

**WAS THERE UNITY IN THE
SUBAPOSTOLIC CHURCH?**

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE
TUNNEL PERIOD (~A.D. 62-150)

by

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Northern Illinois University, 1981

A THESIS

Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
MASTERS OF ARTS
With a Major in Theology
at Wheaton College

Wheaton, Illinois
November 1996

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INTRODUCTION

The question, "as there unity in the subapostolic church?," creates more questions. What is meant by unity? Was there unity throughout the apostolic church? And last, what is the specific relevance of the subapostolic church? Whatever the answer to the original question, it will have to be qualified by answers to related questions.

The period in church history following the apostles' deaths is obscure and leaves little evidence about which scholars are in agreement. Therefore, two qualifications must be made before drawing conclusions on the question of unity. First, assumptions about apostolic Christianity will be described in light of current scholarship. Second, in discussing the geographical spectrum of the sources, all exploration must attempt to identify larger certainties. Admittedly, this restricts the investigation.

It is my position that the testimony of available sources establishes that a central conviction was shared across most of the areas surrounding the Mediterranean after the apostolic witnesses departed. This conviction was tightly guarded in memory, fellowship, and the continuity of practices that affirmed the original Christian dogma. The foremost earthly objective of those who confessed this conviction was the propagation of that belief and hope which is summarized in the person and work of Jesus Christ. The testimony of the data also affirms a sizable realm of diversity in ecclesiastical polity, cultural appropriations of the conviction, and vastly different mission approaches. However, the spirit of schism and faction would always lead to some form of exclusion from the otherwise open fellowship of believers.

I recognize that such a position is under censure in many circles, yet the whole Christian enterprise, including such issues as the canon and Salvation History,¹ is largely dependent on this position. The question of unity in ancient Christianity is largely a question of how to treat the sources. Not surprisingly, where one starts is where one usually ends up. In this regard the current investigation is not unique, however there is one exception. I will explore the strongest testimony for each region for the designated period, as sources allow, prior to answering the unity question. In the end, these testimonies, which function as unplanned views from different angles, will either confirm or disprove my thesis position concerning unity in the subapostolic Age.

Did unanimity even exist in the apostolic Age?² Until roughly 160 years ago, there was a prevailing perception of a unified apostolic church. The attempts of F.C. Baur and the Tübingen School of the nineteenth century to present Catholic Christianity of the second century as the syncretism of two deeply divided earlier forms of Christianity did not win wide approval. However, some of the school's naturalistic explanations of Christian origins were perpetuated by the History of Religions School founded at the beginning of this century. Therefore, New Testament studies occasionally encounter "ghosts"³ of Tübingenism in one form or another.

¹ Later I will explain what is meant by the term Salvation History. For now it is related to the constancy of God in providing a testimony of salvation in each period of history. For further discussion see Eric C. Rust *Salvation History* (Richmond: John Know, 1962).

² Raymond Brown suggests that the term "Apostolic Age" should be confined to the middle third of the first century. *The Churches The Apostles Left Behind* (New York: Paulist Press, 1984), 15.

³ S.G.F. Brandon, *The Fall of Jerusalem and the Christian Church* (2nd ed.; London: SPCK, 1957). He has substituted Peter with James the Just as the representative leader of the Jewish church in a hypothesis similar to the Tübingen dialectic.

Wilhelm Bousset, a prominent leader of the History of Religions School, in *Kyrios Christos*, assumed two different forms of Christian religion: the Palestinian disciples of a rabbi named Jesus, and the Hellenized church, with Paul as its founder. Allegedly these two movements were incompatible, and the latter church is a syncretism between an existing Gnosticism and the primitive following of a rabbi named Jesus. Bousset's scheme differed from Baur's in two ways. First, he posits a Gnostic redeemer myth as the kernel behind the teaching of a dying and resurrected Christ. Second, he used a messianic secret device, first put forth by William Wrede at the turn of this century,⁴ to describe how the Catholic church of the next period rewrote its history. For Wrede and Bousset it was evident in Mark that the local Palestinian teacher was superimposed upon the redeemer-Christ figure and made both Lord and Christ by the believers themselves (Acts 2:37 NIV).

After the radical research influenced by the History-of-Religions scholars, an increased distrust of the Gospels and Acts accompanied the next generation of German scholars, which included Adolph Harnack and Rudolph Bultmann. Harnack was very skeptical of the pre-Catholic stratum and was a stringent opponent of the Catholicism of the early church.⁵ He proposed a thesis of great diversity within earliest Christianity and was a teacher of Walter Bauer, the famous lexicographer.

Bauer's thesis, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*,⁶ first published in 1934, challenged the classical position of essential unity in the early church through A.D. 150. In *Orthodoxy and Heresy*, Bauer asserted that from the onset there were equally authoritative and ancient forms of Christianity which were different from each other. Most of his primary evidence came from the second century which he then used to support his thesis in an interpretation of first century tensions.

Bauer was only tentatively satisfied with the term "orthodoxy" in describing one branch of Christianity. He recognized that it was impossible to avoid the term used to describe what eventually became classical Christianity, even though, for Bauer, it was associated with the "ecclesiastical position."⁷ Bauer was convinced that other branches, which were strong during the Catholic period of the second century, had legitimate predecessors in the earliest period. Here is where his reconstruction differs from that of the Tübingen School. Tübingenism saw Catholicism as the natural and necessary progression, where history itself was troublesome. Bauer held the judgment that Catholicism of the second century was the less authentic form of Christianity. He suspected that most of the documents which make up the New Testament were propaganda and represented only one branch of ancient Christianity. Consequently, he began unveiling "proof" of divergent Christian forms.

It is not the purpose of this thesis to challenge Bauer's thesis of authoritative and ancient forms of Christianity even in the apostolic period as H.E.W. Turner, Thomas Robinson, and others have already successfully challenged Bauer on this matter.⁸ A growing number of scholars agree that a

⁴ William Wrede, *The Messianic Secret*, trans. J. C. G. Greig (Cambridge: James Clark, 1971), 94-95. His chief text was Mark 8:27-30.

⁵ Adolph Harnack, *What is Christianity?* trans. Thomas Bailey Saunders (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), 216. See L. Michael White, "Adolph Harnack and the 'Expansion' of Early Christianity: A Reappraisal of Social History," *Second Century*, 5 No 2, (Sum 1985-6):97-127.

⁶ Walter Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971). This book is a translation from the 1964 edition of the original 1934, *Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum*, which was volume 10 in the series *Beiträge zur historischen Theologie* (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck).

⁷ W. Bauer, *OHEC*, xxii-iii.

⁸ H.E.W. Turner, *The Pattern of Christian Truth*, London: Mowbray & Co. Ltd, 1954. Thomas A. Robinson, *The Bauer Thesis Examined*, Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1988, Arland J. Hultgren, *The Rise of Normative Christianity*, Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994.

thread of a *normative*,⁹ but broadly defined, Christianity existed in the earliest era. This is still significantly different from the more traditional view that has been labeled Eusebian, which could be described as *idyllic*. Even though Bauer's method is flawed, his work took a fresh look at the evidence of diverse forms of Christianity in the period following the apostolic Age. Because Bauer uncovered and analyzed evidence of diverse Christian forms, his work is helpful in recognizing conflict and tensions in early Christianity. It is precisely those diverse forms he unveiled that posed a threat to unity in the subapostolic church.

Some historians date the subapostolic period from A.D. 62-100 and the postapostolic period from A.D. 100-180.¹⁰ Others use both terms interchangeably for the period after A.D. 70. The approximately ninety-year window of A.D. 62-150, sometimes called the "Tunnel Period," is the preferred period for investigating the unity question. The Tunnel Period represents the interval of transition between the apostolic and Catholic periods. The reason for ending this period about A.D. 150 is the emergence of the proto-orthodox voice of Justin, who serves as a transitional character in the mid second century. In addition, Polycarp, the last apostolic Father and the last living witness thought to have known an apostle, was martyred in the mid A.D. 150s.

The Tunnel Period is critical in church history because it represents the transitional period between apostolic oversight and canonical concerns in the early church. The progress and unity of Christian forms¹¹ from A.D. 30-62 serve an extensive role in forming the background for subapostolic Christianity. The next three sections of this introduction will describe common Christian forms during this apostolic period, the tensions between correct and erroneous belief before A.D. 62, and the new situation that developed thereafter.

Common (Normative) Christian Forms from A.D. 30-62

Much of the documentation for A.D. 30-62 comes from the end of this period or just after it.¹² Nearly all, if not all, of the surviving records included in the New Testament canon date earlier than subsequent documents that present a different historical Jesus. Therefore, "common Christianity" represents the Christian forms associated with the historical Jesus revealed within the NT documents. This investigation begins with the position that a family resemblance exists throughout the NT that excludes novel Christian views/groups.

The adjective terms *mainline*, *mainstream*, and *normative* correspond to the term *common*, as in *common Christianity*, which appears most frequently during this investigation. Each of these terms refer to a shared core of belief, but *common* is a looser term allowing for the fact that each form may not progress in each region at the same rate. For this investigation it is assumed that a "standard

⁹ Hultgren 1-5, The first five pages of his *Rise of Normative Christianity* is concerned with the proper terminology use to describe the main strain of the new religion. He toyed with such terms as proto-orthodoxy, early Catholicism, normative, and even formative Christianity. He includes all evidence which points to a family resemblance. Although he settles with normative Christianity, this is a concession.

¹⁰ Raymond Brown defines A.D. 62-96 as "Sub-Apostolic" and the following period as "Post-Apostolic." *The Churches the Apostles Left Behind* (New York: Paulist Press, 1984), 15-16. Leonhard Goppelt assigns 30-65 as Apostolic, 65-115 as Sub-Apostolic and 115-135 as Post-Apostolic, *Apostolic and Post-Apostolic Times*, New York: Harper & Row, 1970.

¹¹ The term "Christian form" in this investigation applies to Christianity of any character. The more data that exists for a particular form the greater the ability to determine its character.

¹² The events covered in *The Acts of the Apostles* seem to end around A.D. 62. There is more than one view of the events after Chapter 28 of Acts, and many explanations as to why Acts may have been written later than Paul's house arrest.

deviation"¹³ existed within common Christianity which did not hamper its ability to distinguish innovative forms such as second-century Gnosticism. Furthermore, Colin H. Roberts wrote that the "only two historical figures of consequence . . . before the later second century are both Gnostics."¹⁴ Correspondingly, Thomas Robinson points out that,

How mistaken we would be in reconstructing the character of *common Christianity* (italics mine) for any age were we to take as our guide the most innovative and progressive theologian of that age. Novel theologians are as untrustworthy an indicator of the average believer or average clergy as we could possibly find. It is a cause of some concern to see that reconstructions of primitive Christianity fail to take this relatively undebatable point into account.¹⁵

While the four Gospels account for the life of Jesus, there exists only one source that accounts for the origins and early progress of common Christianity--the book of Acts. The traditional title, *Acts of the Apostles*, is a misnomer. This history, which illustrates Christian beginnings, serves as an apologetic for the apostle Paul's ministry, and provides the backdrop for understanding common Christianity. Because Acts is the only ancient source that details the origins of mainstream Christianity, skeptics of the orthodox origins of the church highly scrutinize Luke's work. Nevertheless, the provenance of the Acts chronicle accords well with other historical sources such as the epistles, known people, places, and events. Therefore, *common* corresponds to the Christian populace who were closely connected with the events in Acts, the apostles and their churches. Later, common Christianity would correspond with the Apostolic Fathers and their churches.¹⁶

While Bauer would staunchly reject the conclusion that common Christianity could be decided from the majority of manuscripts of a particular view, a sheer historical inquiry has no other recourse. There are no non-orthodox manuscripts serving as correspondence, treatise, or narrative that are traceable to the first century. A brief summary of the majority view is in order.

For the apostolic period five items will be examined: The historical figure of Jesus of Nazareth, the immediate *Koinonia* (Partnership) of Christ that followed his time on earth, the basic beliefs (*kerygma/didache*) of among key figures, the famous Jerusalem Council, and the relationship between different missions.

The Historical Jesus

Jesus of Nazareth was born of a Jewish peasant family in Judea at Bethlehem and was believed by some to be the long awaited Messiah predicted by the prophets (Isa. 7:14, 52:13ff).¹⁷

Not much is known about Jesus from his birth through his adult years until he was baptized by John the Baptist near the age of thirty. According to Josephus, John "was a good man and had exhorted

¹³ I use this term loosely to suggest that there was a difference between an error from an incomplete or inaccurate picture and a new thesis under the guise of Christianity that subverted the Christian message.

¹⁴ Colin H. Roberts, *Manuscripts, Society, and Belief in Early Christian Literature*, 50. He was alluding to Valentinus and Basilides.

