *Mount Vesuvius*, happened in the year Titus' reign. This disaster demolished the cities of *Pompeii* and *Herculaneum* and caused vast casualties.

Domitian

Domitian's reign was marked by his fanaticism. He took control of Rome in AD 81, and his reign of depravity and cruelty began. He ruled in selfish excess for many years until his wife, prefects, and senators plotted to assassinate him. Some think that the Apostle John was martyred during the reign of Domitian.

Trajan

Trajan became emperor in AD 98 and was an able ruler. He was very popular because he decreased extravagant spending, destroyed monopolies, and reduced corruption. Trajan is known as a conqueror, however, not a reformer. His reign was marked by military campaigns, and he died at the end of one such campaign in AD 117.

Hadrian and Antoninus

Hadrian claimed he had been adopted by Trajan as the former emperor lay dying, and the senate confirmed him as emperor in AD 117, four days after Trajan's death. He was an intelligent man who spoke Greek fluently. Hadrian provoked the Jews by forbidding Jewish practices and by building a shrine to pagan gods on the site of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem. Later in life, Hadrian began to show his vindictive and cruel nature. He eventually adopted an older senator, *Antoninus*. Hadrian died in AD 138 after severe bouts with depression and mood swings. Antoninus' reign was one of peace and conciliation. He was not a man of great ambition, and he saw his job as one of caretaker not dictator. *Antoninus* died a quiet death in AD 161.

Marcus Aurelius

Marcus Aurelius became emperor upon Antoninus' death. As a devoted *Stoic*, he believed in the equality of man and invited his political rival, *Verus*, to rule alongside him. Verus died in AD 168, and Marcus Aurelius ruled alone until his death from illness in AD 180.

Commodus

Commodus came to power after a period of stability in Roman leadership. In the 84 years prior to Commodus' ruling, the Roman Empire had only experienced 5 emperors. Commodus would be the first of 29 emperors to rule in the upcoming century. He was not a man of character or intelligence, but he was plagued by irrational fears. These fears led to a tyrannical reign of terror and a personal life of depravity. A hired, professional athlete was successful in the assassination of Commodus in AD 192.

The Holy Roman Empire Germanic Invasions

During the turbulent century of nearly 30 Roman emperors, invasions were inevitable. The *Ostrogoths* were the first Germanic tribe to invade Italy, but less than one hundred years later, internal struggles made it simple for the *Byzantines* to gain control. In AD 476 the invading Germanic chieftain *Odoacer* defeated the last independent Roman emperor of the West, *Romulus Augustulus*, and succeeded him to the throne. In 488 *Theodoric*, king of the Ostrogoths, invaded Italy, defeated Odoacer and became the sole ruler in Italy. *Theodoric* ruled until his death in 526.

In 535 *Justinian I*, emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire sent General *Belisarius* to push the Germanic invaders from Italy. The ensuing war that ended in 553 saw the death of the last of the Gothic kings, *Teias*. The Byzantine rule was of short duration, however, for in 572 Italy was invaded by the *Lombards*, another Germanic tribe. *Alboin*, their king, made *Pavia* the capital of his realm, and launched a series of campaigns that eventually seized the Byzantine power in Italy with the exception of the southern portion of the province and the parts of *Ravenna* in the north.

The country's most important religious leaders of the time were the archbishops of Ravenna. Upon the death of *Alboin* in 572, the Lombards for a time had no king. Separate bands united under regional leaders known as *duces*. The problem also involved a religious aspect. The Lombards, like the Goths before them, accepted the heretical creed, *Arianism*. This doctrine brought them into perpetual religious conflict with the native Italians, who overwhelmingly supported orthodox Christianity. This conflict was intensified as the temporal power of the popes increased.

By AD 568, another Germanic tribe controlled Italy. The *Lombards* focused their attention on the northern areas of the country and met with much papal opposition. This tribe was successful in extending their influence even through such opposition.

Agiluf, a new Lombard king (AD 590 to 615) converted to orthodox Christianity and thereby ushered in a time of comparative harmony. The Lombards, seeking to consolidate their political power, began to encroach on papal territory, even threatening the center of church authority, Rome. Pope Stephen II in 754 sought aid from the Franks, who had accepted the spiritual authority of the church a century earlier. Under *Pepin, the Short*, and his son, *Charlemagne*, the Franks defeated the Lombards. The last Lombard king was deposed in 774.

On Christmas Day, 800, Charlemagne was crowned emperor of the West by Pope Leo III. During the subsequent two centuries, a constant shift of power occurred. The papacy once again invited foreign invaders to visit Italy.

The Saracens subdued Sicily and threatened Rome in the 9th century. Pope Leo IV turned for help to *King Louis II*. Charlemagne's great-grandson, King Louis checked the progress of the invaders but after the death of Louis, the Muslims overran southern Italy. The Muslims compelled the popes to pay tribute. The history of Italy during the following periods is the record of the rise and fall of successive and often ineffective kings such as *Guido of Spoleto*; *Berengar I of Friuli*, Holy Roman emperor; and *Hugh of Provence*. The period of anarchy ended in 962, when the Germanic leader Otto I, after obtaining possession of northern Italy and the Lombard

crown, was crowned emperor by Pope John XII. *This event is considered by some to mark the establishment of both the Holy Roman Empire and the German nation.*

Until the end of the middle ages, the Holy Roman Emperors exercised some degree of sovereignty over Italy. Imperial authority, however, became largely nominal by the beginning of the 14th century. The south of Italy had remained under Byzantine and Lombard jurisdiction. In the 11th century, however, the Normans broke the Byzantine power and expelled the Lombards. The Normans subsequently united their Italian holdings in 1127 by seizing Sicily from the Saracens.

These developments coincided with a resurgence of papal power. The Popes had long been secondary to the emperors. Imperial and papal friction reached a peak in the *Investiture Controversy*.

The decision of the *Concordat of Worms*, in 1122, forced the emperor to surrender to the College of Cardinals the right to elect the pope. Along with this increasing power of the papacy, Italy witnessed a rising opposition to the rule of the Holy Roman emperors on the part of the rising Italian city-states.

Rise of City-States

The quarrels between the emperors and popes during the eleventh and twelfth centuries gave rise to the freedom of cities and the formation of city-states. Gradually, the local ruling families began to exercise their power and political struggles ensued. The city-states were ravaged by both wars and the *Black Death* in the fourteenth century. However, the city-states were centers of flourishing arts, science, commerce, literature, and music. By the fifteenth century, the Renaissance was in full bloom, yet the country was facing invasion threats from France, Austria, and Spain.

Italy was divided by the struggles between imperial partisans (the *Guelphs*) and their opponents (the *Ghibellines*). These names continued to be the designations of fiercely contending parties long after the Holy Roman emperors had lost their hold on the country. The cities of northern and central Italy have been divided into *Guelphs* and *Ghibellines*.

The Rise of Modern Italy Italian Wars

By the middle of the 15th century, Italy had achieved both great prosperity and comparative tranquility. The country stood in the forefront of European nations culturally—having pioneered the great revival of learning and the arts, the Renaissance.

Near the end of the 15th century, Italy became the object of a succession of aggressive wars, waged by France, Spain, and Austria, which culminated in the ascendancy of the Spanish and Austrian Habsburgs. In 1494 *King Charles VIII* of France sought to take the kingdom of Naples, then under the rule of the house of *Aragón*. Charles was encouraged to mount this campaign by the Milanese regent *Ludovico Sforza* and by the citizens of Florence, who then lived under the control of the *Medici* family. Charles invaded Italy, occupied Naples, and concluded a treaty

with Florence, by the terms of which the Medici were expelled, and the pope was brought to submission.

This seemingly successful war was not of great advantage to the French. A league composed of Spain, the pope, the Holy Roman emperor, and the Italian cities of Venice and Milan formed and opposed Charles and France. This opposition forced Charles to retire from Naples and fight his way out of Italy. This French invasion produced little political results but eventuated in the spread of Italian culture into much of Europe.

During the 16th century the various states on the Italian Peninsula came under the power of armies from the European countries to the north. Around 1499 King Louis XII of France subjugated Milan. The French and the Habsburgs subsequently took turns ruling Milan.

Ferdinand V of Castile, King of Sicily since 1468, reunited Naples and Sicily under one crown in 1501. Rivalry between Charles V, the Holy Roman emperor, and King Francis I of France eventuated in another French invasion of Italy in 1524. The French were successful at first due to their alliance with the Florentines, Genoese, and Venetians. The French were ultimately defeated and at *Peace of Cambrai* (1529) Francis renounced all his claims to territory in Italy.

Francis renewed the conflict in the 1540s but Charles's domination over Italy could not be broken. After the failure of Milan's Sforza dynasty in 1535, Charles took control of that region and it became part of his Spanish Habsburg holding. Milan remained a Spanish possession for almost 200 years. Only a few of the free cities of Italy survived and of these only Genoa and Venice maintained influence. The conquest of the Pelopónnisos (Peloponnesus) in 1684 marked Venice's last achievement as an independent city but even this was lost in 1715.

