

## I. Christian Leadership & Worship

### A. New Testament Church - Acts 2:42-47; 5:12-16

1. Offices of oversight - 2 tier: Bishops/Presbyters(elders), deacons
2. Ministry roles - apostles, prophets, pastor/teacher, evangelists (see I Cor. 12:28ff, Rom 12:5-8, Eph. 2:20, Eph. 4:11-13)
3. Places of meeting - homes, synagogues, still went to Temple at Jerusalem until its destruction (70 AD).
4. Leadership structure - congregational/democratic
5. Operation of all spiritual gifts encouraged - especially prophecy
6. Classes - all classes of people in church, patricians, plebians, craftsmen, masters & slaves; however, preponderance seemed to be lower classes (Gonzalez, 91-92). (Note: Aland, *History of Christianity*, v. 1, ca. 150 CE, 57ff influx of upperclass Christians e.g. Clement of Alexandria, Cyprian, Dionysius, Paul of Samosata directed their writings to elite).
7. Focus of worship: Celebration of resurrection of Jesus (Gonzalez, 93). Primary meeting day - Sunday, 1<sup>st</sup> day of week.
8. Primary worship liturgy: Communion as part of a larger agape meal (I Cor. 11:20-34; Gonzalez, 94)
9. Early Communion service - commented scripture reading, prayers, hymns, extended prayer over elements, only baptized allowed to attend (Gonzalez, 94)

B. After 1<sup>st</sup> century, factors that began to change nature of church:

1. Destruction of Temple (70 AD) and Bar Kochba revolt (135 AD) broke final link to Jews
2. Increased conversion of Gentiles changed makeup of church. First converts primarily Jewish; after 100 AD majority converted Gentiles.
3. Identity crisis:
  - a) Eschatological focus prior to 100 AD (*Didache*, 158-9)
  - b) After 100 AD church takes on more formalism
4. Around 220 AD, greater increase of upper class converted to Christianity.
5. Architectural evidence – *domus ecclesiae* of Dura Europos, bishop's throne

C. Baptism

1. Acts 8:26-39 - For N.T. church confession of faith only criteria for baptism, no delay required.
2. Baptism administered by various disciples in N.T. period.
3. Later was done by deacons/deaconesses under direction of bishop
4. Note doctrinal emphasis of baptism as suggested in Justin Martyr's First Apology (section 61, pages 66-67) - Emphasis is on being washed/cleansed from sin. (Concept of substitutionary atonement, identifying with Christ's death, not really an emphasis until the Middle Ages).
5. By 3<sup>rd</sup> century, baptism allowed only after 3 year period as catechumen (see Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus and Apostolic Constitutions)

#### D. The Threat of Heresy and its Effect on Leadership

1. Apostolic succession - tradition of leadership linked to Peter (viewed as 1<sup>st</sup> pope).
2. Increase in authority of bishops
3. 3 tier leadership - bishop, elder, deacons
4. Ministry offices - reader, widow, virgin, porters, singer.

#### E. Three documents that demonstrate progression of leadership/liturgy:

1. Didache - written approx. 60-100 AD
  - a) Baptism - name of Father, Son & Holy Spirit; running water, or cold water, or warm, or if none of these, sprinkle water on head 3 times, fast if possible. Doesn't indicate who performs baptism (Didache, 153 [7])
  - b) Eucharist - cup & broken bread only for baptized, doesn't indicate who can serve it (e.g. bishop, Didache 154-5).
  - c) Prophets and apostles still considered valued gifts - Didache 155-8); focus still on parousia (Christ's return)

2. *Apostolic Tradition* - written approximately 215 A.D.
  - a) Professions prohibited to Christians (*Apostolic Tradition*, 24-28) - note cultural influences e.g. woman & her slave. Slaves had to have master's permission to accept Christ (*Part II*, xiv).
  - b) Baptism - 3 years of instruction before baptism, kept separate from believers, women veiled, teacher of catechumen could be ordained or layman, exorcism by bishop, washing on Thursday before, fast on Friday & Saturday, all night vigil, baptism Easter morning.
  - c) Eucharist - Bishop breaks the bread assisted by elders & deacons. Eucharist is part of larger Agape meal and comes first (*Apostolic Tradition* 46, 48)
  
3. *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles* - written approximately 310 A.D. (*Around time of Constantine's Christianization of the empire*)
  - a) Bishop equated to God on earth, nothing done without bishop's permission
  - b) Specific order of building - long with head at east, bishop's throne, reader's throne, specific dress for deacons,
  - c) Specific order of service - read from Tanakh (parsha), sing 2 hymns, Acts, Epistles, Gospels, prayer.
  - d) People required to sit in specific places, women and youth had to sit in separate sections, married women sat apart from widows and virgins.