¹⁵ Robinson, *BTE*, 66.

¹⁶ At this point, there is only one accounting for the origins of the Christian religion that can be found in extant documents originating and surfacing between A.D. 50 through the early second century. The Gospel-Acts account of church origins corroborate on the major details of early Christianity and a consistent picture emerges.

¹⁷ Matthew 1:18-23; Luke 2:8-11, 25-26.

the Jews to exercise virtue, both in practicing justice toward one another and in piety toward God, and, so doing, to join in baptism.”¹⁸ The people who had been waiting in anticipation of the Christ thought John might be the Christ (Luke 3:15). However, John the Baptist pointed to Jesus as the one who fulfilled the prophetic oracles and that he was to prepare the way for Jesus, who would surpass him (John 3:30).

After Jesus' baptism and a lengthy period of fasting and temptation, he began his ministry. Many of John's disciples joined him, and for approximately three years Jesus taught in Palestine. According to the preaching of the church, he “was a man accredited by God to you [the Jews] by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among” the people (Acts 2:22).

During his final trip to Jerusalem at Passover, he was initially received with accolades by common Jews in a triumphal entry. However, Jesus initiated conflicts with the Jewish leaders over moneychangers who were misusing the temple area. Jesus delivered a scorching rebuke to the Jewish religious parties, and their leaders brashly planned to end his life. Blasphemy and other charges were created to make Jesus look like a threat to Rome. With the reluctant compliance of Pilate, Jesus was captured, tried, and executed in an expeditious manner. After he was crucified, his body was buried in a nearby tomb, which was guarded to prevent any disturbances from his followers.

The earliest traditions are unanimous: on the third day after his death, the tomb of Jesus was empty. Soldiers guarding the tomb propagated a story of a stolen body; however, some five hundred eyewitnesses saw Jesus during the following forty days (1 Corinth. 15:3-5). Some of his appearances were in or near the city of Jerusalem, and others in Galilee. It was later reported that “. . . God raised him from the dead, and for many days he was seen by those who had traveled with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are now his witnesses to our people” (Acts 13:30-31). It was on one of those occasions, while in Galilee, that Jesus commissioned his disciples, “Go, disciple the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:18ff). He instructed them to wait in Jerusalem for a promised gift. The Holy Spirit would come upon them in power (Acts 1:6ff).

After Jesus had just completed teaching his apostles, he ascended into heaven as they watched. A few days later, one hundred and twenty disciples were praying in an upper room in Jerusalem when the Holy Spirit came upon them. The followers of Jesus began speaking to foreign Jews from all over the Mediterranean area and proclaimed wondrous words in their native tongues. Many were convinced of God's involvement. At this point the crowd consisted of pilgrim Jews, representing at least fifteen regions or classes of Jews (Acts 2:5ff). Possibly many thousands heard Peter, the chief apostle, as he interpreted the events concerning Jesus that had just occurred (Acts 2:14ff). Peter implied that what these inhabitants and visitors of Jerusalem did to Jesus was purposed in the foreknowledge of God (vs. 23) and had been predicted by the prophets. All who were convinced that the Jesus whom they crucified was both Lord and Christ, were exhorted to “repent and be baptized, everyone of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the Holy Spirit.” (vs. 38). This promise was extended to their offspring and descendants (vs. 39). Shortly after this, the believers are described as being devoted to the *koinonia* (vs. 42).

¹⁸ Josephus, *Antiquities*, 18:106. This corroborates on major details, with Luke 3:1-20. Josephus also noted that Herod Antipas killed John, to which the Gospels also testify.

Unity of *Koinonia* (Partnership)

Before proceeding with the earliest *koinonia*, it will be helpful to obtain the clearest translation of the word through the one who used it consistently--the apostle Paul. He used it to suggest partnership in some joint activity (1 Corinth. 10:18ff, 2 Corinth. 1:7; 8:23; Philemon 17), and with sharing in an external activity (Rom. 15:27; Phil. 4:15, and Eph. 5:11), and in contributing in some way (Rom. 12:13, Gal. 6:6). Robert Banks points out a misunderstanding of the word.

. . . *koinonia*, frequently mistranslated “fellowship,” occupies a large place in many popular discussions of Paul’s understanding of community . . . the sense is of participation in some common object of activity, e.g., participation in the Spirit, in someone’s faith, in Christ and his sufferings, in the work of the gospel, in a financial contribution--not of the sharing of people concerned directly with one another.¹⁹

For the current survey of *koinonia*, the term “fellowship” is used interchangeably with “partnership,” because the former term still adequately describes different people integrating; however, Banks make it clear that there is an object in their togetherness. The first three thousand people were joined together in a common association with Jesus and in a new deployment.

The initial *koinonia* was comprised of Hebraic Jews who tended to be particularistic,²⁰ and Hellenistic (Grecian) Jews who tended to be inclusivists, and converts to Judaism. At first, these Jewish believers were no longer hindered by reservations about each other’s Jewishness, but were “devoted to the fellowship” (Acts 2:42). Luke wrote “All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had” (Acts 4:32).

In the earliest years the fellowship consisted exclusively of circumcised, although ethnically diverse, Jews. This early fellowship took place in Jerusalem prior to the forthcoming racial, geographical, and greater cultural challenges. In one incident involving food distribution, some form of separateness resulted in Hellenistic widows being overlooked. This could have resulted in a racial schism. In order to ensure equality of food distribution, the apostles chose seven Hellenistic believers to serve and monitor the situation (Acts 6:1-6). The Greek names of the Seven indicate their origins.

It appeared that the church would stay isolated in Judea. Even though Jesus had commissioned the church to go into all of the world, there was a hesitation. The challenges of reaching groups outside of those aligned with Second Temple Judaism may have been the predominant factor. However, a persecution following the martyrdom of Stephen served as the necessary impetus to scatter the disciples.

Stephen was a Hellenist Jew. His speech to the Sanhedrin gives it away, especially his dialectic against the necessity of worship in temples built by humans (Acts 7:48-50).²¹ His typical *Diaspora* interpretation would probably be stated differently than a conservative Hebrew Christian, because he presumably believed this way before his conversion and continued to do so. However, there is evidence that Hebrew Christians in Jerusalem continued to associate with the temple (Acts 21:26-29). In Stephen's becoming one of the Seven appointed to oversee the food distribution, he was not

¹⁹ Robert Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 57.

²⁰ By 'particularistic,' I mean that they tend to focus on issues that tend to divide themselves.

²¹ Not everyone is convinced that Hebrew Jews and Hellenist Jews would see the place of the Temple differently. See Craig C. Hill, *Hellenists and Hebrews: Reappraising Division within the Earliest Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 1-4.

compelled to conform with Hebrew thought.

Philip, also one of the Seven, went to Samaria. This region contained a race of half-Jewish cousins whose worship was unacceptable to the Jews. They were even despised by the Jews, and the Samaritans resented the notion that their worship was viewed as insufficient (John 4:19-20). However, a strong following of Samaritan believers embraced the gospel and were baptized (Acts 8:9-13). A Hellenistic disciple, Philip, began this work and two leading apostles, Peter and John, confirmed it. When the apostles laid their hands on them, the Spirit gave them the same gift of certification that the Jews received at Pentecost. Now, the distinctions between a Samaritan believer and a Jewish believer no longer centered on where their worship occurred (John 4:19-24).

Shortly after this, a Jewish Ethiopian official returning from Jerusalem encountered Philip (Acts 8:26ff). He was most probably a member of the dark skinned race of Jews who claimed their ancestry through the Queen of Sheba back to Solomon (1 Kings 10:1-13).

Some believers were from a Jewish sect of the Pharisees, some delineated by culture, and others by ideal, all encompassed early Jewish Christianity. Jews in the coastal plain at Joppa were suspected of being lax in kosher and other cultic observances and therefore suspect in their commitment and purity by other Jews. However, some Jews received the gospel in Joppa and God worked miracles among them through Peter (Acts 9:36-43). Many believed in the Lord, and Peter stayed there for some time.

The next challenge to unity involved Gentile missions. In Caesarea, a foboumeno" ton qeon (god-fearer)²² named Cornelius was converted under the ministry of Simon Peter. In conjunction with a vision from God, the preaching of Peter, and the miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit which astonished nearby Jews, God made it clear: He was accessible to Gentile believers.²³ Cornelius, considered a "good Gentile" by the Jews, was the first recorded non-Jew to convert to the faith.

Jewish Christians from Cyrene preached in Antioch (Acts 11:20). Shortly afterwards, Greeks were converted (Acts 11:21), and the Church in Jerusalem thought it necessary to send Barnabas there to check out the situation (Acts 11:22).²⁴ Initially, the Antioch mission must have seemed out of step with the church. No miracles. No recognized leaders. No apparent knowledge or connection to the Peter/Cornelius affair. This mission looked like an offshoot pursuit by some renegade believers. Only after Barnabas eyewitnessed the "evidence of the grace of God," could a good report have been sent back to Jerusalem (if indeed, there was one.) It appears that Barnabas did not immediately return. He brought Saul to Antioch. In time, prophets from Jerusalem came to aid the church. The Jerusalem church seemed to have accepted gifts from Antioch, thus implying approval of the work. Over the next eight years (~ A.D. 42-50) those "of the circumcision" were forming a dissonant opinion on the matter of accepting uncircumcised Gentiles as believers. This became a colossal issue in the unity question.

²² The term "god-fearer," literally means "fearing God." See J. Julius Scott Jr, *Customs and Controversies* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 346. This term applies to "a class of uncircumcised Gentiles who stopped short of becoming full proselytes, but were permitted (by some Jews) limited participation in Jewish worship."

²³ Each time a new category of people was added to the fellowship, a similar pattern was evident. Though, not necessarily in the same order, the events usually accompanied preaching, the involvement of a key leader such as an apostle, a miraculous wonder and the witness of conservative Jews.

²⁴ Indeed, it may have been that Barnabas' report did not come to Jerusalem until his own arrival there with Saul during the "famine visit" (Acts 11:29-30;12:35). Some reconstructions equate the visit of Paul to Jerusalem of Galatians 1:18-24 with the famine visit.

The fellowship begun in Jerusalem was extending throughout Palestine. The inclusion, in principle, of every tribe, race, and culture within the confines of the church (cf. Acts 1:8) drew much attention to Christianity. Christ served as the unrivaled adhesive to bring people together who formerly preferred to emphasize their distinctions. In the first years of the Church in Judea, according to the Acts record, cultural distinctions were neither emphasized or minimized. They are only pointed to in order to illustrate the wider appeal of the gospel.

Aside from common belief itself (next section), unity of *koinonia* was intentionally fostered by continual teaching and regular fellowship. First, Jesus intended that the Church “continue” to teach its disciples to obey everything that he had commanded after their baptism (Matt. 28:18-20). After the conversion of a few thousand Jews, the apostles were doing exactly what Jesus had commanded (Acts 2:42ff).

The fellowship was eventually comprised of the following sub-groups. (1) Hebraic Jews (Galilee and Judea), A.D. 30, (2) Hellenized Jews, A.D. 30., (3) converts to Judaism (Proselytes), A.D. 30, (4) Samaritans, A.D. 33/34, (5) Ethiopian Jews, A.D. 33/34, (6) unconventional country Jews, A.D. 36/37, (7) God-fearing Gentiles, A.D. 38/40, (8) Hellenistic Greeks in Syria, A.D. 38/40, and (9) Gentiles outside of Syria, A.D. 40/42. The *koinonia* is not portrayed as a group of ethnic franchises. Each group of people was included in the same gathering of disciples through conversion, teaching, and bonded relationships. This is not to say that there weren't smaller gatherings within the whole fellowship designed to meet particular needs of a smaller convocation. The inclusion of new sub-group was not without incidents. The challenge of maintaining the original *koinonia* is evident in the documents of common Christianity.

Unity between the *Kerygma* of Peter/Acts and the *Didache* of Paul

Among scholars since Tübingen and even in modern evangelical circles, much is said about the differences between the thought of the original Twelve apostles and Paul. These differences are emphasized before considering the dependence on a common *paradosis*, a comparable missions focus, and different concerns being addressed in the different texts. By comparing and contrasting the preaching of Peter with the teaching of Paul, it is possible to establish the unity between their preaching and teaching and, more importantly, between Paul and the Twelve. As almost all of the preaching in Acts is associated with Peter, he may be assumed to represent the Twelve. In addition, a large portion of the teaching of early Christianity is connected with Paul. Therefore, once the core of the *kerygma* of Peter/Acts is identified alongside the teaching of Paul, a discussion of whether there was basic unity between the teaching of Paul and the Twelve will be possible.