Italy remained divided and controlled by foreigners during the 18th century—being the site of a succession of European wars. In 1748 the balance of power shifted. Venice turned eastward, the papacy became increasingly insular, and Florence no longer had a central role in the area. The duchy of Savoy, located between France and the Habsburg possessions in Italy, became a major force in the area. Duke *Victor Amadeus II* gained power after the *War of the Spanish Succession* (1701-1714) with power and prestige. The *Peace of Utrecht* (1713) awarded Victor a royal title and Sicily, which he ceded to Austria in exchange for Sardinia in 1720. The Utrecht treaties also transferred Spain's holdings in Italy to the Austrians, who exercised dominion in the peninsula throughout most of the second half of the 18th century.

Napoleon Bonaparte

In 1796, Napoleon Bonaparte, later Emperor Napoleon I of France, invaded Italy. Napoleon's Italian campaign was initially welcomed by most Italians. Napoleon redrew the boundaries of Italy and achieved much land reform. He failed in his attempt to unite the country, even though he established the kingdom of Italy and appointed himself king.

His victories did, however, lead to the *Treaty of Campo Formio* (1797) that established the *Cisalpine* and *Ligurian* Republics, with the former's capital at Milan and the latter's at Genoa. Venice and its territory came under the power of Austria. Napoleon was crowned king of Italy at Milan in 1805. The next year he took possession of the kingdom of Naples. The island of Sicily,

however, was preserved for the *Neapolitan Bourbons* by the British fleet. By 1810 even Rome was incorporated into the French empire.

Napoleon's hold on Italy was weakened by his defeat at Leipzig in 1813 as the Austrians invaded northern Italy and a British fleet occupied Genoa. *The Congress of Vienna* (1814-1815) led to a restoration of Austrian domination of the peninsula, but Sardinia recovered Piedmont (Piemonte), Nice, and Savoy.

Italian resistance to Austrian domination was marked by a growing movement for national unity and independence, termed the *Risorgimento*. Petty despots relied on Austrian statesman *Prince Klemens von Metternich* and threat of military intervention continued their power. A network of secret societies challenged this traditional order. These societies, especially the *Carbonari* of southern Italy, played a key role in the revolutions of 1820 but Austria was able to suppress these movements.

Congress of Vienna

In the early 1800's, the Congress of Vienna restored the ruling families, and it was during this time that the movement for unification began. The movement included three distinct groups. The *radicals* wanted a republic; the *moderates* desired a royal ruler from the house of Savoy; and the *Roman Catholic conservatives* who demanded the Pope become Italy's president. Ultimately, the moderates succeeded in their endeavors, and the country was unified under the royal rule of the house of Savoy.

The Revolution of 1830 expelled the Bourbons from France and influenced events in Italy. Resistance arose in the Papal States in 1831. A congress of representatives met in Bologna and adopted a constitution establishing a republican form of government. Responding to the request of *Pope Gregory XVI*, Austria intervened and placed Bologna under military surveillance. Charles Albert, prince of Savoy and Piedmont, had proposed a constitution in 1821. After the death of King Charles Felix of Sardinia in 1831, the Italian patriot *Giuseppe Mazzini*, believing that Charles Albert still held liberal views, asked Charles Albert to serve as liberator of Italy. The king responded by ordering Mazzini's arrest. In spite of these events, patriotic Italians continued to look to the Sardinian monarchy for leadership.

From exile in Marseille, Mazzini in 1831 established an organization called *Giovane Italia* (Young Italy) to spread the ideals of nationalism and republicanism. The goals of the movement, which birthed several revolutions, were education and insurrection. These uprisings were defeated and some Italians questioned the use of radical tactics. A call arose for a more responsible leadership.

T

he nationalist and *neo-Guelph* movements were encouraged by the election of Pope Pius IX, who was perceived as being a liberal and a nationalist. Pope Pius IX initiated an extensive program of reforms in the Papal States. An amnesty was proclaimed for political offenders, political exiles were permitted to return, freedom of the press was introduced, the highest government offices were opened to laymen, and a consultative chamber was created to suggest new reforms. The rulers of Lucca, Tuscany, and Piedmont followed the Pope's example.

The reforms of 1846 and 1847 intensified the movements of reform. In January 1848 the people of Palermo drove out the forces of *Ferdinand II*, king of the *Two Sicilies*. Ferdinand II responded to the events on the mainland by granting his Italian subjects a constitution. At the same time *Leopold II*, grand duke of Tuscany, issued a constitution for his duchy. In Turin, *Charles Albert*, encouraged by *Conte Camillo Benso di Cavour*, also promised to issue a constitution. Pope Pius IX reluctantly consented to a constitution for the Papal States, although he began to regard the course of events with some apprehension.

Charles Albert later abdicated the Sardinian throne in favor of his son, Victor Emmanuel II. Pius IX was denounced by radicals in the Papal States for failing to join the war of national liberation. A popular insurrection in Rome led the Pope and his adviser, Cardinal *Giacomo Antonelli*, to flee the capital in 1848. In the Pope's absence the temporal power of the pontiff was abolished and a republic was proclaimed.

Early in 1849 Cardinal Antonelli appealed to the Roman Catholic powers of France, Austria, Spain, and Naples to overturn the Roman Republic. Despite the efforts of Mazzini, at the head of the government, and the military leadership of Giuseppe Garibaldi, the Austrians moved into the north, the Spanish and Neapolitans invaded from the south, and a French force occupied Rome in July 1849. The papal regime was restored.

House of Savoy

On March 17, 1861, the kingdom of Italy was proclaimed, with Victor Emmanuel II as king and Cavour as prime minister. During Emmanuel's reign, Italy annexed Venetia and Rome. Relations between the royal family and the papacy deteriorated even further. The papacy refused to concede any loss of power or to honor the new ruling family. The nation was facing numerous problems from extreme debt and poverty to high illiteracy and no industry.

Italy, however, was not complete; Rome and Venice remained outside the kingdom. Cavour had planned for their peaceful inclusion but he died in June. The next year *Garibaldi* organized a march on Rome. Fearing French intervention, the Italian government denounced Garibaldi. When Garibaldi and his followers landed in Calabria they were blocked by the troops of Victor Emmanuel and compelled to surrender in August 1862. In 1866 Italy became the ally of Prussia in the Seven Weeks' War against Austria, and at its end acquired Venice. Rome remained elusive, however, as a combined Franco-papal force defeated a renewed effort by Garibaldi and his followers at Mentana in 1867. In 1870 French reverses in the Franco-Prussian War induced Napoleon III to withdraw his troops from Rome, and the Italians were finally able to enter the city. An October plebiscite favored union with the Italian kingdom, and in July 1871, Rome became the capital of a united Italy.

After Victor Emmanuel's death in 1878, his son, Humbert I, succeeded to the Italian throne and a socialist movement began to develop during his reign to combat the country's problems. During his reign, Italy concluded the *Triple Alliance* with Germany and Austria-Hungary in 1882. This alliance brought about the division of Europe into two hostile camps.

Influenced by the examples of France and Britain and the desire to distract attention from economic and social problems at home, the government launched a colonial program. In early

1885 an Italian expedition occupied a region of East Africa, an area later consolidated into the colony of Eritrea. Italy also, in 1890, established a protectorate over the Somali coast south of British Somaliland. Prime Minister *Francesco Crispi* moved from the coastal territories and took over the heartland of Ethiopia. The Italians after suffering defeat at *Adwa* (Aduwa) in 1896 were forced to recognize Ethiopia's independence. Italian troops moved into Libya in 1911 and eventually gained power over the Libyan coast.

Humbert was assassinated by an anarchist on July 29, 1900, and his son, Victor Emmanuel III, ascended the throne. He was the last member of the House of Savoy to rule in Italy. From 1901 to 1914 Prime Minister *Giovanni Giolitti* led Italy and the nation experienced political, social, and economic modernization. Giolitti, though often criticized, has been praised as the maker of modern Italy. During his leadership role reforms were introduced, including the right of workers to strike for higher wages, electoral law increasing male suffrage, the inclusion of Roman Catholics into Italy's political life, and the first major legislation on behalf of the economically depressed south. Italy's relations with France were improved and Italy remained in the Triple Alliance. During the Giolitti era Italy's rate of industrial growth was 87 percent, and workers' wages grew by more than 25 percent despite a shortened workday and the introduction of a guaranteed day of rest. Italy's progress toward democracy was halted by participation in World War I.