Paul's debt to Jesus and the other apostles is emphasized in Archibald M. Hunter's *Paul and His Predecessors*,²⁵ and David Wenham's *Paul: Follower of Jesus or Founder of Christianity*.²⁶ Both Hunter and Wenham conclude that Paul depended upon the Christianity espoused by the first apostles. Hunter identified a *paradosis* (tradition) that was “guarded by the church as no tradition is guarded today.”²⁷ He points out Paul's effort to make it apparent that he is tied into the leading tradition of the church in 1 Cor. 15:3ff. Paul made this very clear when he wrote, “Whether, then, it was I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed” (1 Cor. 15:11). In Hunter's first printing in 1940, he

²⁵ Archibald Hunter, *Paul and His Predecessors* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961).

²⁶ David Wenham, *Paul: Follower of Jesus or Founder of Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995).

²⁷ Hunter, *PHP*, 22.

concluded that this tradition came to Paul through “the baptismal creed of the Damascus church--a creed perhaps taught him by Ananias before his baptism;”²⁸ however, he later came to believe that “the tradition stemmed from the Jerusalem church.”²⁹

Wenham states that "Paul would have been horrified at the suggestion that he was the founder of Christianity. For him the fountain of theology was Jesus: first, the Jesus whom he met on the Damascus road; second, the Jesus of the Christian tradition."³⁰ Although Wenham agrees that Paul greatly influenced the shape of the Christian gospel for his audiences, he contends and illustrates how Paul received his Christianity from the earlier Christian tradition. Wenham sees the earlier Jesus tradition in Paul's writings concerning his community ideals, theology of the kingdom, teachings and sayings of Jesus, discipleship ethics, and the events leading to Jesus' death and resurrection in Jerusalem. Even though the tradition came first, Paul took license to appropriate the gospel for new, generally Gentile audiences.

The Preaching of Peter/Acts and Paul

C.H. Dodd explored the early preaching of Acts and considered the nature of the epistles and explained the difference between *kerygma* (preaching) and *didache* (teaching).

There are, however, difficulties in attempting to discover the apostolic preaching in the epistles of Paul. In the first place, the epistles are, of course, not the nature of the *kerygma*. They are addressed to readers already Christian, and they deal with the theological and ethical problems arising out of attempting to follow the Christian way of life and thought in a non-Christian world.³¹

Six distinctive attributes of apostolic preaching according to C.H. Dodd are:³²

1. The Age has dawned, the Messiah has come.
2. Jesus' ministry, death, and resurrection points to him as that Messiah. So did his miracles. You crucified him. He was from the seed of David. The Church is a witness of these things.
3. Jesus is at the right hand of God and he is seen as both Lord and Christ.
4. The Holy Spirit is poured out as a testimony and is a gift.
5. He will come again and judge everyone.
6. Repentance and baptism is preached for the forgiveness of sins.

Most of the above details are clear in Peter's Pentecost sermon. Only mild differences exist between the various preachings of Peter, which seem to indicate variations among his audience, situations, and the recollection and/or the editing of Luke. E.g., Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost may serve as the comprehensive standard for Luke's purposes, so that his work is not repetitious. Three of the four sermons of Acts containing the gospel are from Peter--Acts 2,3, and 10.

We have only one of Paul's sermons (Acts 13:16-47), but a few of his defenses. Evidence points to the fact that his preaching was in accord with Peter's. A more thorough comparison between the

²⁸ Ibid, 117.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Wenham, *PFJFC*, 415.

³¹ C.H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), 9.

³² Dodd, *A.P.D.*, 21-24.

beliefs espoused by Peter and Paul can be seen after examining the *didache* of Paul.

The Teaching of Paul

The books of Romans, Ephesians, and Colossians seem to have most of Paul's theology or *didache* for catechizing the Church. At the core of Paul's teachings, Paul instructs his readers in the following tenets:

1. *Death and Separation.* Men become dead in their sins (Eph. 2:1-3), separated from the life of God (Eph. 4:17ff), and, having fallen short, are inadequate to do enough good to merit salvation (Rom. 3:9-23).

2. *The Call to "put off the old life."* The first step toward redemption begins with properly learning about Christ (Eph. 4:20-24). One is to put off the old life and take on a new life.

3. *Essential Response.* The candidate for salvation accepts the message, being circumcised in the heart and repenting (Rom. 2:29, Col. 2:11).

4. *Jesus: Lord and Savior.* Jesus becomes Lord of the individual in life and association (Col. 2:6, Rom. 10:9).

5. *Baptism through faith.* Corresponding to the baptismal confession, one is raised through their faith in the power of God (Col. 2:12, Rom. 6:4-6). Consequently, the convert is made alive and forgiven (Col. 2:13).

6. *The Holy Spirit seals the promise* for the convert (Eph. 1:13, Rom. 8:15-16).

The language of Paul's message in written form differs than the language of preaching of Acts/Peter. There is a unity between the *kerygma* and the *didache*, but it is not a uniformity of terminology, but a unity of practice and theology.

Preaching of Peter

1. You killed the Messiah.
2. Repent.
3. Jesus is Lord and Messiah.
4. They were "cut to the heart," implying conviction.
5. Baptism in Jesus' name.
6. Forgiveness, gift of Holy Spirit.

Teaching of Paul

1. You were dead in your sins.
2. You put off the old self.
3. You received Jesus as Lord.
4. Your heart was "circumcised," implying repentance.
5. You were baptized with Christ.
6. Made alive, forgiven, and given the seal of the Spirit.

Some may not be satisfied with a conclusion that the teaching of Paul corroborates with the preaching of Peter. In Galatians Paul directly answers the earlier dependency question. He had gone back to Jerusalem to verify that the gospel that he received through revelation from Jesus corresponded with what the leadership of the mother church taught. He later said, "I went in response to a revelation and set before them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. But I did this privately to those who seemed to be leaders, for fear that I was running or had run my race in vain" (Gal. 2:2). That Paul believes his Gospel is the same as that of the other apostles is confirmed just a few years later in his first correspondence with the church in Corinth. He stresses the "gospel I preached to you, which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you," (1 Cor. 15:1-2).

The unity between the *kerygma* of Acts/Peter and the *didache* of Paul suggests a unity of

essentials, not of format or structure. The missions work of Peter and the other apostles varied, but with great overlap. Their methods for building the Church were not from the same starting point. Peter and the Twelve had encountered daily the earthly Jesus. They knew of his priority for the lost sheep of Israel and only occasionally heard Jesus indirectly refer to the future of the Greek missions until after the resurrection. Paul, on the other hand, received from the risen and cosmic Jesus the task of testifying to the Gentiles, and subsequently, to Rome (Acts 22:21, 23:11). Unity between the two movements exists with respect to the message and not necessarily their primary audiences or method of presentation.

The Jerusalem Council: Unity on Justification

Prior to the Gentile conversions which took place at Antioch, Luke indicated only one tension concerning the church (Acts 6:1ff). None of the groups within the Church (Pharisees, Hellenized Jews, etc.) were required to abandon distinctions associated with their heritage. They appeared to live within the larger community of disciples where they were converted. The successful Syrian Gentile mission brought believers from Judea³³ into conflict with Barnabas and Paul over the issue of circumcising Gentiles for salvation (Acts 15:1). This became a most serious challenge to the unity that the churches in Cilicia and Syria shared with the mother church in Jerusalem.

The practical issue of the moment was about whether a Gentile must convert to Judaism to become a Christian. Two other significant issues also were involved. Foremost, the nature of justification was the doctrinal issue at the heart of the conflict. There were long-term implications concerning the gospel that would result from this affair. Second, the ultimate procedure for resolving potentially divisive conflicts would remain in the memory of the Church, serving as a precedent demonstrating how to maintain the “spirit” of unity.

Acts 15 records the most serious crisis of the first two decades of the Christian movement. There were ten steps or characteristics involved in resolving this potentially volatile situation. It was initiated by unsolicited opinions of believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees and concluded by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem.

1. A respect for the established leaders is demonstrated (vs. 2).
2. Those involved exhibit a general optimism in spirit (vs. 3-4).
3. The apostles and elders convene (vs. 6).
4. Peter speaks to the issue (vs. 7-11).
5. A report on common interests, “good news” is given (vs. 12).
6. James affirms Peter’s vision using the Old Testament (vs. 13-18).³⁴
7. James presses for the first policy using the Old Testament (vs. 19-21).
8. Representatives are selected to deliver decisions (vs. 22).
9. An authoritative “decisions” letter was sent to the affected areas (vs. 23-30).
10. Authorized leaders accompany the decree (vs. 30).

³³ The brothers from Judea had the same orientation and view as the Pharisee believers of Acts 15:5 who brought up the same issue. It is almost conclusive that the “some men from Judea” were Pharisees.

³⁴ James said that God was “taking from the Gentiles a people unto himself” by selecting a remnant from among the Gentiles (Amos 9:11-12). Luke portrays James as quoting Amos from the LXX which encased a spiritualized interpretation useful for universalizing the Davidic kingdom to include Gentiles. For more discussion on whether James could imagine the “tabernacle of David” to include Gentiles, see J. Julius Scott, Jr., *The Church of Jerusalem, A.D. 30-100* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilm, 1969), 175-180.

The apostles and elders concluded that the Holy Spirit was pleased with the decisions arrived at by the leaders (vs. 28). Throughout the proceedings, Peter and James acted as first among equals. Peter spoke for the twelve and James for the Jerusalem elders (Acts 15:19). The question of James's role is raised by this incident. He seems to be as highly regarded as Peter. Does this suggest a pattern for the monarchical bishop, a papacy or is this merely a one-time post? The issue is too large to settle here except that it is noteworthy that they both held unique qualifications that went back to their relationship and post-resurrection encounter with Jesus.

Evidently the Church in Judea felt the same peace that the apostles and elders felt. Those present from Judea at Jerusalem had heard reasoning with Scripture, heard of the occurrence of miracles, and witnessed their leaders resolving a potent conflict. The fourfold requirements for Gentile converts, affirming holiness and separation from the impure and immoral, were in step with the Jewish church and the intentions of the gospel. The decisions were delivered to the churches in northern Palestine. Later, Judean prophets encouraged the Syrian Christians, affirming the oneness of the Church, and then returned with a "blessing of peace" after spending some time there.

Undoubtedly, there would be those who did not assent to the decision of the apostles and elders. Unity between *all* believers, if it had been retained until this point, was no longer possible. As evident later, groups would eventually form that would be comprised of those who were marginalized by the decisions of Jerusalem and whose opinions dissented from the common root of Christian belief. The manner of the decision-making used in Jerusalem could never be exactly duplicated. However, similar difficulties lay ahead and the lessons from the Jerusalem episode could be adopted for solving local conflicts and upholding a spirit of unity.

Unity on the Mission Field: Deference and Diversity

Luke's Acts is really his inquiry into the origins of the Church and his knowledge of Paul's ministry to the Gentiles. Being a Gentile himself, and having accompanied Paul extensively, his work would serve as a defense of the branch of the Christian movement led by Paul. Therefore, only limited speculation about the other apostles is possible because the availability of evidence is not balanced.

Tradition places most of the apostles where *Diaspora* Jews were to be found because their original mission from Jesus to go to all of the "lost sheep of Israel," had not been completed as of yet (Matt. 10:5-6). If the apostles did go into all the nations as Jesus had told them and not merely the ones west of Judea, and worked from a Jewish context at first, as the pattern of Acts suggests, a Gospel-Acts congruity can be observed. Therefore, Jesus' original lost-sheep commission of Matt. 10:6 was a foundation for achieving his comprehensive all-nations commission of Matt. 28:18-20. The idea of 'first the Jews, then the Gentiles' had pragmatic possibilities.

Even though Paul's extensive literary trail indicates a basic Mediterranean orientation, the Twelve's mission extended in all directions.³⁵ The chief apostle Peter is associated with Judea, Samaria, Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, and Rome.³⁶ John has been associated with Judea, Samaria, and western Asia Minor. James, one of the three, never left Jerusalem and was martyred circa A.D. 43. Of the remaining apostles, Eusebius preserves traditions of their ministries which span from

³⁵ Evidence for Christianity outside of Roman Civilization is scant in part because of the frigid borders outside of *the Pax Romana*. Presumably, the political landscape of the Mediterranean plays a part of the provenance of NT literature.

³⁶ It is commonly held that the Babylon of 1 Peter 5:13 is Rome. Carsten Thiede provides arguments in support of this in *Rekindling the Word* (Valley Forge: Trinity Press, 1995), 140-150.

the east to the west.³⁷

The evidence seems to indicate a division of apostolic ministries. When Paul was once at the border of Mysia and Bithynia, “the Spirit of Jesus” (Acts 16:7) would not allow him to enter Bithynia, which could have been a ministry under Peter’s auspice.³⁸ It is very clear in his letter to the Romans that he avoided regions where he would be building on the foundation of someone else (Rom. 15:24). There would be possible overlaps such as the case of Asia and Galatia. However, Peter’s audience may have been in northeast Asia near Cappadocia and Bithynia, while it is known that Paul’s focus in Asia Minor was in the west. The suggestion of separate ministries does not imply incompatibility between the leaders, but rather a respect for the work and plans already laid out by the other leading apostles. However, competition and issues of motives did arise within common Christian forms (Phil. 1:24).

It is not to be assumed that a separatist spirit accompanied these missions. There is clear evidence of efforts to enhance those in other fields, even to the point where some parts of the apostolic church appear to have a sense of organization. Between A.D. 53 and A.D. 58 Paul had been very active at building funds for the Judean churches. His efforts indicated procedures, organization, multiple churches, and both yearly and weekly contributions. (1 Cor. 16:1-3, 2 Cor. 8-9, Rom. 15:25-27).³⁹ It is tempting to think that such cross-congregational efforts could only be supported by the Twelve and Paul. Kevin Giles makes the observation that Paul sought to pass the supra inter-church responsibilities on to others.

(1) councils of elders with pastoral and administrative responsibilities over Christians in one location, who would have met in several house churches, were known in the apostolic age (e.g. Acts 21.18; 1 Tim. 4.14); (2) Paul regularly asserted his authority and exercised a continuing pastoral concern over particular Christian communities; (3) in the Pastorals, Paul is depicted as delegating this ministry to others, thereby implying supra-congregational superintendence, was to continue; and (4) a dispute affecting the relations between Jewish Christians and gentile Christians was resolved by representatives from both churches meeting together in a 'synod' to reach a binding agreement (Acts 15:1-29).⁴⁰

Giles was making the point that the extension of time and numerical growth would lead to institutionalism. While this is unacceptable to opponents of later Catholicism, he was correct to suggest that the seeds of this type are in the documents of the third decade of the Christian movement. Cooperation and/or organization were on the horizon.

Paul envisioned a time when the Church would experience an attack from within. Just before he left Ephesus for the last time, he told the elders that “from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard . . .” (Acts 20:30-31). Fierce power struggles would erupt from within the church. Serious “unity” threats to the mission were brewing even when Paul wrote the following opening to the church at Colossae in about A.D. 61.

³⁷ Eusebius 3.1.

³⁸ Acts 2:9, 1 Pet. 1:1, Cappadocia, Pontus and Bithynia sometimes shared the same governorships in the first centuries in the common era. Historians sometimes do not separate Cappadocia from Bithynia.

³⁹ In the least, the churches in Achaia, Macedonia, Galatia, and probably even Rome, were involved. The apostle used the previous year's history for Achaia as a way to awaken them to reach their potential in the coming contribution. This cross-congregational and cross-regional collection suggests that efforts were made to persist for the common good of the larger Christian church.

⁴⁰ Kevin Giles, *What On Earth is the Church?: An Exploration In New Testament Theology* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity press, 1995), 206.

All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth (Colossians 1:5-6, emphasis added).

While expansion and large-scale unity occurred among the larger church, detractors and false apostles arose. Unless the kind of imitation of the Judean churches found in Thessalonica existed in other regions, isolation would also occur. Paul complimented the church there for its imitation of the Judean churches (1 Thess. 2:14). He already noted that the same church was a model for the churches in the rest of Macedonia and Achaia (1:7-8).

Until the mid-60s, a sense of missionary unity is part of the backdrop of the apostolic era. Would the successors to Peter, Paul, and James show the same deference and respect that had existed among the earlier missions? Any way that one examines the evidence, means for achieving a basic unity of commonality and acceptance were modeled in the earliest apostolic churches. The various examples that have been cited are: (1) The modeling of premier churches and the imitation of them by derivative or peer churches. The exact nature of how these were always recognized is elusive; (2) Deference to the existing foundation of an area is already being built; (3) Benevolence for a needy and/or foremost church in another region. The exact historical situation in which these methods were used was not unique, yet illustrates the earliest church's association with other common church forms.

"Orthodoxy" and Dissension Prior to A.D. 62

In light of the spell that Bauer has cast on research of Christian origins, it is necessary to identify the movement with the strongest claim to Christian antiquity. Then, and only then can one distinguish between forms of Christianity in order to assign qualities.

First Corinthians is usually accepted as the most explicit early document in our possession with a clear statement of "orthodoxy." Whereas Galatians is believed to be the earliest, this letter does not have the clear-cut article of belief of Jesus' death and resurrection that is contained in 1 Corinthians 15.⁴¹ This statement will be a sufficient starting point to reference a strong and early position in early Christianity.⁴² It is very helpful that Paul produced a dogmatic passage that states his central message. In addition, the letter defines some relationship between acceptable Christianity and alternative schisms. Of importance, Paul's first letter to the Corinthians was referenced authoritatively by the Apostolic Fathers Clement, Ignatius, and Polycarp. It is certainly a hallmark document for common Christianity. Most scholars involved in the discussion of Christian origins agree on an A.D. 53/55 date for 1 Corinthians. It is difficult to envision any statements of Christian belief that are as lucid as this one:

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep (1 Cor. 15:3-6).

First Corinthians is the backbone of the Christian literary witness because it attests to the

⁴¹ There is no tension between the two epistles on the central issue of proto-orthodoxy. See 1 Cor. 15:1-5 and Gal. 3:1-13.

⁴² The same is true here. Although 1 Thessalonians was penned earlier than 1 Cor., and it references the resurrected Christ in

conclusion of the four Gospels: the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. From the onset, common Christianity must be anchored by the above passage.

First Corinthians and Galatians clearly discuss dissension and disunity. In Corinth, the disunity problems were apparent. Most of the letter relates to the problems of disunity. "I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no *divisions* among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought" (1 Cor. 1:10). The word used here, *σχίσματα* (*schisms*), relates to splits that tear and start in the mind or sentiment. These splits can be violent and eventually lead to completely separate parties. The Corinthian church was heading in this direction. Paul insisted that the Church act as a unified body.

The issue of the forthcoming schism revolved around favorite Christian personalities. In his classic book, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind*, Johannes Munck asserts that "Paul therefore describes the conditions that he is combating not as factions but as bickerings."⁴³ Munck, holding that too much is made from the disputes of the Corinthian church, writes,

If it is factions that are referred to in chs. 1-4, they appear there only to disappear completely later. That is strange if we reflect that these factions are supposed to have had such importance that they embodied decisive forces in the history of early Christianity.⁴⁴

The apostle actually did refer to "faction" in 1 Cor. 11:18-19, but, according to Munck, this was used "eschatologically."⁴⁵ That is, the inevitable outcome of "the differences among you," is that the group with God's approval will be recognized. Paul was aware that people are going to take sides; therefore, his letter was designed to equip the believers to choose properly. Paul's response was to subordinate personalities and roles to "Jesus Christ . . . crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2) because he believed that a high degree of unity was possible.

The term orthodoxy has not yet surfaced; however, a strong sense of it exists already in 1 Corinthians. As H.E.W. Turner says, orthodoxy is an "instinctive feeling . . . of fixed and definable doctrinal norms."⁴⁶

The letter to the churches in Galatia reveal the serious nature of sins associated with dissension. Many of the sins listed in Gal. 5:19-21 relate to contentions and four of them relate to the current discussion. He mentions as sins, *strife* (ἔρις), which is a contention or wrangling with another person. More deadly, were the *disputes* (ἐριθείαι), which included rivalry with a motive of self-interest to the point of mean behavior. The consequent *dissensions* (διχοστασίαι), or partitioning of the churches, was what Paul feared, a parting of the ways through disunion. He also mentions *heresy* (αἵρεσις), often translated *faction* or *sect*, a divergent opinion within a larger group.

The word αἵρεσις" should be translated and envisioned within its context. While it is true that it can represent an "act of the sinful nature," it can also be used of a party. Josephus used the term in a value-free manner as in the "sect" of the Pharisees, or Sadducees, Essenes, or Zealots.⁴⁷ Eventually, the

⁴³ Johannes Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind*, (Atlanta: John Knox, 1977), 139.

⁴⁴ J. Munck, *PSM*, 140.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 136.

⁴⁶ H.E.W. Turner, *The Pattern of Christian Truth: A Study in the Relations between Orthodoxy and Heresy in the Early Church*, (London: Mowbray, 1954), 9-10.

⁴⁷ Josephus, *Ant.* 13.5.9; 18.1.2; *Bell.* 2.3.14.

Christian religion is marked by the Jews and “people everywhere are talking against this *hairesis* (Acts 28:22). Perhaps *hairesis* is best understood in relation to its parent. When there is a relationship between the parent and the offspring groups/idea, the term should be best thought of as “sect.” However, when the parent group has formally castigated the latter, the term “heresy,” as meaning false belief would be the appropriate understanding. Alan Segal defines a heretic as “someone who began in the parent group but who has put himself beyond the pale with respect to some canon of orthodoxy.”⁴⁸

Emerging Situation for the Church—A.D. 62 onward

Two contrasting pictures emerge in the stratum of the fourth decade of the Christian religion. One is of great growth, Jews and Gentiles accepting each other in Christ, living impressive lives, and powerful congregations that are beacons in a dark age. The other picture is of deserters, apostasy, a fading faith, and disillusionment.

The struggles of the churches in Judea were foretold in Jesus’ Olivet Discourse. When the Romans sacked Jerusalem in A.D. 70, it was surely tumultuous for the church, even though the hostility was directed towards the more zealous Jews and not necessarily the followers of Christ.

Correspondingly, by mid A.D. 64 the relations of the church in Rome with the state were at a low point. The conflicts in Rome concerning the Christians became evident around A.D. 62-64 and came to a zenith when Nero allegedly burned Rome and blamed the Christians. Primary evidence of the fate of the leading apostles comes from Clement, circa A.D. 96. He called Peter and Paul “champions who lived nearest our time . . . noble examples which belong to our own generation.”⁴⁹ There is no evidence that any apostle except John outlived both the conflicts in Rome of A.D. 63-4 and at Jerusalem of A.D. 70. These developments would indirectly affect the Church everywhere, but as to how far and fast, one cannot be sure. But, the church in Jerusalem would no longer be a leading church.

The churches in Ephesus, Rome, Corinth, Antioch, and possibly Alexandria come to the foreground. Unity, uniformity, diversity, and division were becoming foremost issues. Christianity enters an age without the aid of apostles or the possibility of convening at Jerusalem, with a disappointment with the expected *parousia*,⁵⁰ and without a formal written testament with the weight of Scripture.⁵¹

A General Remark About Unity

For a practical impetus to answer the question “Was there unity in the subapostolic Church?,” one does not need to look far. More than any other period, the last five hundred years have taught Christians that unity can be quite elusive. For the apostolic Church, unity was achieved one episode at a time. Did the Church achieve unity during the period after the apostles’ deaths? Did they teach other postapostolic ages anything useful in the pursuit of unity?

⁴⁸ A. Segal, *Two powers in Heaven: Early Rabbinic Reports about Christianity and Gnosticism* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1977), 5.

⁴⁹ 1 Clement 5:1. “A Letter of the Romans to the Corinthians” (1 Clement) from Lightfoot, J.B., Holmes M.W., eds., J.R. Harmer, trans. *The Apostolic Fathers*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992.

⁵⁰ The term *parousia* means appearance and is usually associated with the Second Coming of Christ.

⁵¹ 2 Peter 3:16 is usually taken to affirm that all of the apostles’ writings are considered Holy Scripture. This cannot be absolutely determined from the word *graphe*. Nor, does the church at large seem to have an authorized list of authentic apostolic texts at this early date.

The preceding brief survey of the apostolic Church showed that unity was originally achieved through an agreement on the meaning of the basic events of Jesus' suffering, resurrection, and the possibility of *rebirth* which were all intertwined in both the *kerygma* and *didache*. The practices and experiences of the Lord's Supper, baptism, and fellowship gatherings also contributed to their commonality. Great diversity in ministerial approaches existed, yet a solid ecclesiastical objective was clear. Missions and geographical overlaps occasionally resulted in tension. In time, some actions, motives, doctrines, and practices were beginning to be singled out as false or unacceptable by the late A.D. 50s.

After having reviewed the apostolic Church, four points were chosen that would be relatively comprehensive toward defining unity for this thesis. Upon a completion of the investigation into the selected regions, unity in the Tunnel Period will be assessed according to the following criteria:

1. A singularity of belief using apostolic *kerygma* and *didache* as a starting point.
2. An association with other forms of common Christianity.
3. A continuity of fundamental practices such as baptism and Eucharist.
4. A solidarity of ecclesiastical objective.