During World War I, the Italian government disregarded the Triple Alliance and declared neutrality. Italy signed the secret *Treaty of London* with the Allied powers who declared war on Austria and the Ottoman Empire and later on Germany. Italy's activities in World War I were mostly disastrous. Italian casualties during the war totaled more than half a million. In the treaties that followed, Italy acquired the Trentino, Trieste, and the South Tyrol, but did not get all the territory promised in the Treaty of London—notably Dalmatia and Fiume.

From 1919 to 1922 Italy was torn by social and political strife, inflation, and economic problems, aggravated by the belief that Italy had won the war but lost the peace. Armed bands with a strong nationalist bias, known as the *Fascisti*, fought Socialist and Communist groups in Rome, Bologna, Trieste, Genoa, Parma, and elsewhere. Giolitti in 1922 resigned. His departure precipitated a period of uncertainty. Many landowners feared that their estates would be seized by the peasants; the middle class and the industrialists feared that Italy would become a Soviet-style republic. Conservative Roman Catholics worried that socialism, communism, and atheism threatened the religious order.

Fascism

During Victor Emmanuel III's reign, *Benito Mussolini* founded the Italian fascist movement. On October 24, 1922, Mussolini, emboldened by the support of conservatives and former soldiers, demanded that the government be entrusted to his party. Mussolini led a march on Rome. Mussolini threatened to seize power by force if his conditions were refused. As the *Fascisti* mobilized for a march on Rome, Prime Minister *Luigi Facta* resigned. On October 28 Victor Emmanuel called on Mussolini to form a new government.

Mussolini initially governed constitutionally. He headed a coalition government in 1923 that included Liberals, Nationalists, and Catholics, as well as Fascists. After the 1924 elections and

the murder of the Socialist Party deputy *Giacomo Matteotti*, Mussolini suspended constitutional government. He established a dictatorship by forbidding the parliament to initiate legislation, making himself responsible to the king alone, ordering parliament to authorize him to issue decrees having the force of law, establishing absolute censorship of the press, and suppressing all opposition parties in 1926.

By 1926, Mussolini had become a dictator and had adopted a totalitarian regime. His forces conquered Ethiopia in 1936 and Albania in 1939. Mussolini achieved one of his greatest triumphs in 1929 by concluding the *Lateran Treaty* between the Italian state and the Holy See. This agreement settled the 60-year-old controversy concerning the temporal power of the pope by the creation, at Rome, of Vatican City.

The appointment of *Adolf Hitler* as chancellor of Germany in 1933 received cautious approval in the controlled Italian press. Hitler, however, expressed friendship for Italian fascism. A German-Italian axis was not, however, immediately formed. Actually, a temporary improvement in Franco-Italian relations resulted from German attempts to force Austria into the Third Reich of Germany in 1934. Mussolini rushed 75,000 Italian troops to the Italo-Austrian frontier, announcing that he would intervene if Germany took overt action. Italy drew even closer to its allies of World War I in 1935, when, along with France and Britain, it formed the *Stresa Front*, organized in protest against Germany's repeated violations of the Treaty of Versailles.

Italy's invasion of Ethiopia in 1935 upset European alignments and brought the Fascist and Nazi dictatorships into closer relationship. The Italian invasion of Ethiopia was denounced by Council of the League of Nations that declared Italy guilty of violating its obligations under the League Covenant. The economic sanctions imposed were not enforced and this failure contributed significantly to the Italian victory. On May 9, 1936, Mussolini formally annexed Ethiopia and proclaimed King Victor Emmanuel III emperor. Within a month, the country was incorporated, along with Eritrea and Italian Somaliland, into a single colony, Italian East Africa. In October 1936, Germany recognized the Italian conquest. Hitler and Mussolini then concluded an agreement providing for joint action in support of their common goals.

New stresses on the Italian economy were caused by Mussolini's active espousal of General Francisco Franco's cause in the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). Italian troops played an important role at the battles of Málaga and Santander, the Italian air force participated in many engagements, and Italian submarines allegedly sank many neutral ships bound for Loyalist ports with oil, food, and other supplies for the Republican armies. On the Guadalajara front, Italian forces were routed by the Spanish Loyalists in March 1937. An official report put Italian casualties at some 4,000 killed and 15,000 wounded.

By 1937, cooperation between Italy and Germany began to produce results. Italy announced its adherence to the *Anti-Comintern Pact* between Germany and Japan and withdrew from the League of Nations. Mussolini refused to aid Austria when that republic was absorbed by Germany in 1938. Increasing influence of Nazi racist doctrines on Italy found expression in a series of measures aimed at curbing the activities of Italian Jews. These measures included a law that excluded all Jews from civil and military administrations. Italy supported the *Munich Pact*

in 1938 and dismemberment of Czechoslovakia. The two dictators signed a military assistance pact in May 1939.

When World War II began in September 1939, Mussolini declared he was under no obligation to aid Germany militarily because he had made it clear to the Nazis that Italy would not be prepared for war until 1942. German successes during the first year of the war, however, led Mussolini to reverse his policy and in June 1940, when France had been defeated and Britain alone opposed the German armies, Italy entered the war and granted France an armistice. In August 1940, Italian forces in East Africa occupied British Somaliland, and the following month Fascist armies in Libya and Italian East Africa began an effort to seize British defenses in Egypt. In 1940, Fascist forces in Albania unsuccessfully invaded Greece when the Greeks drove the Italians from Greece and Albania. This defeat, followed by British victories in the Mediterranean and in Egypt, shook the Fascist regime. Mussolini had to ask Hitler for aid and this act brought Italian policy increasingly under German control.

In 1941 Italy suffered successive military and naval disasters and growing economic privation caused by an Allied blockade. Anti-Fascist sentiment spread throughout the population. Many Italians soon realized that their territorial gains in the Balkans were largely illusory, because the Germans actually controlled these areas. Also, Italy was forced to pay an increasingly high price for Hitler's military assistance. As difficulties developed in the German offensive, Hitler became more pressing in his demands on Mussolini.

At the same time, relations between the United States and Italy deteriorated. The U.S. government seized 28 Italian merchant ships in U.S. ports and arrested crew members who sabotaged the vessels on orders from the Italian naval attaché in Washington, D.C. The US demanded the immediate recall of the attaché and Italy demanded the recall of the U.S. military attaché in Rome. The United States impounded Italian assets and Italy instituted similar measures against U.S. assets. The alienation reached breaking point in December, after Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, when Mussolini declared war on the United States.

The outlook for Fascist Italy in 1942 was gloomy. In North Africa, temporary Italo-German gains were liquidated by a vigorous British offensive. Axis forces, including the Italians, suffered serious reverses in the Soviet Union. Italian occupation troops in Albania, Yugoslavia, and Greece suffered heavy losses from guerrilla bands. In Italy the Italian people endured a bitter winter with short rations of food and fuel. Increasing German control of all phases of Italian life, corruption and inefficiency among Fascist officials, and evasion of the rationing laws by the wealthy and influential contributed to their demoralization.

The British launched a series of bombing raids against the industrial cities of northern Italy. As advancing British and American forces in North Africa established air bases in Algeria and Cyrenaica, southern Italy was also bombed. The political prestige of the Fascist regime continued to decline. In February 1943, hoping to turn the tide, Mussolini assumed full responsibility for both political affairs and military operations. When the Axis forces in Tunisia collapsed in May, he established a council of defense to prepare for an Allied invasion of the Italian mainland. All efforts to bolster defenses and raise morale, however, were nullified by the Allied air raids.

In 1943, the Allies invaded, and Mussolini's own fascist leadership turned against him. He was dismissed from his position as prime minister and fled to northern Italy. He lived there until his capture and execution in April 1945. Victor Emmanuel asked *Marshal Pietro Badoglio* to form a new ministry and the Badoglio cabinet soon decreed the liquidation of all Fascist organizations.

Mussolini's fall led to peace demonstrations throughout Italy. *Winston Churchill* offered Italy the choice of breaking off its alliance with Germany or suffering destruction; *General Dwight D. Eisenhower* promised the Italian people an honorable peace and a beneficent occupation if they ceased their aid to the German war effort. Badoglio's government offered to join the Allies against Germany when the Allied invasion of the Italian mainland began. The armistice was signed on September 3, 1943 the day the invasion of southern Italy began.

In line with pledges made to the Allies and to the Italian people, Prime Minister Badoglio declared war on Germany on October 13 and reorganized his government on a broader, more democratic basis. Seeking to induce leaders of various anti-German political groups to enter his cabinet, he conferred with leaders of six political parties, disbanded by Mussolini, which had united to form a National Liberation Front. These liberal elements, however, would consent to form a representative government only if Victor Emmanuel abdicated. The king refused, and Badoglio declined any part in a move to oust him. As a temporary solution, he organized a so-called technical government of nonparty experts to carry on administrative functions. In November the Committee of National Liberation voted no-confidence in the Badoglio government and called on the king to abdicate.