For the period that followed, A.D. 62-150, the question of unity will be responded to throughout the end of the investigation along the four-point interests of belief, association, practices, and objective. If the testimony supported by the data indicates that a representation of common Christianity existed in the majority of the regions where data is extant, then this question can be answered accordingly.

Methodology

A historical approach of examining all forms of early Christianity will be used to discern how they relate to one another. The research is limited to viewing the common Christian forms which existed after the death or absence of the apostles in those geographical areas for which source material exists. The investigation will become focused on how those Christians of this Tunnel Period saw themselves and related to each other and against the more diverse forms. Although issues relating to catholicity and orthodoxy were developing within this period, no assumption is made that *common Christianity* in each geographical region developed at the same rate of speed, or displayed unity in the same manner.

In the second chapter, the sources will be analyzed according to each geographical region for which data can be gathered. In order to perform an adequate treatment of this subject in the limited space available, the main focus will be on the best attested documents, and regions with the strongest witness. This method will not rigidly presuppose the current canon, but only attempt to evaluate the documents on their own internal and external attestation. This investigation will only consider regions which have sufficient testimony. This chapter will conclude with a brief look at ecclesiastical terminology.

In the third chapter, each region will be treated separately to determine what can be learned from its history. The testimony of each region will be useful later when attempting to compare them with the four selected points of unity throughout the Tunnel Period. Some procedure of qualifying is

essential in order to avoid proof-texting the regions for a simple test when the history and character of a region might provide vital insight.

I will consider the Christian and general religious history of each region prior to A.D. 62 and any other data coming between A.D. 62-150 that will assist in clarifying distinctions and similarities in Christian forms found among the regions. Initially, primary areas of concern will be Italy, Egypt, Asia Minor, Syria, Mesopotamia, Judea, and Greece since they are traditionally given attention. However, in the end the attention given to each region will correspond to the quality and number of sources for that region. For example, Mesopotamia and Egypt before A.D. 150 raise too many problems for the historian and will eventually be excluded for what will be obvious reasons.

In the fourth chapter, the pre-62 and post-150 periods will be compared to the glimpses observed from the Tunnel Period. By using the bordering periods, a sense of development within the Tunnel Period can be gained to ensure that the investigation is not skewed. Also, in this chapter, inter-church relations will be directly considered in relation to the chief question of the unity thesis. An understanding of the rise of the monarchical bishop is of great importance. Also, the Tunnel Period will be discussed in relation to the issue of Salvation History.

In conclusion, an attempt will be made to be forthright about my original presuppositions and starting point concerning the unity question. In addition, after having made a separate investigation of each of the areas Walter Bauer mentioned, his conclusions will be addressed. In doing so, the difference between Bauer's method and the method I have chosen will be obvious. A final remark on the state of unity using the four selected points for the Tunnel Period will close this investigation.

ORGANIZATION OF DATA AND TERMINOLOGY

Two principal sources of information are pertinent for an adequate treatment of Christian forms throughout the Tunnel Period: literary evidence of all Christian forms, and implementations of ecclesiology. In examining the literary evidence, the current inquiry will begin with a wide margin of possible dates for the key sources. A closer look at the Christian documents associated with each region may allow for more conclusive dates on some sources. A survey of literary evidence by region will help identify what can be known about the religious history of each territory. Once the documents are organized, the distinctive testimony of mainline Christian forms will be evident when compared to other identified forms.

A brief chronicle of early *ekklesia* (*called out gathering*, church) terms and models will provide the background from which to evaluate changes during the period under investigation. Because the response of the *ekklesia* to the changing developments resulted in new formulations and terms, this evolution will be observed.

Preliminary Dates of Key Sources

Assigning dates and locations for documents written between A.D. 60 and 150 is an immense task in itself and even the New Testament documents written after A.D. 60 involve intense debates and extensive research in addressing these issues. Therefore, this investigation is relying on past research of others for an initially wide margin of possibilities: Donald Guthrie's *Introduction into the New Testament*,⁵² J.B. Lightfoot's *The Apostolic Fathers*,⁵³ and *New Testament Apocrypha* from Hennecke and Schneemelcher.⁵⁴ Upon the need to adjust the provenance or period of a writing, it will be substantiated within the discussion of the associated region.

Table 1 - Provenance of Ancient Christian Literature

Title	Range of Dates	Representing Locations
Mark	A.D. 50-70	Rome
Luke	A.D. 60-70	Rome, Greece
1 Peter	A.D. 60-62	Rome, Northern Asia Minor
Jude	A.D. 63-67	Palestine/Syria
Acts	A.D. 60s	Extensive provincial sources
2 Peter	mid A.D. 60s	Various
Matthew	A.D. 50-70	Palestine
Hebrews	A.D. 60-70	Rome, Judea
epistles of John	A.D. 80-95	Western Asia Minor
Gospel of John	A.D. 80-95	Palestine, W. Asia Minor
Revelation	approx. A.D. 95	Western Asia Minor
Didache	A.D. 60-140	Palestine, especially Syria
1 Clement	A.D. 96	Rome, Corinth
Aristides	A.D. 120-130	Greece (Athens)
Gospel of Hebrews	A.D. 120-130	Palestine or Egypt
works of Ignatius	A.D. 107-117	Asia Minor, Greece, Rome

⁵² Donald Guthrie, *Introduction to the New Testament* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 1990).

⁵³ J.B. Lightfoot, M. W. Holmes, eds., J.R. Harmer, trans, *The Apostolic Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992)

⁵⁴ Hennecke and Schneemelcher, eds., *New Testament Apocrypha*. 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963, 1965).

Diognetus	A.D. 120-140	Unknown, poss. Rome
Papias	A.D. 140-150	Western Asia Minor
Polycarp to Philipians	A.D. 118-130	Asia Minor (Syrna, Philadelphia)
2 Clement	A.D. 140-150	Egypt (Alexandria)
Shepherd of Hermas	A.D. 110-125	Rome
Barnabas	A.D. 110-120	Egypt or Palestine
Gospel of Egyptians	A.D. 120-130	Egypt
Gospel of Thomas	A.D. 100-150	Egypt
Acts of Thomas	A.D. 100-150	Egypt
Preaching of Peter	A.D. 140-150	Asia Minor
Gospel, Acts of Peter	A.D. 140-150	Asia Minor
Epistola Apostolorum	A.D. 140-150	Egypt
Justin: Dialogue w/Trypho	A.D. 137, 155 (rev.)	Asia Minor, Rome
Justin: First Apology	A.D. 150	Rome

Evidence of Christian Forms by Region

This investigation will begin with a regional examination of documentary evidence of the ancient world. Because some early Christian forms were partially cut off from contact with similar forms in other regions, inaccurate generalizations can be avoided by briefly observing the history of Christianity and/or documentation of each territory.

In order for a region to have enough testimony to be useful for the investigation, it is evident that there must be documentation that reveals the beliefs, relations, practices, and purposes of Christian forms for a given location. It is unlikely to find these four features at one time for one location. The investigation will be open to second-hand testimony and later reports relating testimony for an earlier period. However, I recognize the difference in reliability between the varieties of sources.

The Exclusion of Edessa and Alexandria

To illustrate the issue of the importance of documents, I will briefly mention the situation of Edessa in Mesopotamia. Walter Bauer used Edessa as a case study in identifying Christian forms in the earliest times. Edessa poses problems for any investigation of ancient Christianity. For instance, the so-called correspondence between King Abgar and Jesus, which concerns the king's request for a personal healing from Jesus, has several highly precarious elements. (1) It is possible that a legend was built from two historical Abgars. Elements from King Abgar V who ruled in Edessa from A.D. 9-46 and of a later King Abgar IX may have blended into one story.

This explanation seems plausible since the first stories of Christianity at Edessa through Eusebius come long after both Abgars lived. Bauer may be right when he over-confidently concludes that the story leading to a conversion of Edessa "can in no way and to no extent be traced back as a report that is earlier than the beginning of the third century."⁵⁵ (2) The so-called *Doctrine of Addai* (Thaddaeus), written around A.D. 400, contains more supporting material but also reads like legend and should be passed over. (3) The *Edessene Chronicle*, a sixth-century book designed to inform his countrymen of their spiritual heritage, contains further difficulties. Bauer uses the propagandist elements of these documents to support his "heresy in Edessa" theory. His theory was driven by a

⁵⁵ Bauer, *OHEC*, 3.

thesis, not by any clear evidence. Nevertheless, places like Edessa cannot be considered part of this investigation because its records come too late and the sources are combinations of truth, tale, and tradition.

Edessa is a pitifully poor choice on which to build any case for certainty. Therefore, Thomas Robinson's position on Edessa is where the current investigation finds itself. The question of the character of Christianity in Edessa is still an open one, and one that I do not attempt to resolve. My concern here is not to demonstrate which particular form of Christianity was first to arrive in Edessa; rather, it is to show that our information is too ambiguous or mute to allow us confident reconstructions of Christianity in this area.⁵⁶

Following Robinson's admonition, only territories with reasonable testimony will be part of the investigation. The regions directly south of the Mediterranean do not have early enough testimony to reveal anything about the character of any leading city in those regions. Therefore Egypt, Africa, Arabia, Mesopotamia, Libya, and other regions near the Mediterranean or Judea will not be considered for the period between A.D. 62-150. Alexandria and Egypt generally are associated with second century sources but not with the specificity that some other regions have. The only regions that provide useful testimony are Palestine, Syria, western Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy.

Palestine: Jerusalem

The insurrections of A.D. 66-70 and A.D. 132-135 are the two most significant events to affect the Jewish nation during this era. The aftermath of these affairs changed the social, political, and religious standing of Jews worldwide. In many ways these revolts were senseless and adversely affected Jews for centuries. A conscious expectation of a Messiah, other than Jesus, was at the heart of the Bar Kochba revolt of A.D. 132-135. None of the New Testament letters directly addresses the destruction of Jerusalem. This is one of the factors used to date books such as Jude or Hebrews.

Josephus', *The Jewish War*, provides valuable information concerning the events between A.D. 66 and 73. Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical History*⁵⁷ and Justin's *Dialogue With Trypho the Jew*,⁵⁸ describe the religious situation of Palestine resulting from the Bar Kokhba revolt. Eusebius gathered his information from earlier writers such as Hegesippus who lived in second- century Palestine.

Outside of Acts, little data is available concerning the Christian forms in Galilee and Samaria. In the early sixties, the leading congregation in Judea--Jerusalem continued to have the presence of Jesus' relatives. James, the brother of Jesus, was the elder and according to Josephus, he was highly respected by many Jews. He appeared to have been an elder's elder, that is, an elder above the others in the church (Gal. 2:12, and Acts 15:21 and 21:8). The threat of his death is mentioned by Josephus.

Having such a character, Ananus thought that with Festus dead and Albinus still on the way he would have the proper opportunity. Convening the judges of the Sanhedrin, he brought before them the brother of Jesus who was called the Christ, whose name was James, and certain others. He accused them of having transgressed the law and delivered them up to be stoned.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Robinson, *BTE*, 58.

⁵⁷ Eusebius, *EH*, 2:1-2, 2.19,26, 5:14;9,10,11.

⁵⁸ Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 1.

⁵⁹ Josephus, *Antiquities*, XX.200.

While Eusebius might have been able to associate James' death with Ananus, from other sources, both he and Origen later erred in reporting what Josephus wrote.⁶⁰ Josephus mentioned an intervention on behalf of James and never mentioned his death. Hegesippus was the source for information relating to James. It seems that Eusebius interpolated Hegesippus into Josephus.

Eusebius states that many of the Christians fled to Pella in the Decapolis to avoid the revolt itself.⁶¹ They returned to Jerusalem when it was safe. Other relatives of Jesus survived the earlier Jerusalem tragedy. Symeon,⁶² son of Clopas and Jude, received notoriety in Judea. It is not clear whether the Jude of the letter that bears his name was a comrade or a relative of James and Jesus. However, he was respected.

By the close of the first century, the academy of Jamnia accepted a Hebrew canon that corresponds to the Old Testament. The academy was a conglomeration of Jews who were trying to preserve their pre-A.D. 70 collection of sacred books. If the Jews of Jamnia are considered the rightful custodians of the Old Testament canon, then the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings are a fixed number of books. This is not to say that the Jews and Christians became immediately aware of, or were in agreement with, Jamnia's list of twenty-four books (equivalent to thirty-nine books in the Christian Old Testament). Many of the Jews actually accepted other books as inspired to either be included alongside, but not necessarily within the canon. The Qumran scribes seemed aware of canonical works which they "copied on a special parchment and in a special script. No Apocryphal books were found in this form."⁶³ However, a strong consensus on the extent of the canon cannot be found among post-A.D. 70 Jewish literature as seen in the Enochian traditions.⁶⁴ The Jamnia collection was more firmly recognized as authoritative long after the period under consideration.

It appears that the Jewish war of A.D. 66-70 ended most of the associations between the Church and the Synagogue. By the end of the first century, Jewish daily prayers were being said that condemned the "Natzorim and Minim." These terms are usually taken to be referring to Jewish Christians and apostates.⁶⁵

The eastern part of the world produced spurious Gospels. The *Gospel According to the Hebrews*, if it is the one quoted by Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Jerome, was used by the mid-second century and was probably written in the first part of the second century. It has stronger ties to Egyptian Christianity, and interestingly, it mentions James the Just, the leading elder in Jerusalem. "The Lord, after he had given the linen cloth to the priest's slave, went to James and appeared to him."⁶⁶

⁶⁰ Zvi Baras wrote "In the hands of Origen and Eusebius, this incident, defined as 'the martyrdom of James,' became, through Christian historiographical interpretation, the main cause for the destruction of Jerusalem and of the Temple. Moreover, they went so far as to say that Josephus himself regarded this catastrophe as just punishment for the execution of James—a statement not supported by the text." *The Testimonium Flavianum and the Martyrdom of James in Josephus, Judaism, and Christianity* (Detroit: Wayne State Univ., 1987), 341.

⁶¹ Eusebius, *EH*, 3:5.

⁶² Eusebius, *EH*, 3:10-11. 4:22.

⁶³ Norman Geisler, *The Extent of the Old Testament Canon* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 41.

⁶⁴ Richard Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1990), 225-233. His discussion of Jude's use of Apocryphal literature relates to the position that such documents had at the end of the first century.

⁶⁵ From the twelfth benediction of the *Shemoneh 'Esreh* (Eighteen Benedictions). The text was very fluid and its origins are unknown, however, one version was adapted for usage in a climate that heeded Jew/Christian relations. The text of this particular version of the twelfth benediction can be found in Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ* (3 vols.) (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1973-87), 2:454-63.

⁶⁶ The Gospel of Hebrews 9:1.

Another Jewish-Christian Gospel, the *Gospel of the Ebionites*, found east of the Jordan by Epiphanius in the fourth century, is probably an edited version of Matthew. It is considered "early to mid-second century"⁶⁷ and bears witness of adoptionist Christology when describing Jesus' baptism, "And there was a voice from the sky that said, 'You are my favored son--I fully approve of you,' and again, 'Today I have become your Father'" (4:4). In the second century, a separated group of Jewish Christians certainly existed in the regions in and near Palestine. It is possible that the Gospel is associated with a group known as the Ebionites of which little is known.⁶⁸

The book of Jude is often connected to Syria, but it may be tied to the churches in Judea. Even if it is a Syrian work, the short book may apply to those who were in Judea before A.D. 70. The name Jude would have given it an uncontested Palestinian framework if it were not for the fact that the book so closely resembles portions of 2 Peter. The latter document introduces itself as a successor of 1 Peter, a correspondence intended for Bithynia, Asia, Galatia, and Pontus. Nevertheless, the contents of Jude suggest a Jewish Christian audience, familiar with the Hebrew Old Testament, not the LXX. Jude also alludes to an apocryphal source, 1 Enoch,⁶⁹ which would assume an audience more deeply submersed in Jewish roots such as those found in Palestine.

There are other resources for comparing Christian forms in Palestine and Syria. For instance, if it could be determined that there were strong ties in Syria where Matthew and Didache are usually placed, some insight could be gained from the emphasis placed in both regions on the roles of the prophet and teacher.

For Judea, its greatest testimony will be related to the antiquity and the perseverance of the Jerusalem church to maintain survivors, at least until Hadrian's reign. Justin was confident that Christianity was sufficiently represented past A.D. 137.

Syria: Antioch

Josephus gives a descriptive introduction to the religious history of Syria and especially Antioch. The successors to Antiochus Epiphanes (B.C. 175) who had oppressed Jews, granted Antioch Jews "citizen rights on an equality with Greeks."⁷⁰ It is generally assumed that Jews were in better standing in Syria than they were in Jerusalem. When Syria became a Roman province (B.C. 64-63) there were few changes in policies concerning the Jews. Their position would always be delicate because of the activities of their brothers to the south. Josephus wrote that Jews were

particularly numerous in Syria, where intermingling is due to the proximity of the two countries. But it was at Antioch that they were especially congregated, partly owing to the greatness of that city . . . they were constantly attracting to their religious ceremonies multitudes of Greeks, and these they had in some measure incorporated with themselves.⁷¹

The population of Antioch for this period is estimated at about 150,000 whereas Syria proper was only about 400,000. The Jewish population at Antioch would be approximately between twenty

⁶⁷ Miller/Funk, *The Complete Gospels* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1994), 436.

⁶⁸ Eusebius, *EH*, 3:27.

⁶⁹ Compare Jude 12 with 1 Enoch 2:1-5, 80:2-8, and Jude 15 to 1 Enoch 1:9.

⁷⁰ Josephus, *Jewish War* 7.44-45.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

and forty-five thousand at the beginning of the first century.⁷² Even the lower number of Jews, say twenty-four thousand, would constitute the highest percentage of Jews anywhere in the Diaspora, at about sixteen percent, compared to Alexandria at about twelve percent. From Antioch to Jerusalem came a Jew named Nicolas who became a believer, and later, one of the Seven (Acts 6:5).

The first known form of the messianic faith to come to Antioch appeared shortly after the Church scattered following Stephen's death (Acts 11:19). Consequently, as early as A.D. 34/5, the Way could have reached Antioch. The next verse from Luke gives no indication as to the passage of time, "Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to the Greeks also" (11:20).

Although Syrian Christianity would be comprised of a strong Jewish and Gentile mix, it had a strong connection with Judean Christianity. Documents pertinent to one area cannot be irrelevant to the other. The gospel of Matthew, the epistle Jude, and the evolved catechism, the Didache, are usually connected to Syria. The factors that indicate a document's association with Syria are (1) the strong historical presence of the prophet and teacher in the region which are referenced in the ascribed documents, (2) a Gentile environment with strong affinities for Jewish concerns, and (3) Antioch would possibly be the strongest post-A.D. 70 environment favorable for the Christianity proposed in the document.

Jude, the author of Jude, was probably a relative of James and Jesus. If he was the Lord's brother, he was probably an itinerant evangelist (1 Cor. 9:5). A traveling ministry would correspond to the non-localized concerns of the letter. Matthew's gospel envisions Jews who would take this gospel into all nations (Matt. 24:14, 28:19ff) and yet it contains issues relevant only to the Jews at Jerusalem (Matt. 24, 22:7).

John P. Meier believed that Matthew was a gospel written to counter tensions and address needs in Antioch from A.D. 85-100.⁷³ However, to view Matthew as a contrived document to meet those needs is conjecture only. Meier's Antiochene church is so radically different from any portrait of this church from either Acts or Ignatius that Meier's position ought to be suspect. Matthew must remain as it seems--a general presentation of Christ to Hebrew believers.

The themes contained in the Didache resonate with the missions from Galilee where Jesus sent out the seventy-two to preach (Luke 10:1ff). Both Syria and Palestine (Galilee, Decapolis, and Judea) would become intimately familiar with the roles of the prophet and teacher,⁷⁴ which are mentioned in Didache 13:1. Because it is very difficult to date each of the portions of this work, it is safe to say that some of the contents appear to be from the second half of the first century and rely on the Synoptic Gospels, especially Matthew: but the final edition should be dated toward the middle of the next century.

Justin Martyr names a Menander as a leader of a Christian group, who was said to have a Syrian influence. No document from Menander survives, but his influence must be considered for the background of Christian forms in Syria and the tensions that resided there. Justin remarks,

⁷² These are estimations made on the part of the authors that leave a large margin for error. Wayne A. Meeks and Robert L. Wilken, *Jews and Christians in Antioch in the First Four Centuries of the Common Era* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1978), 8.

⁷³ Raymond Brown and John Meier, *Antioch and Rome* (New York: Paulist Press, 1982), 45-72.

⁷⁴ Matthew 23:34, Luke 11:49, Acts 11:27-28 and 13:1-2.

And a man, Menander, also a Samaritan, of the town Capparetaea, a disciple of Simon, and inspired by devils, we know to have deceived many while he was in Antioch by his magical art. He persuaded those who adhered to him that they should never die, and even now there are some living who hold this opinion of his.⁷⁵

Saturnilos (or Saturninus) was an active influence in Syria from the end of the first century into the beginning of the second century. All evidence about him comes from Irenaeus.⁷⁶ He was an ascetic, possessing a form that was a predecessor to Gnosticism.

Ignatius wrote five letters to local churches in Asia Minor, one to Rome, and another to a friend, Polycarp, in about A.D. 107/117. There is much to be learned from his letters because, not only does Ignatius make his views as a Syrian bishop very apparent, he also refers to the condition of the church in Antioch (Phil 10, Smyrn 11, Poly 7).

Syrian Christianity was one of the closest cousins of Palestinian Christianity before A.D. 70. There is reason to believe that this did not change even though dissenters emerged. The documents associated with Syria reflect a development in ecclesiology.

Western Asia Minor

The western region of modern Turkey received a great deal of attention in the early Church. It was at the center of Roman civilization. Paul had ministered to western Asia Minor up until or near his death. John, the aged apostle, was stationed there until his death. Ignatius gave special attention to this region prior to his death (between A.D. 107-117).

John's Revelation (circa A.D. 80/95) provides insight into seven churches: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. Irenaeus of Lyons (~A.D. 180) credits the Gospel of John and Revelation to the apostle. He had a connection to John as a one time pupil of Polycarp, who died about A.D. 154. Polycarp had met John when he was very young. John wrote from Patmos, an island fifteen miles off the coast of Ephesus. He was placed there because of the word of God and *την μαρτυρίαν* Ἰησοῦ (testimony of Jesus, 1:9).

From a cursory look, the letter to the seven churches could only belong to one of two possible first-century periods. The reigns of Nero (A.D. 54-68) and that of Domitian (A.D. 81-96) were the most unfavorable toward the Church between A.D. 54-118. Any examination of the situation of the apocalypse must consider seriously these two periods. There is no evidence that Nero's madness directly affected Christians outside of Rome. Coinage, policies, and remarks from Suetonius show that Domitian was more interested in his emperor cult in honor of himself than he was in the welfare of the Roman empire.⁷⁷ This fact alone would certainly bring heated relations with the fastest growing movement of that century, which bound itself to *one* God, in heaven.

Irenaeus and Tertullian place the Apocalypse toward the end of Domitian's reign. Therefore, the date of Revelation is usually interpreted to be about A.D. 95. Tertullian even directly credits the

⁷⁵ Justin Martyr, *The First Apology of Justin*, 26. From Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson eds. *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*-vol. 1 (Eerdmans: T. & T. Clark, 1993).

⁷⁶ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 1.24.1-2.

⁷⁷ Suetonius, *Twelve Caesars*, Domitian, 4.4, 13.2.

emperor with having John exiled to the island but that could be conjecture.⁷⁸ It is possible that John was placed on Patmos during a local opposition between A.D. 70 and A.D. 80, like that which was instigated by Pliny three decades later.⁷⁹ Revelation would have been foretelling events “soon to take place” (1:1) under Domitian’s rule. A general milieu between A.D. 80 and A.D. 95 is assumed for the situation leading to the Apocalypse, however, the date itself would be about A.D. 95.

All three of the epistles of 1, 2, 3 John provide insight into tensions with alternative Christian forms. It is difficult to date them more specifically than A.D. 80 to A.D. 95. They receive a late date because of the usual assumption that the progression of Jewish tension and the heretical issues that he is dealing with allegedly caused John to move on from Judea. Both 1 John 1:1-3 and 2 John 1:7 address Docetism.

Evidence for Christian forms at Ephesus, Smyrna, and Philadelphia is also found in the writings of Ignatius. He also wrote to Magnesia and Tralles. Another letter of Ignatius is only relevant in that he addresses the church in Rome in a peer-level or upward fashion, as a pillar. In Ignatius' view, the western Asia Minor churches which he addressed were not necessarily directly under his care, but were in need of his directives.