In April 1944 the king announced his decision to withdraw from public affairs and to appoint his son Humbert, later King Humbert II, as lieutenant general of Italy. This act opened the way for a government representing the National Committee of Liberation. The Allied armies liberated Rome on June 4, and Victor Emmanuel transferred all royal authority to Humbert. The party leaders of the Committee of National Liberation, however, unanimously refused to serve in the Badoglio government, and the position of prime minister was given to *Ivanoe Bonomi*, who formed a coalition government.

Post-World War II Italy

Italians voted in 1946 to end the country's monarchy and become a republic. The son of Victor Emmanuel II, *Humbert*, abdicated his position as king and was exiled. After the adoption of Italy's new constitution, three political parties formed--the Christian Democrats, the Communists, and the Socialists. The strongest of these parties was the Christian Democrats. The party's first leader, *Alcide de Gasperi*, supported industrial growth, agricultural reform, and partnership with the United States, as well as the Vatican. Italy's partnership with the United States allowed the country to receive much needed financial aid, and economic recovery soon followed. Italy joined NATO in 1949, but its economic growth was confined mainly to the northern regions forcing those in the poorer southern regions to move north or abroad to find employment.

Political Instability

From the beginning, until March 1988, the *Italian Republic* experienced the rule of 48 different coalition governments. The longest tenure of any of these coalition governments was approximately 4 years. Italy was plagued with social and political unrest, as well as political corruption. The height of political crime and corruption occurred in 1978 when Prime Minister *Aldo Moro* was kidnapped and murdered by opposing party members associated with left-wing terrorism.

By the mid-1980's, however, an effort to improve security and decrease organized crime was implemented. In the 1990's, the country experienced political corruption and scandal once again when hundreds of businessmen and politicians were investigated and arrested. These scandals eventually discredited the political parties which had been strong since the republic's beginnings. Voters showed their lack of confidence in all established parties in elections held in April 1992. The once-dominant Christian Democrats received 29.7 percent of the vote, an all-time low. The renamed Communists, in second place, drew 16.1 percent, down from 26.6 percent in 1987; the Socialists were third, with 13.6 percent.

In April 1993 Italian voters approved eight governmental reform referendums, which revised the country's electoral system and ended state funding of political parties. Soon after the elections Prime Minister *Giuliano Amato* resigned and was replaced by the head of the Bank of Italy, *Carlo Azeglio Ciampi*.

By 1993, Italy changed its electoral system and instituted a plan in which $\frac{3}{4}$ of the seats in the Chamber and the Senate would be a result of majority voting. The remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ would be appointed proportionally based on those political parties receiving at least 4% of the vote. This reform encouraged a more positive political atmosphere.

In March 1994 a newly formed right-wing coalition called the Freedom Alliance was voted into power, winning 58 percent of the vote; the left-wing coalition received 34 percent of the vote, and the once-dominant centrist parties drew only 7 percent. The Freedom Alliance was composed of the new *Forza Italia* party, a creation of media magnate *Silvio Berlusconi*; the far-right National Alliance; and the Northern League. With 25 percent of the vote, Forza Italia was the election leader, and Berlusconi was named prime minister, with the Freedom Alliance holding a majority in the Chamber of Deputies and forming the strongest force in the Senate. But Berlusconi's coalition collapsed in December 1994 when the Northern League withdrew from the alliance. Berlusconi, who was also facing investigation on bribery charges, resigned as prime minister.

In January 1995 Lamberto Dini, Berlusconi's treasury minister, was appointed prime minister by President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro to lead a politically neutral, transitional government. Dini's government passed an austerity budget to deal with Italy's worsening economy, which included a crippling national deficit and a devalued lira. It also oversaw efforts to reform the regional electoral system and state pension system and to enact rules governing political access to television. Dini resigned in January 1996, but continued in office until elections were held in April.

Elections in 1996 ushered in another change when a coalition, the *Olive Tree*, won the right to form a new government. The alliance's largest member was the Democratic Party of the Left; it also included former Christian Democrats and Dini's newly formed Italian Renewal Party. Olive Tree gained control of the Senate and a plurality, 284 seats, in the Chamber of Deputies. *Romano Prodi*, an economics professor, was sworn in as prime minister, pledging to cut spending and reduce unemployment. The corruption scandals continued, engulfing prominent politicians as well as business leaders and others.

In November 1996 Italy moved to rejoin Europe's currency system by admitting the lira into the European exchange rate mechanism (ERM). The euro was gradually phased in between 1999 and 2002. In 1997 and 1998 two natural disasters (earthquakes and floods) left widespread devastation.

In October 1998 *Prodi* lost a parliamentary confidence motion by only one vote. *Massimo D'Alema*, a former Communist and head of the Democratic Party of the Left, led a coalition that assumed power in the Italian parliament. D'Alema replaced Prodi as prime minister. This event marked the first occurrence of an ex-Communist serving in that position. The new prime minister hoped to stabilize the Italian government with proposals for electoral reform, but a national referendum on the issue was narrowly defeated in April 1999.

In May 1999 former Prime Minister *Carlo Azeglio Ciampi* was elected president. In December of that year, in the face of widening cracks in his ruling coalition, D'Alema resigned as prime minister. After negotiations between the opposition parties failed to produce a government, D'Alema returned to office at the head of a slightly smaller center-left coalition. This new government, however, was equally short-lived, and after his coalition sustained heavy losses in regional elections in April 2000, D'Alema resigned for good. He was replaced by former Prime Minister *Giuliano Amato*, who had served as treasury minister in D'Alema's cabinet.

The center-left's control of government came to an end in national elections in May 2001, when a conservative alliance led by Berlusconi captured a majority of seats in the upper and lower houses of parliament. Berlusconi's winning alliance included his own *Forza Italia* party, which emerged from the elections as the nation's largest single party; the National Alliance; and four smaller conservative groups. As Italy's new prime minister, Berlusconi pledged to lower taxes, streamline the state bureaucracy, and modernize Italy's sluggish economy.

In Nov. 2002, *Giulio Andreotti*, who served as Italy's prime minister numerous times between 1972 and 1992, was sentenced to 24 years for ordering the Mafia to murder a journalist in 1979. At 84, however, he was deemed too old for prison. In 2003, Parliament passed an immunity law for top government officials that meant the latest corruption trial involving Berlusconi—he is accused of bribing judges in 1985—would be suspended while he remained in office. The law was passed just weeks before Berlusconi took over the rotating EU presidency in July, meant in part to help Italy save face while their president held a high-profile international position. His first day on the EU job, Berlusconi caused a diplomatic furor when he compared a German European Parliament member to a Nazi concentration-camp guard.

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People Groups

Indigenous Italian Peoples

Mainline Italians

Over 93.5 % of the people in Italy are from the indigenous Italian people. The total number exceeds 51 million. While all from the indigenous Italian people, extreme cultural differences exist between peoples from the north and the south. These differences are expressed in variations in cultures, dialects, and languages. Among these diverse Italians are Lombards (9 million), Neopolitan/Calabrian (7.7 million), Sicillan (5.1 million), Piedmontese (4.3 million), Venetian (4.5 million), Ligurian (1.6 million), Sardinian (4 million), and Friulian/Laddin (1.2 million).

Over 40,000,000 Italian speakers live in the world. Their primary religion is Roman Catholicism. While about 84% claim Christianity, only an estimate of 0.31% of these are considered evangelical. They have the Bible, audio recordings of the Gospel, radio broadcasts, and the Jesus film.

Other peoples that can be considered indigenous due to having lived in Italy for centuries include Albanian, Tyrolese, Romani, and Greek. The Profile mentions these groups individually in the following section.

Campidanese Sardinian 343,000(JPII)

This people group speaks Sardinian and Campidanese and practice Roman Catholicism. They have the Bible and audio recordings of the Gospel, but they do not have the Jesus film or radio broadcasts. About 0.42% are evangelicals.

Friulian 600,000(JPII)

This people group speaks Friulian which is a cluster of several languages—Carnico, East Central Friulian, Western Friulian, and Tuscan. The Bible is available in all four languages, but audio recordings of the Gospel, the Jesus film, and radio broadcasts are only available in Tuscan. About .49% profess to be evangelical. The prominent religion is Roman Catholicism.

Italian, Sicilian 4,681,000(JPII)

These Sicilian speakers live on the island of Sicily and practice Roman Catholicism. They may number as many as 5.1 million. About 50% claim Christianity, but only 1.41% are considered evangelical. They have the Bible and audio recordings of the Gospel. They do not have radio broadcasts or the Jesus film.

Italian, Venetian 2,110,000(JPII)

These Venetian speakers live mainly in northern Italy and Venetia. While the Joshua Project places their number at 2.1 million, Johnstone estimates the population at 4.5 million. Their language is a cluster of 3 dialects—Istrian, Tretine, and Venetian Proper. They practice Roman Catholicism as their main religion, and 90% claim Christianity. Only 0.74% are considered evangelical, however. They have the Bible, but they do not have audio recordings of the Gospel, radio broadcasts, and the Jesus film.