Ignatius confirms the standing of the church in Ephesus. Ignatius reminds the church in Ephesus that they are in accord with historical Christianity (4.1,8.1). This congregation appears more stable than all the others. Therefore, if the other churches would follow the model of the congregation in Ephesus, a measure of proto-orthodoxy for Ignatius/Ephesus would be twofold: (1) Person of Christ: “There is one physician, who is both flesh and spirit, unborn and born, God in man, true life in death, both from Mary and from God, first subject to suffering and then beyond it, Jesus Christ our Lord” (Eph 7.2-8.1), and, (2) The Work of Christ: “Consequently all magic and every kind of spell were dissolved, . . . God appeared in human form to bring the newness of eternal life; and what had been prepared by God began to take effect. As a result, all things were thrown into ferment, because the abolition of death was being carried out” (Eph 19.3).

Polycarp wrote a letter to the church at Philippi that had been attached to the Ignatius collection. The main data for dating Ignatius' letters is the uncertainty over the death of Ignatius-- “As for Ignatius himself and those with him, if you learn anything more definite, let us know” (13.2). In 1.1 and 9.1 it appeared that he was assuming that Ignatius was already martyred. P.N. Harrison attempts to establish two letters out of the single document⁸⁰ by pointing to (1) the ambiguous references over Ignatius' death,⁸¹ and (2) Polycarp's reference to the “firstborn of Satan” (7.1). Polycarp was considered a leading opponent of Marcion in the A.D. 140s; therefore, he was allegedly writing about Marcion, a figure whose ministry began more than two decades after Ignatius' death. Therefore, Harrison divided the letter into two letters from two periods.

These arguments are not convincing and really rest on the writer's reference to the “firstborn of Satan.” First, Polycarp was not writing about an individual, but “whoever” twists the sayings of the Lord to suit his own evil desires and claims there is no resurrection nor judgment--“well, that person is

⁷⁸ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 5. 30. 3.

⁷⁹ Pliny was governor of Bithynia when a Christian “superstition” caused both civil and religious annoyances. See Epistles Pliny, A. N. Sherwin-White, *The Letters of Pliny: A Historical and Social Commentary* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1966).

⁸⁰ P. N. Harrison, *Polycarp's Two Epistles to the Philippians* (Cambridge, 1936).

⁸¹ The comments of 1.1 and 9.1 seem more certain of Ignatius' death than 13.2.

the first-born of Satan” (7.1). The phrase is a title, not a description of a specific individual. Also, it is difficult to prove conclusively that this three-point portrait was originally designated for Marcion. Polycarp was aware of other heretics, such as Cerinthus, who may have matched this description. The letter of Polycarp to the Philippians should remain dated at around A.D. 107/117.

The *Epistola Apostolorum*, a document that has been ascribed dates by scholars for anywhere between A.D. 130-170, will be given a date of around A.D. 150. It is usually thought to be associated with Asia or Egypt, though one cannot be sure. It was probably a normative Christian source with bizarre features that leaned toward speculation, fiction, and heterodoxy.

Justin and Eusebius are also helpful sources for Asia Minor. The testimony of western Asia Minor is great in that it persistently yields useful information throughout the Tunnel Period.

Greece: Corinth

The origins of Christianity at Corinth are well documented in Acts and the two long epistles to the Corinthians. The Church suffered from tensions, schism, cliques, and unity problems which can enhance theories concerning diverse forms of Christianity. A close look at first letter to the Corinthians reveals that there were personality versus doctrinally oriented parties at the root of Paul’s concerns in the A.D. 50s that appear to have been rectified by the time 2 Corinthians was written. However, false apostles mentioned in 2 Cor. 11:1-5,13-15 indicate that those with a “different spirit” led some astray.

The church at Corinth addressed by 1 Clement seems to have the same vulnerable character as the Corinthian church did in apostolic times. The letter is generally dated about A.D. 95/96 and was written on behalf of the church in Rome advising to advise the church in Corinth. Well-attested tradition names the author as Clement, a bishop in Rome. The leading issue in the letter resembles that which was addressed by the apostle Paul four decades earlier--divisions.

William R. Schoedel believed that Polycarp was aware of this document,⁸² which means that the letter received exposure east of Achaia within two decades. The fact that the recipients of the letter shared it with others suggests some acceptance of help from Clement. Secondary evidence from Irenaeus implies that it was received well,

“The church in Rome sent a very lengthy letter to the Corinthians urgently admonishing them to be at peace with each other, to renew their faith, and to proclaim the tradition which they recently received from the apostles; . . . Those who desire can learn from this writing that this is the God proclaimed by the churches as the father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and thus can gain insight into the apostolic tradition of the church, for the letter is older than the present false teachers who deceitfully claim that there is another God superior to the Demiurge and creator of all things.”⁸³

1 Clement is presented by Irenaeus as a successful document that contained apostolic tradition. The fact that it was older than the “present false teachers” (Gnostics) continues to be a strong argument in favor of normative Christianity versus novel forms. Philippi also had a strong presence

⁸² Williams R. Schoedel, *Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, to the Philippians, Fragments of Papias. The Apostolic Fathers*, vol. 5 (Camden: Nelson, 1967) 4-5.

⁸³ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 3.3.2-3.

when Polycarp wrote to that church in the early second century. His epistle to the Philippians, mentions that their “faith, renowned from the earliest times, still perseveres and bears fruit.” (1.2). He quotes their now famous epistle from Paul (Phil. 2:10, 3:21 in Pol. Phil 2.1).

The most distinct contribution for Christianity in Greece will relate to the reasons that one church outside of Greece became concerned with the situation at Corinth.

West: Rome

Christian forms in Rome have very strong attestation. For the first century, Acts 2:10, 18:2, 28:15-31, Paul’s classic treatise of Romans, and 1 Clement are significant references and sources. Portions of 1 Peter and Hebrews also affirm forms of Christianity in Rome. If the chief criterion of common Christianity is the person and work of Christ, the Son of God, then Roman Christianity of Clement’s letter is a direct descendant of Jewish/Gentile Christianity. It is on par with the early literary witness of mainline Christianity, 1 Corinthians, which it quotes. Simply put, Roman Christianity has strong historical allegiances to the best attested forms of normative Christianity.

There are good reasons that Christians from the East would want to establish themselves in this leading city. In antiquity, it was a common practice to have representation in Rome in order for a religion to be recognized. Rome officially condemned secret societies, so, in order not to appear subversive, religions would frequently look for acceptance or endorsement in Rome. As well, the apostle to the Gentiles was commissioned by the Lord and determined himself to be a witness in Rome (Acts 22:21, 23:11, 26:16-18).

W.H.C. Frend points out that Christianity would raise many red flags with the authorities in Rome.

Roman Religion was therefore less a matter of personal devotion than of national cult. Rome judged the religion of others from the same standpoint ... *A religio was licita* for a particular group on the basis of tribe or nationality and traditional practices, coupled with the proviso that its rites were not offensive to the Roman people or their gods. But, for Roman citizens, loyalty to the national religion precluded participation in the rites of others, unless these have been specifically sanctioned by the Senate.⁸⁴

Frend goes on to point out that people were expected to embrace the "gods whose worship they had received from their ancestors."⁸⁵ New religions were automatically suspect. Those who appeared to practice clandestine rites were especially marked. Christianity was an easy target for Nero. The Neronian Persecution of Christians at Rome in 64 A.D. factors into the deaths of Peter and Paul of the same period,⁸⁶ although exact dates cannot be fixed.

1 Peter was written from Rome in about A.D. 62⁸⁷, shortly before Peter's death. A second

⁸⁴ W.H.C. Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker: 1981), 106.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ 1 Clement 5:1-7.

⁸⁷ 1 Peter 5:13. Babylon represented Rome in Revelation 14:8, 16:19, and 17:5. II Baruch 11.1 and 67:7 also posits Rome in this way. The “fiery ordeal” of 4:12 could correspond to the persecution in Rome in which Christians would have felt like the ancient Jews did when they were sacked by Babylon.

century witness Papias, affirms this.⁸⁸ 1 Peter provides insight into Peter's catechumenate material. Raymond Brown believes that the letter is a commentary of an imaginative use of the exodus experience as a fundamental way of looking at Christian conversion. He sizes up a large portion of 1 Peter as "a baptismal homily, a baptismal liturgy, a baptismal hymn, or a baptismal confession."⁸⁹

A consistent trajectory of thought between 1 Peter and the tradition of the Roman church has caused some to see 1 Peter as Pauline. It is possible that Peter picked up on the same needs that Paul did and was even influenced by Paul. They both emphasize submission to governing authorities (Rom. 13:1-7, 1 Pet. 2:13-17).

Hebrews appears as a treatise written for a Jewish Christian audience. The writer was very aware of the issues of a matured Christian faith and the letter was referenced early in antiquity. It was quoted in 1 Clement,⁹⁰ *Shepherd of Hermas* and the *Muratorian Canon*, which are Roman works. Raymond Brown argues that Rome was the first church to use Hebrews. Brown states that the earliest Roman uses of Hebrews moves in a somewhat different thought direction than its original audience did, yet it was used authoritatively.⁹¹ Of its source, Brown held off from stating a view.

Both Clement and Josephus describe Jewish activities that were normally associated with the Temple as still occurring in their days.⁹² The verses in Hebrews that describe the activities of the temple, 8:4, 8:13, 9:6-7, 10:1-2, and 13:11 seem to view the activities as continuous to that point. The perils described by Heb. 10:33 and 11:36ff are similar to the fate of Christians in Rome around A.D. 63/64 and those Jewish believers who would have stayed at Jerusalem between A.D. 66-70, even though those who went around in "sheepskins" and "goatskins" most likely refer to the ancient prophets. An estimation of A.D. 65 seems to work well with the timing of the reprieve for those who once joyfully overcame tough trials (Heb. 10:32ff). However, this is part conjecture, because the time and place of those trials are unknown.

Clement's letter to Corinth in about A.D. 96 reveals that the stature of the Roman church is elevated by its legacy. The church in Rome, in Clement's mind, almost appears to be standing where the church in Jerusalem once was. There are parallels between the two churches. Jerusalem was the capital of Judaism, Rome the leading city of the Gentiles. Jerusalem was where the first Jewish sanctioned persecution took place and Rome was where the first state persecution took place. In the first generation of Christianity, the leading Christian authorities were located in Jerusalem; however, the city of Rome was where some of the last epistles of Peter and Paul were written and where they were martyred.

There is a connection between each of the post A.D. 60 documents associated with Rome. The relationship is a preponderance toward the same reasoning. The caliber of Christianity is not superior to Ephesus or Antioch. The documents of 1 Peter, Hebrews, and 1 Clement each show a common stream of thought or federation that subtly indicates that the Roman church was beginning to provide leadership where there was a vacancy. The Roman church was the first to endure a very intense state-sponsored persecution. It held two heroes in a difficult decade. It showed an early concern about

⁸⁸ Eusebius, *EH*, 2.15.2.

⁸⁹ Brown and Meier, *AR*, 133.

⁹⁰ 1 Clement 36:2-5 is a close match for Hebrews 1:3-13. There are other allusions.

⁹¹ Brown and Meier, *AR*, 147-148.

⁹² 1 Clement 40:4-5 and Josephus, *Against Apion* 2.77.

collecting documents for preservation. The congregation was available for consultation to churches like Corinth when they needed help. An early successful convergence of Jewish and Gentile sentiments indicate a vision for the future state of the Church. It was “very loyal to its Jewish heritage.”⁹³ The Roman church was known to “teach all,”⁹⁴ and evidence suggests that this was done from a position of legacy, not authority.

The Shepherd of Hermas was written around A.D. 110-125. It is divided into the Visions, the Mandates, and the Parables. Although it was considered Scripture by many early Christians, it is substandard on various levels. There are clear inconsistencies between Hermas and the apostle Paul on marriage and divorce proceedings,⁹⁵ yet, it is a rich document. The Visions are reminiscent of Revelations. The Mandates read like a manual at times, and other times like a question and answer session. The Parables have both proverbial qualities and similarities to the Visions and Mandates. It is associated with Rome because it refers to Clement and Vision 1-4 has similarities with 1 Clement. Some clues to the inner workings of the church at Rome are detectable, but elusive due to the genre.

Justin was in Rome sometime between A.D. 140 and 150. After his conversion (est. A.D. 130), he traveled to various places. It is likely that Ephesus is where he had a famous encounter with a Jew named Trypho. Although his discussion with Trypho took place shortly after the Jewish revolt connected with Bar Kokhba (A.D. 132/5), the final publication has elements that indicate knowledge of a post A.D. 150 situation. His *First Apology* is the first classic Christian apologetic, dating around A.D. 150/5. He writes in a pre-canonical framework, but with a strong proto-orthodox concern over Christian antiquity. He was an enthusiast for sound doctrine, practices, and descriptions.