Logudorese Sardinian 1,500,000(JPII)

This people group is located in central Sardinia and speaks Sardinian and Logudorese. Logudorese is the second official language of Sardinia after Italian. The dominant religion is Roman Catholicism, and about 80% claim Christianity. Only about 0.09% are considered evangelicals. They have the Bible and audio recordings of the Gospel. They do not have radio broadcasts or access to the Jesus film in their language.

Lombard 8,671,000(JPII)

There are about 9,000,000 speakers in the world. Those in Italy live in Milan, Lombardy, and northern Italy. They practice mainly Roman Catholicism, and 85% claim Christianity. However, only about 0.29% are considered evangelical. They have the Bible, but they do not have access to the Jesus film in their language. They do not have audio recordings of the Gospel or radio broadcasts, either.

Neapolitan-Calabrian 7,047,000(JPII)

This people group speaks Napoletano-calabrese and lives in the provinces of Campania and Calabria, as well as in southern Italy. Johnstone counts as many as 7.7 million in the group. Most do not know Standard Italian. The prominent religion is Roman Catholicism, and 80% claim Christianity. However, only about 1.41% can be considered evangelical. They have the Bible and audio recordings of the Gospel in their language, but they do not have access to the Jesus film in their language or radio broadcasts.

Piedmontese 3,000,000(JPII)

These Piedmontese speakers lived in northwest Italy and the Piedmont region. Johnstone counts as many as 4.3 million in the group. They have been influenced considerably by the French and are usually bilingual in Standard Italian. The primary religion is Roman Catholicism, and about 80% claim Christianity. Only 0.76% are considered to be evangelical, however. They have the Bible in their language, but they do not have audio recordings of the Gospel, radio broadcasts, or access to the Jesus film in their language.

Sardinian, Sard 171,600(JPII)

These Italian speakers have the Bible, radio broadcasts, audio recordings of the Gospel, and the Jesus film. About 84% of them claim Christianity, but there are no known evangelicals. The primary religion is Roman Catholicism.

Sassarese Sardinian 343,000(JPII)

These speakers of Sardinian and Sassarese live in northwestern Sardinia. Their culture is influenced by Corsican and Tuscan cultures. They mainly practice Roman Catholicism, and about 80% claim Christianity. Less than 1%, however, are considered evangelicals. They have the Bible, but they do not have access to radio broadcasts, audio recordings of the Gospel, or the Jesus film in their language.

Tempiese Sardinian 285,977(JPII)

These Sardinian and Campidanese speakers prefer the dialect of Gallurese and live in northern Sardinia. They mainly practice Roman Catholicism and about 80% claim Christianity. There is no information about the number of evangelicals. They have the Bible and audio recordings of the Gospel. They do not have radio broadcasts or the Jesus film in their language.

Arabic Peoples

Various people groups from Arabic backgrounds now reside in Italy. Most follow Islam and are increasing in numbers.

Arab, Algerian 400(PG)

These Arabic speakers primarily practice Islam. The group is considered the last frontier because there are fewer than 2% evangelicals in the group. They have some access to evangelical resources, but there is no active church planting at present. There has been no active church planting in the past two years either.

Most of these people are immigrants with backgrounds in agriculture. Their ancestors originated in the Arabian Desert and migrated to various areas. Most of the Algerian Arabs in Italy live along the coastal areas. According to their culture, if they profess faith in Christ, they are put to death. This group has portions of the Bible in their language, audio recordings of the Gospel, and the Jesus film.

Arab, Egyptian 2,500 (PG)

These Arabic speakers primarily practice Islam. The group is in last frontier status because there are fewer than 2% evangelicals in this group. They have limited access to evangelical resources and have no active church planting taking place among them presently. They tend to be very conservative in their Islamic theology, especially concerning gender roles.

Recent trends of change have arisen in the views of female roles, however, due to the international Arabic influence. Some international Arabic leaders are calling for empowerment of Islamic women in order to unify and expand the development of the Arabic world. While this group is slowly beginning such a transition, one aspect of their society remains unchanged—their dislike of American policy abroad. This group does not have radio broadcasts, but they do have

portions of the Bible, audio recordings of the Gospel, and the Jesus film. There are no known evangelicals.

Arab, Cyreaic **600(JPII)**

This people speak Arabic and Libyan. They do not have the Bible, audio recordings, radio broadcasts, or the Jesus film.

Arab, North African **23,000(JPII)**

This people group is one of the least reached and speaks Arabic, as well as Judeo-moroccan. They do not have the Bible, radio broadcasts, audio recordings of the Gospel, or the Jesus film. About .05% are evangelicals, but the primary religion is Islam.

Arabic, Judeo-Tunisian **500 (JPII)**

These Arabic and Judeo-tunisian speakers have at least portions of the Bible, but they do not have Gospel audio recordings, radio broadcasts, or the Jesus film. They are Muslim

Gypsy Peoples

Several peoples all stemming from the Gypsy Tradition now are found in Italy.

Balkan Gypsy, Arjila **25,000(JPII)**

There are about 1,000,000 speakers in the world. They are located in 12 countries and are predominantly Muslim. They speak Romani or Balkan and have the Bible, radio broadcasts, Gospel audio recordings, and the Jesus film.

Italian Gypsy **22,900(JPII)**

These Italian speakers have the Bible, radio broadcasts, audio recordings of the Gospel, and the Jesus film. About 20% are nonreligious, and the other 80% consider themselves to be adherents of Christianity. There are nomadic caravan churches and a Gypsy evangelical movement.

Gypsy, Rom Kalderash **3,000(JPII)**

These nomads speak Vlax Romani. About 80% claim Christianity, but few if any are considered evangelicals. They have the Bible, audio recordings of the Gospel, radio broadcasts, and the Jesus film.

Lovari Gypsy **1,000(JPII)**

These nomads speak Vlax Romani and have the Bible, audio recordings of the Gospel, radio broadcasts, and the Jesus film in their language. The Roman Catholic church, as well as the Gypsy Evangelical Movement, are primary religions of this people group. They have the Bible, audio recordings of the Gospel, radio broadcasts, and access to the Jesus film in their language.

Rhaeto-Romansh **21,000(JPII)**

This border people speak both Romansch and Upper Engadine. Their prominent religion is Roman Catholicism, and about 85% claim Christianity. There are few if any known evangelicals, however. They have the Bible and audio recordings of the Gospel, but they do not have access to radio broadcasts or the Jesus film in their language.

Romani, Vlach 2,000(JPII)

This gypsy people group speaks Vlax Romani. There are 1,500,000 speakers worldwide. The prominent religion is Christian Orthodox, but there are no known evangelicals. They have the Bible, radio broadcasts, audio recordings, and the Jesus film in their languages.

Sinte Gypsy 14,000(JPII)

This gypsy people group speaks Sinte Romani, and there are about 200,000 speakers worldwide. They practice Roman Catholicism primarily, and about 80% claim Christianity. They have the Bible and audio recordings of the Gospel. They do not have access to radio broadcasts or the Jesus film in their language.

Yugoslavian Gypsy, Sinte 4,000(JPII)

These Romani and Sinte speakers are nomads who live in northeastern Italy. 20% claim no religion at all, and others are members of the Gypsy Evangelical Movement. They have the Bible and audio recordings of the Gospel, but they do not have radio broadcasts or access to the Jesus film in their language.

Other Minority Peoples

Anglophones 198,000(PG)

The Anglophones, English speakers, are an unreached group in Italy. The primary religion of record is Christianity, and most claim to be Protestant in their theology. However, there are fewer than 2% evangelicals. Localized church planting has taken place in the past two years. Many native Italians see this people group as individualistic and out of touch with the non-white world in which they live. Some Anglophones convey the attitude that they are superior due to their English-speaking society and the assumed loyalty to their mainly white societies. This perception among non-whites has been the source of ethnic barriers in missions in the country for some time.

Bergamasco 131,000(JPII)

These *Bela* speakers from central Lombardy practice Catholicism. They do not have the Bible, the Jesus film, audio recordings of the Gospel, or radio broadcasts. There are very few, or a handful, of evangelicals among the Bergamaschi.

Cimbrian 2,200(JPII)

These *Cimbrian* speakers are found in northeastern Italy. Until the late 19th century, all church services were conducted in Cimbrian, not Italian. About 90% claim Christianity, but none are considered evangelicals. The predominant religion is Roman Catholicism, and they have no radio broadcasts, audio recordings of the Gospel, or the Jesus film.

Dari 300(JPII)

This small people group is mainly Islamic and their primary language is *Dari* which is very much related to the Persian language. Most of them use Western Farsi as their second language. The group does not have the Bible, Gospel audio recordings, or the Jesus film; but there are some believers among them.

Dolomite, Ladino 30,000(JPII)

These speakers of *Atesino* claim Roman Catholicism as their prominent religion. They do not have the Jesus film, audio recordings of the Gospel, or radio broadcasts.

Emilian 17,000(JPII)

They speak *Emiliano-romagnolo* and live in northwest Italy. Most also know Italian, and they have the Bible in their language. Their primary religion is Roman Catholicism. They do not have radio broadcasts, Gospel audio recordings, or the Jesus film.

Jews-Tunisian 500,000(JPII)

This group of Jews mostly speaks an Arabic, Judeo-Tunisian language which is a mixture of Arabic, Hebrew, and Romance languages. The main religion among them is Islam. They are less than 2% evangelical and there has been no active church planting in the past 2 years. They do have the Bible in their language but they do not have either the Jesus film or Gospel recordings.

Judeo-Italian Jew 4,000(JPII)

This group of highly religious Jews is nearly extinct. They speak Judeo-Italian and make up about 10% of Italy's Jewish population. There are only a few who speak Judeo-Italian fluently. It is spoken mainly in religious ceremonies and services.

Ligurian, Genoan 1,854,000(JPII)

These *Ligurian* speakers are located in northern Italy and mainly practice Roman Catholicism. They have the Bible, but they do not have audio recordings of the Gospel, radio broadcasts, or the Jesus film. About 85% claim Christianity, but it is not known how many can be considered evangelicals.

Mocheno 1,900(JPII)

These *Mocheno* speakers live mainly in the Trentino area of Italy. There are no evangelicals, and they do not have the Bible in their language, audio recordings of the Gospel, radio broadcasts, or access to the Jesus film in their language.

Provençal, Occitani 100,000(JPII)

There are over 350,000 *Provençal* speakers worldwide. Their primary religion is Roman Catholicism, and they live in the upper valleys of the Piedmont region, as well as in Calabria. About 90% claim Christianity, but there are few if any known evangelicals. They have the Bible, but they do not have access to radio broadcasts, recordings of the Gospel, or the Jesus film in their language.

Shawiya 37,000(JPII)

These *Chaouia* speakers are followers of Islam and have no known evangelical members. They have the Bible and the Jesus film in their language, but they do not have audio recordings of the Gospel or radio broadcasts.

Slovene 100,000(JPII)

There are 2, 218,000 speakers worldwide. This people group live in the northeastern regions of Trieste and Gorizia. Most of them practice Roman Catholicism and 95% claim Christianity. There are no known evangelicals, however. They do not have the Bible, radio broadcasts, audio recordings of the Gospel, or the Jesus film in their language.

Ex-patriot Peoples

Afghani 2,000(PG)

Over 2000 people of the Afghani group, composed of members from differing regional tribes in Afghanistan, live in Italy. Peoples from the Tajiks, Uzbeks, nomadic Turkmen, Hazaras, Afghans, and Baluchis tribes may also be counted as Afghanis in Italy. The Afghani peoples are speakers of Pashto, Dari, and various Turkish languages. Due to the exile of the Afghani King in 1973 and the intense warfare in 1979, many fled to various countries.

The former royal family sought exile in Italy, and many of the Afghani people living there today are sympathetic to him. While Afghanis are a vastly diverse people, they are unified by their religion of Islam. Over 80% are Sunni Muslims, but some are Shiite Muslims. These people have no Bible, radio broadcasts, audio recordings of the Gospel, or Jesus film; and there are fewer than 2% evangelicals. They have some evangelical resources, but there are no active churches serving them.

Albanian, Tosk 57,000(JPII)

These Albanian and Tosk speakers practice Roman Catholicism mainly, but there are about 17% who are Muslim. No information is available concerning the presence of evangelicals in this group. They have the Bible, audio recordings of the Gospel, and the Jesus film in their language. They do not have radio broadcasts.

Arbereshe 80,000(JPII)

This group speaks Albanian, Abershe, and Sicilian Albanian. These languages are spoken mainly in the home, and Italian is spoken elsewhere. They have portions of the Bible, but they do not have Gospel audio recordings, radio broadcasts, or the Jesus film. They are Muslim, and there are no evangelicals.

Armenian 1,300(JPII)

This group of people fled the USSR and sought refuge in Italy around 1917. These Armenian speakers primarily practice a form of Christian Orthodoxy. They have the Bible, radio broadcasts, audio recordings of the Gospel, and the Jesus film.

Austrian 229,000(JPII)

These expatriates from Austria live mainly in northern Italy, and speak German. They have the Bible, radio broadcasts, audio recordings of the Gospel, and the Jesus Film.

Bengali, Bangladeshi 8,000(JPII)

These Bangala speakers practice Hinduism. They do not have the Jesus film or radio broadcasts, but they do have the Bible and Gospel audio recordings. There are no evangelicals.

Bavarian Austrian 29,000(JPII)

These Bavarian speakers have 3 dialects—Central, South, and North Bavarian. They live mainly in the Bavarian Alps. They have the Bible and audio recordings, but they do not have the Jesus film or radio broadcasts. About .52% are evangelicals, but the main religion practiced is Catholicism.

Bosnian, Muslimani 3,500(JPII)

These Serbo-croatian speakers have the Bible, radio broadcasts, audio recordings of the Gospel, and the Jesus film. Many practice Orthodox Christianity, while many others are Muslim. This people group is composed of refugees and migrant workers from Bosnia.

British 29,000(JPII)

This English-speaking people group has the Bible, audio recordings of the Gospel, radio broadcasts, and the Jesus film. They are British expatriates who are employed mainly in the fields of business and education.

Bulgar, Pomak 2,100(JPII)

These Pomak and Bulgarian speakers practice the religion of Islam. They were converted from Orthodox Christianity under Ottoman rule. There are no known evangelicals in this group, but they have the Bible, audio recordings of the Gospel, radio broadcasts, and the Jesus film in their language.

Catalonian, Algerhese 21,600(JPII)

There are over 4,350,000 speakers in the world. They speak both Algerhese and Tuscan and are mainly immigrants from Spain. They have the Bible, the Jesus film, and audio recordings of the Gospel.

Corsican 5,700(JPII)

There are 260,000 speakers in the world. They speak Corsican and live in Sardinia. They have the Bible and audio recordings of the Gospel, but they do not have the Jesus film or radio broadcasts.

Croat 23,400(JPII)

These Serbo-Croatian speakers mainly inhabit southern Italy and are refugees or migrant workers from Croatia. About 90% claim Christianity, but fewer than .01% are truly evangelicals. Some of them are Muslim. This people group has the Bible, the Jesus film, Gospel audio recordings, and radio broadcasts.

Eritrean 52,000(JPII)

They are refugees from Eritrea and speak *Tigrigna*. 80% are estimated to be Muslim. They have the Bible, radio broadcasts, audio recordings of the Gospel, and the Jesus film.

Filipino, Tagalog 11,000(JPII)

The Philippine people immigrated from the Philippines and speak Tagalog. They have the Bible, radio broadcasts, audio recordings of the Gospel, and the Jesus film.

Franco-Provencal 70,000(JPII)

These Franco-provencal speakers have the Bible, but 0.0% are evangelical. They do not have radio broadcasts, audio recordings of the Gospel, or the Jesus film. They live mainly in northwest Italy and the Aosta Valley.

French 100,000(JPII)

There are 72,000,000 speakers in the world. Those in Italy live in the Aosta Valley region and mainly practice Roman Catholicism. They are expatriates from France and work in business and commerce. They have the Bible, audio recordings of the Gospel, radio broadcasts, and the Jesus film.

German 225,000(JPII)

There are over 98,000,000 standard German speakers in the world. In Italy, they reside in the northern regions, as well as the areas of Trentino-Alto Adige, Bolzano, and South Tyrol. Standard German is spoken in the schools in these areas and is even the official language in the Alto-Adige region. About 88% claim Christianity, but few if any are evangelical. Most are Roman Catholic or Evangelical Lutheran. They do have the Bible, Gospel audio recordings, radio broadcasts, and the Jesus film.

Jew 41,000(JPII)

These Italian speakers reside in several areas of Italy, including Florence, Milan, Trieste, and Rome. There are over 16,000 Jewish inhabitants of Rome. They have the Bible, audio recordings of the Gospel, radio broadcasts, and the Jesus film. However, they are one of the least-reached people groups in Italy. About 0.30% claim Christianity, but few if any are considered evangelical.

Greek 20,000(JPII)

There are 12,000,000 Greek speakers in the world. Those in Italy live in the regions of Salento, Calimera, and eastern Reggio, as well as Southern Italy. Most practice the Greek Orthodox religion and 95% claim Christianity. Few if any are evangelicals, however. They have the Bible, audio recordings of the Gospel, and the Jesus film.

Han Chinese, Mandarin 1,300(JPII)

This people group speaks Mandarin Chinese. They are mainly immigrants from the Chinese Diaspora. About 90% practice Buddhism or a Chinese folk religion while 8% consider themselves to be Christian. Few of those claiming Christianity, however, are evangelicals. They have the Bible, audio recordings of the Gospel, radio broadcasts, and the Jesus film.

Iraqi 1,500(PG)

This people group is mainly Arabs from Iraq and they speak Arabic. The primary religion among them is Islam. They do have the Bible and Jesus film in their own language. There are less than 2% of them are evangelicals.

Italo-Albanian 458,000(JPII)

These Italian speakers are immigrants from Albania. Their primary religion is Roman Catholicism. They have the Bible, radio broadcasts, audio recordings of the Gospel, and the Jesus film.

Japanese 520(JPII)

These expatriates and immigrants from Japan speak Japanese and are Buddhists or New Religionists. About 2% claim Christianity. They have the Bible, audio recordings of the Gospel, radio broadcasts, and the Jesus film.

Kurds 11,500(JPII)

These refugees from Turkey, Iran, and Iraq speak Kurmanji. Most are Sunni Muslims, but they have the Bible, audio recordings of the Gospel, radio broadcasts, and the Jesus film.

Latin American 1,000(JPII)

These Ladino speakers are closely related to the Dolomite people group. They have the Bible and audio recordings of the Gospel, but they do not have radio broadcasts or access to the Jesus film. About 90% of these people claim Christianity.

Maltese 28,000(JPII)

These expatriates and immigrants from Malta speak Maltese. Most practice Roman Catholicism, but there are many charismatic adherents, as well. About 91% claim Christianity, but few if any are considered evangelical. They have the Bible, audio recordings of the Gospel, and access to the Jesus film in their language. They do not have radio broadcasts.

Nigerian 750(PG)

This small people group's main language is English. Their religion is Christianity, mainly Protestantism. They do have the Bible and the Jesus film in their Language.

Russian 4,100(JPII)

This people group is mostly refugees from the USSR who fled after 1917. They speak Russian and practice Russian Orthodoxy. About 25% claim no religion at all, and the remainder claim Christianity. There are no known evangelicals. This group has the Bible, radio broadcasts, audio recordings of the Gospel, and the Jesus film.

Serb, Bosnian 3,500(JPII)

These Serbo-Croatian speakers live mainly in the Trieste region. There are 21,000,000 speakers worldwide. Their primary religion is Serbian Orthodoxy, as well as Muslim. They have the Bible, radio broadcasts, audio recordings of the Gospel, and the Jesus film in their language.

Somali 50,000(JPII)

These Somali speakers practice Islam and are mainly refugees or migrants from Somalia. They have the Bible, audio recordings of the Gospel, radio broadcasts, and the Jesus film in their language. There is no information about the presence of evangelicals in this group.

Spaniard 57,000(JPII)

These Spanish speakers practice Roman Catholicism and approximately 96% claim Christianity. There are no known evangelicals. Most are expatriates from Spain who work as professionals in areas such as commerce. They have access to the Bible, audio recordings of the Gospel, radio broadcasts, and the Jesus film in their language.

Sri Lanken 1,500(PG)

Sri Lankens who live in Italy still maintain their language which is Sinhala. Their Primary religion is Hinduism. The earliest dates for the Bible in the Sinhala language was 1823 – 1982.

USA White 114,000(JPII)

These English speakers are expatriates from the United States. There are less than 1% who are evangelicals, and they have the Bible, audio recordings of the Gospel, radio broadcasts, and the Jesus film in their language.

Wolof **2,000(PG)**

This people group is mainly from Senegal. Their main language is Wolof. The primary religion among them is Islam. The New Testament was translated into their language in 1988.

Walser **3,400(JPII)**

This people group speaks Walser, and there are no known evangelicals among them. Their primary religion is Roman Catholicism. They do not have the Bible, audio recordings of the Gospel, radio broadcasts, or the Jesus film in their language.

Christian History

Brief History

Christianity began in Rome before even Peter or Paul visited it. In the 1st and 2nd Century Christians faced intense persecution in Rome. Some theologians, led by Paul Minear, *The Obedience of Faith*, believe that the churches in Rome were small congregations built around the differing people groups who had migrated there. We also know of *Aquila* and *Priscilla*, a Christian couple who were forced from Rome and became fellow workers with Paul in Corinth. In 324 A.D. *Constantine*, the emperor, officially declared Christianity as the religion of the state and established Constantinople as the Capital. A division between the Eastern and Western Churches was finalized by 395 AD. Benedict of Nursia (500 AD) initiated the monastic movement. The Roman Pope, in 752 A.D., asked Pepin of France for protection. This alliance led in 800 A.D. to the foundation of the Holy Roman Empire and its Emperor, Charlemagne.

The Muslims took over Sicily and Southern Italy. Then in 962 A.D. Otto I of Germany restored the Holy Roman Empire. From 962 A.D. and until 1796 A.D. there were a great deal of conflicts between the papacy and the northern nations such as the Normans, the French, the Spanish, and the Austrians.

The separation between Greek and Roman Christianity was confirmed in the beginning of the second millennium. This separation was finalized around 1054 AD. New movements arose such as the pre-Reformation one of Peter Waldo, the Waldensians. When France regained power, the Papacy was taken to Avignon in 1309 (The Babylonian Captivity of the Church). The schism that followed saw a series of Popes come to and fall from power (1378-1417 AD). Luther and Calvin's successes in the 16th Century aided in the growth of the Waldenses in northern Italy but was quickly stopped by new bodies that were formed after the Council of Trent like the Capuchins and Jesuits.

There was a new movement in the 1990s which was a Pentecostal/Charismatic Renewal movement. This movement rapidly captured a great deal of members from other churches, reaching 4,180,000 adherents (8% Pentecostals, 82% Catholics, 11% Independents).

Protestant Churches

The first Protestant missionaries in Italy came from England in the 1860s. The Methodist missionaries arrived in 1859. Baptists sent missionaries in 1863, and the first Adventists sent theirs in 1864. The American Southern Baptists took the place of the British Baptists in 1920, and the Italian Baptist Union was established in 1956.

The Waldensian Church (Chiesa Evangelica Methodista d'Italia and Chiesa Evangelica Valdese)

The Waldensian Church constitutes the oldest protestant denomination in Italy and is still the largest non-Pentecostal Protestant group in Italy. The Waldensian movement started in the 12th Century in southern France with Peter Waldo and the Poor Men of Lyons active in its origin. The Waldenses experienced significant growth in the 16th century. The Waldenses suffered greatly at the hands of the Counter-Reformation after the Council of Trent (1545-1563). With some lessening of persecution, the group reached a total membership of up to 200,000.

The Waldensian Church joined in a loose network with the Methodists in Italy and formed the Unione delle Chiese Methodisthe e Valdesi. The merger took place in 1979. Johnstone reports Waldensian & Methodist membership at over 172 congregations with 17,000 members and 27,000 plus adherents.

The website (<http://www.chiesavaldese.org/indexen.html>) claims over 45,000 members. For more information see: http://www.geocities.com/luoghistorici/English/Intro_en.html

The Lutheran Church (Chiesa Evangelica Luterana in Italia)

The Lutheran Church in Italy points to a date as early as 1648. Lutherans claim as many as 59 congregations in Italy, over 5000 members and 7000 adherents.

The Assemblies of God (Assemblee di Dio in Italia)

The Assemblies of God Church first came to Italy in 1908 when an immigrant returned from the United States. Along with other immigrants, membership increased fast. By 1961, they had expanded to 600 churches with 100,000 members. The Assembly of God churches now number over 1090 congregations, 70,000 members and 160,000 adherents.

Evangelical Baptist Union (Unione Cristiana Evangelica Battista)

The Evangelical Baptist Union began work in Italy as early as 1863 and now has over 113 congregations with 5000 members and 15,000 adherents.

The Assembly of Evangelical Baptists (Assemblea Evangelica Battista)

This Baptist group began in Italy in 1947 and is affiliated with the Conservative Baptist Foreign Mission Society from the United States. Johnstone counts 6 congregations and 700 members while Barrett points to 18 congregations and 225 members.

Community of Free Evangelicals

There are 24 congregations of free evangelical churches with membership around 2200. About 3000 people claim to be affiliated with these churches.

Pentecostal Churches

Several groups of Pentecostal type churches serve in Italy.

Pentecostal Churches Federated (Fellowship of Pentecostal Churches)

The Independent Fellowship of Pentecostal Churches reports over 300 congregations, 35,000 members, and 47,000 adherents.

The Apostolic Church in Italy (Chiesa Apostolica Italiana)

This church that began as early as 1927 is a Pentecostal type church that boasts some 10 congregations and 700 members.

The International Evangelical Church (Chiesa Evangelica Internazionale)

In 1957, a new church, the *International Evangelical Church*, was formed and relates to the Pentecostal church. Barrett reports this church as rapidly growing with over 200 congregations and 3000 members. Johnstone apparently numbers this church among the Pentecostals but they appear to be independent.

Church of the Nazarene (Chiesa Evangelica del Nazareno)

The Nazarene Church began ministry in Italy in 1948 and has over 10 congregations with some 600 members and over a 1000 adherents.

Evangelical Christian Brethren Church (Chiesa Cristiana Evangelica del Fratelli)

The Brethren Church began in Italy as early as 1833. The church now reports over 255 congregations with 13,000 members and 24,000 adherents.

Salvation Army (Esercito della Salvezza)

The Salvation Army has ministered in Italy since 1886. They report 36 congregations with over 1715 members and 4000 adherents.

Non-Christian Groups

Among groups claiming attachment to Christianity yet not exhibiting biblical teachings and practices are the Catholic and Orthodox traditions and other marginal groups (Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, and Christian Science). Significantly, the marginal groups account for 0.74 % of the population and 424,000 members. The marginal groups report a growth rate of 1.2 % and outnumber all the groups claiming to be Protestant. Protestants and Independents together only outnumber the marginal groups by 0.14 % of the population and some 78,000 members.

Roman Catholic (Chiesa Cattolica in Italia)

The Roman Catholic Church (Holy Catholic Apostolic & Roman Church) constitutes the largest religious group in Italy and claims almost 99% of the population. Johnstone places the percentage at over 80%. The total membership of the Roman Catholic Church is numbered at over 34,568,000 with over 46,000,000 adherents in over 28,900 congregations.

Only a third of the Catholics attend church regularly and only 6% take communion every Sunday. The Roman Catholic Church, although showing signs of constant crisis, still attempts to wield power over its adherents and still permeates every area of national and individual life. The Church has lost over 10 million followers to New Age thinking, cults, and the occult.

Attendance is decreasing in parishes across Italy, and those entering the priesthood have dropped dramatically. While most Italians are cynical about the Church, they continue to live in a culturally-Catholic manner and refuse to escape from the grasp it has on their lives. The Vatican, located in Italy, makes Italy the “home” of the Catholics and this fact lends power and influence to the Church.

Orthodox Churches (Chiesa Ortodossa Greca and Chiesa Ortodossa Russa)

Four groups of Orthodox churches serve in Italy. The Greek Orthodox Church boasts less than 10 congregations with around 15,000 members and 25,000 adherents. The two groups of Russian Orthodox churches together number around 2000 members and 15 congregations. The Serbian Orthodox church (*Comunitá Religiosa Serbo-Ortodossa*) that began in Italy as early as 1782 has one congregation with over 700 members.

Jehovah’s Witnesses (Testimoni di Geova)

The Jehovah’s Witness Church began ministry in Italy as early as 1891 and published its first magazine in 1903. The Jehovah’s Witnesses claim over 3100 congregations and 230,000 members. Among the native-born Italian citizens, Jehovah’s Witnesses constitute the second largest non-catholic religious group in Italy, having approximately 400,000 adherents. Jehovah’s Witnesses claim almost three times the number of congregations and four times the number of members as the Assemblies of God, the next largest Protestant group in Italy.

The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints (Chiesa di Gesù Cristo dei Santi degli Ultimi Giorni)

The Mormons entered Italy as early as 1850 and report 121 congregations with over 11,500 members and almost 20,000 adherents. This number of members represents almost three times the number of members reported by the Baptist Union.

Christian Scientist (Società della Scienza Cristiana)

The Christian Science group reports at least 9 congregations with 300 members.

Barrett, *World Christian Encyclopedia, Volume 1*, 2001, Johnstone, *Operation World Worldmark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life, Europe*, 1998

Missiological Implications

Evangelical Christians should pray for and actively find ways to evangelize the numerous sections of the population which are unreached.

Only about 1,500 of the 33,500 communities of Italy have any sort of evangelical witness. For instance, in northern Italy in the *Veneto* region alone there are almost 5 million people and only 38 churches with as few as 2,000 evangelical Christians. Evangelicals make up less than 0.1% of the populations of the provinces of *Umbria*, *Trentino*, *Lombardy*, and *Emilia-Romagna*. The *Island of Sardinia* with a population of 1,660,000 who speak their own language and follow their own culture is served by only 14 or 15 evangelical churches. The Christian progress on Sardinia is further obstructed by suspicion of outsiders, vendettas, the occult, and the activities of the Jehovah's Witnesses.

Additionally, Evangelicals should recognize that Italians have tended to be unresponsive to evangelical efforts in recent decades.

Evangelical Christianity should build on the rich history in Italy.

The Christian tradition in Italy is marked but is now weak and divided against itself. The *Waldensian Church*, world's oldest Protestant denomination that has its roots in Italy, has endured vicious persecution for centuries. Now aligned with the Methodist Church, the Waldensian Church has declined due to its sometimes radically liberal theology.

A growing Pentecostal majority in the country is encouraging but the rift between the Pentecostals and non-Pentecostals has led to numerous church splits. New churches are being started based on these bitter splits and not on the principles of strategic church planting. Due to these factors, the churches are usually very small and quite individualistic.

Most church groups do not grasp the challenge and biblical basis of missions, and others are committed to a prosperity doctrine.

Evangelical Christians should seek to provide help in overcoming these serious problems.

Evangelical Christians should redouble efforts among College students and teens. Observers consider these two groups as among the most challenging mission fields in Italy.

There are over 1.6 million students in 48 universities in Italy, and there are only about 100 collegians associated with collegiate ministries and organizations. The student body in Milan is the second largest in the country, and it has no Christian campus group presence at all. The wealthy peoples in the northern cities (Milan, Turin, Bologna, Venice) have little evangelical witness. The Northern provinces report less than 0.1 % evangelicals.

Another evangelistic opportunity centers with peoples harmed by the increasing heroin use among teens in Italy. The last estimate approximated that there are 400,000 heroin addicts now and that the incidence of HIV is increasing steadily, as well.

Evangelical Christians must accept the responsibilities for Italy's minorities and immigrants/refugees who remain in desperate need of the Gospel message.

The minorities in the northeast, the *Friulians, Ladin, Slovenes,* and *South Tyrolean Germans,* all of whom follow their own cultures, receive meager direct evangelical efforts. These staunchly Catholic peoples must be viewed as unreached peoples.

The Greek and Croatian groups in southern regions, as well as the Albanian refugees and immigrants, are in similar situations to those in the northeastern regions.

Muslim immigrants and refugees have grown rapidly through the past few years, and it is estimated that 70% are North African. Rome's Muslim mosque is the largest in Europe, and little or no outreach is targeting this group.

Evangelical Christians must seek to provide long-term, career missionaries whose numbers are decreasing drastically.

Only about 10% of missionaries return for second terms on the field in Italy. The pressures of spiritual warfare, opposition to the Gospel, and personal difficulties shed light on areas of inadequacy, such as spiritual health, emotional maturity, cultural flexibility, and faith. There is a desperate need for ministries in the areas of discipleship and in church-planting.

Evangelical Christians should adopt massive plans for Christian media materials for Italy

Evangelical Christians should redouble efforts to provide media materials in the form of broadcast, television, and film products that proclaim the gospel. While Christian radio and television are quite fruitful ministries, the printed media lags behind. Italians are reluctant to read, and this characteristic has a negative effect on the success of literature and Bible distribution. However, one Christian magazine (*Comunicazioni Cristiane*) is helping to bridge the gap between Italian Protestant churches.

The radio and television ministry has grown significantly, since the Italian government relaxed its control on those industries. There are hundreds of these Christian television and radio stations. This opening provides for vast proclamation.

The *Jesus* film has been seen by at least 10% of the population mostly through Christian television broadcasts.

Evangelical Christians should be active in helping Italian Christian groups provide quality leadership training on all levels.

The existing training schools should be helped and additional centers created to fill the void of training for church leadership. There is also a need for an enrollment increase at the seven Bible schools and seminaries across the country which has been adversely affected by poor church leadership.

Evangelical Christians should seek ways to introduce the concept of servant leadership into the churches and leaders in Italy's Churches.

Protestant leaders in Italian churches sometimes obstruct the advance of the Gospel. Internal church conflicts and scandals which center in proud, power-hungry leaders and pastors plague

the Italian Protestants. Pastors preach against the evils of papal power, yet these same pastors attempt to exert similar control over their congregations. The need for emphasis on holy living, humility and unity marks a reality for Christianity in Italy.

Conferences and literature showing the leadership pattern of Christ and pastoral leadership modeled on his example should be introduced into Italy.

Evangelical Christians should re affirm their responsibilities to have a part in evangelization and church development in Italy and other nations where true Great Commission Churches and living have been eclipsed and genuine gospel outreach is severely limited.