Dissenters were attracted to Rome. Cerdo, Marcion, and Valentinus are among the earliest and most noted. Valentinus was undoubtedly a Christian Gnostic. Some of those who preceded him were proto-gnostic and led movements that floundered. Valentinus had come to Rome from Egypt and sought the office of bishop in Rome. Tertullian later reports that he almost succeeded. When inquired about his views, he was discovered for what he was. He took some disciples with him and launched a movement that is responsible for many forms of Christianity as seen in the Nag Hammadi documents. He was very effective, and one could date his ousting at A.D. 138/140 as signaling the beginning of a more organized attempt of common Christian forms to concentrate on clarifying and protecting orthodoxy. Within three or four few decades, classical Catholicism emerged. Marcion’s excommunication from Rome was equally significant.

Rome drew the attention of Justin and later, Irenaeus, to fend off heresies and define Christianity in a Post-Apostolic world. As Rome was where many great battles were fought, it became a place of eminence. Rome is an especially strong source of testimony for the current inquiry. Its surviving documentation, besides establishing its character, has indicators to its posture.

Ecclesiastical Terminology

The terms used to describe common Christian forms appear to have evolved. In a preliminary exploration of ecclesiastical development for Tunnel Period Christianity I observed that there was little in the way of “common” understanding. Even if I argued that Christians in this period inherited an

⁹³ Brown and Meier, *AR*, 162.

⁹⁴ *The Shepherd of Hermas, Visions*, 2.4.3 indicates that the Roman church continued to send correspondence with churches.

⁹⁵ *Mandate*, 4.

Apostolic paradigm or understanding for ecclesiology, how would this help the investigation when even offices within the Apostolic period are somewhat difficult to pin down? Therefore, a firm formulation is not being imagined or offered, but a proximity of understanding that was somewhat elastic even in the apostles' days.

It is not known for certain where *ekklesia* (church) terminology originated even though, conceptually, it originated with Jesus (Matt. 16:18, 18:17). It is likely that he did not use the Greek word *ekklesia*, which means "an assembly duly summoned or called out," since Matthew's Gospel was probably originally written in Aramaic, the language Jesus most likely spoke in this situation.⁹⁶

Luke's use early in Acts, of *ekklesia* terminology to describe the Church could be a later postscript onto what was becoming apparent from the onset: that the believers were called out as a distinct community (Acts 4:12-13). It would not take long for this term to stick as it was a familiar term for "assembly" in the LXX for the Hebrew term *qahal*.

In Ephesians and Colossians, two outstanding examples of the apostle Paul's church theology, the apostle outlined the two major tenants of *ekklesia* theology that would become the backdrop for Sub-Apostolic Christianity. First, "He [Christ] is the head of the body" (Col. 1:18), and second, the creation of "one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross" (Eph. 2:15). The idea of coinciding meetings of two groups of accepted believers which are divided from each other is foreign to the documents of common Christianity.

The Church was not thought of as fragmented by party problems that led to separate meetings. Subject to pragmatic issues of meeting space and size of the population, the Church was a called out corporate gathering. Internal conflict and all of the evils of schisms and factions occurred, but never left two equally legitimate groups of Apostolic churches (1 Cor. 11:18-19). There was only one church envisioned at each practical location, usually cities.⁹⁷

By the time of Clement and Ignatius, believers from normative Christian forms had precedents to follow for Jewish-Gentile controversies. They also saw, by way of precedent, that unity was not innate within the *ekklesia*, but that it was striven for and fought for (Acts 15, 1 Cor. 1:10ff, 1 Cor. 15:1-2, Eph. 4:3ff). Thus, for the church of the Tunnel Period, the current investigation is concerned with whether the same sort of striving continued to occur among the *ekklesia*.

Offices of the *Ekklesia*

The offices included in the New Testament and early Church are essentially the apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds, and teachers, although the list is not exhaustive. Some of the roles were apparently seen as surrogates under Christ (1 Pet. 5:2-5, Heb. 13:7, 17). There were distinct qualifications and limitations for each of the roles. Each of the posts were limited by subordination to another office, assigned a specific task, or only associated with a geographical area. The requirements

⁹⁶ The term *ekklesia* (assembly) was used in the LXX for the OT word *qahal*, where the LXX translates the word *edah* as *sunagoge* (congregation). For a thorough discussion on the word that Jesus probably used and the history of the term *ekklesia*, see Kevin Giles, *What On Earth is the Church?: An Exploration In New Testament Theology* (Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 1995), 36-45, 230-243.

⁹⁷ This could be an important issue in the unity thesis. The need for understanding among separate meetings such as house churches must have been important to the church at Rome (Rom. 16:1ff). The lack of proper meeting space for a larger group could exacerbate unity problems.

were dependent on the actual office. For apostles, "signs and wonders" marked their office (2 Cor. 12:12). For an elder, his personal example qualified him (1 Tim. 3:2ff). The prophet was qualified by his conduct while on a journey (Didache 13). Those who offered the prophet hospitality were expected to watch his actions.

There is no evidence that suggests that the church order arrived in a neatly fit package when the church began. Circumstances and time factor into the discussion. The ecclesiastical offices are hereby understood in the manner of H.E. Dana--"The proper method of a study of ecclesiology is a combination of the Scriptural, historical, and practical."⁹⁸ Because church roles did not develop in a vacuum, they should be studied with regard to internal needs, expansion activity of the church, and the issue of authority. The roles of Eph. 4:11-13 will be considered specifically because they are given the most treatment in New Testament times.

The *apostle*, from ἀπόστολος, means one sent, an ambassador, or messenger. It was used by the Twelve to designate those who had been with Jesus from the beginning (Acts 1:21-26). To this group, Paul saw himself as being added on the basis of his own encounter and revelation (1 Cor. 15:7,9, Gal. 2:1-9). Another group is called apostles, those who were colleagues of the Twelve and bore witness of Christ, included Barnabas (Acts 14:4, 14, 15:2), Andronicus, and Junia(s)⁹⁹ in Rom. 16:7. Other passages refer to the "apostles of the churches" (2 Cor. 8:23). It may be said that there were the Twelve and Paul, and then there were those associates of the original apostles, who could also be called apostles. To them, a third class of apostle might be those whom the Church has sent out such as *messengers* of the church.

The Didache recognizes the role of the apostle as still quite active, "Now concerning the apostles and prophets, deal with them as follows in accordance with the rule of the gospel. Let every apostle who comes to you be welcomed as if he were the Lord" (11.3-4).

The *prophet*, from προφήτης, in both the Old Testament and early Christianity, was one who tells events beforehand, or interprets God's will. Usually a prophet or prophetess foretells (Acts 2:9-10). A prophet possessed the charisma imparted by the Holy Spirit and was next in rank after the apostles (1 Cor. 12:28). His manner of speaking might come from the "impulse of sudden inspiration at the moment, as indicated in 1 Cor. 14:30"¹⁰⁰ Immediate revelation was connected with an exhortation.

An interesting thesis was put forward by Thomas Gillespie to see this role of a prophet as a preacher or theologian.¹⁰¹ He is partly convincing when dealing with 1 Corinthians, but leaves something to be said about the prophets in Acts whose role is exhortation (Acts 15:32) but also included foretelling events (Acts 11:27-28,21:10). The Didache gives explicit directions on how to treat a prophet (13.11).

The *evangelist* (εὐαγγελιστής) was one who declared the good news (Romans 10:15). "He was often not located in any particular place but traveled as a missionary to preach the gospel and establish

⁹⁸ H.E. Dana, *A Manual of Ecclesiology* (Kansas City: Central Seminary Press, 1944), 211.

⁹⁹ Some read Andronicus and Junia as "brother and sister or husband and wife. But some read "Junias," a man's name. James M. Stifler, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1960), p. 246. While scholars usually say that the term can go either way, if it was possible to determine that Paul was referring to a woman, there would be implications for ecclesiology.

¹⁰⁰ Spiro Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Iowa Falls: World Bible, 1992), 1245.

¹⁰¹ Thomas W. Gillespie, *The First Theologians: A Study in Early Christian Prophecy* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994).

churches”¹⁰² (Acts 21:8, Eph. 4:11, 2 Tim. 4:15). If prophets preached to believers, then it was the evangelists who preached to unbelievers. However, if an unbeliever hears a prophet, he/she can be equally convicted (1 Cor. 14:20, 24-25). These roles often overlap and rigidity in defining these roles is to be avoided.

A development that has affected research on ecclesiology has to do with the confusion about the role of a “deacon.” It is possible that, as there are three or four words to describe an elder, both the term *εὐαγγελιστῆς* and *διάκονος* describe the same post. The traditional understanding of Acts 6:1-7 and the transliteration of *διάκονος* into “deacon” has created some confusion. In a short time after the Seven were chosen, two of them clearly functioned in the role of evangelist (Acts 6:8ff, 21:8). Nowhere in the New Testament documents are the qualifications for an evangelist listed. How could such an authoritative role possess no known qualifications, and yet, have such strict qualifications assigned to the so-called traditional deacon (1 Tim. 3:8ff, 2 Tim. 4:2)?

Ignatius (A.D. 107/117) makes it very clear that the servants were entrusted with the faith: “Those who are deacons of the mysteries of Jesus Christ please everyone in every respect. For they are not merely “deacons of food and drink, but ministers of God’s church” (Tral 2). An evangelist is a servant of the church and was associated with preaching God's word.

The *shepherd* (*ποιμήν*) is one tending the flock (Acts 20:28, 1 Pet. 5:2). It signifies those who feed, cherish, and take care of the flock. The post of *elder*, from *πρεσβυτερος* applies to the same role during the Apostolic Age. An *elder* is thought of as older or more mature, and was considered a vital part of the church from the beginning (Titus 1:5, 1 Tim. 5:1, 1 Pet. 5:5). The role was almost certainly borrowed from the synagogue, signifying those aged leaders who had dignity and experience. The elders took part in managing the affairs of the community.

The shepherd appears to be the same person as the *bishop* (*ἐπισκοπος*). He is a watchman, superintendent, and overseer (See Acts 20:28, Titus 1:7). Zodhiates relates the variety of terms used to describe this position. He emphasizes that the term bishop relates to the “authority and duties” of the one who is so designated. The term elder relates to the “dignity” of the office. Perhaps, shepherd is the best term that designates the care-taking qualities required of the person who has this post (Ezek. 34:1-6).

The work titled 1 Clement relates the office of the bishop in a plural sense (1 Clement 44:1-6). The writer/s said that “the apostles likewise knew, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that there would be strife over the bishop’s office.” (44.1). In 1 Clement it is evident that this post was a guard to preserve the local church into the next age.

The *teacher* (*διδάσκαλος*) or instructor, an obscure role in church history, is a distinguished role seen in Acts 13:1, 1 Cor. 12:28, 29, Eph. 4:11, and James 3:1. Many of those holding offices in the Apostolic age include the function of teaching (Acts 20:28, 1 Tim. 2:7, 3:2, 2 Tim. 2:24). Because of the precise linguistic relationship difficulties of Eph. 4:11 there has been debate about the distinction between “pastors and teachers.” Some think that for this verse, it is one and the same.¹⁰³ But Zodhiates states, “There is a growing consensus that pastors are a sub-group of teachers. This seems to

¹⁰² Zodhiates, *CWSD*, 670.

¹⁰³ Gareth L. Reese, *New Testament History: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Acts* (Missouri: College Press, 1976), 454. Reese holds that elders are referred to by a "double term," pastors and teachers.

be true also for the expression ‘apostles and prophets.’”¹⁰⁴ The teacher seems to be neglected in the Apostolic Fathers, but the Didache mentions teachers as a corollary role with the prophets, bishops, and servants (15.1).

A complex issue arises when attempting to segregate appointed positions from those who are endowed with a gift from the Spirit for a given role. It is difficult to determine the difference between what God appoints (ordains, arranges, 1 Cor. 12:11, 18, 28; Ephesians 4:11), and what he gives as “gifts” (*an item of grace*, Romans 12:6ff). The roles of the teacher and prophet are specifically listed in both categories. An exhaustive examination of this issue would be helpful, but the fact remains that there is overlap between office and gift, and between one office and another.

In many given situations, a person who had one gift/office would operate in more than that one capacity in the absence of another qualified person. All of the roles were initially perceived as an aid in the maturing process of the church.

The offices within Apostolic Christianity were also seen as controls for the faith--to keep the church free from dissension and infection. Certainly, this was part of Paul's commands for the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:17-35) and his charge for Timothy, operating in his role as evangelist (2 Tim. 4:1-5).

Models of Ecclesiology

There are a number of possible “church” structures evolving from the New Testament. While there are hints of three models, monarchical, congregational, and presbyterial, found in the Apostolic Age, there may also have been combinations of the three.

Table 2. - Internal Church Structures

Region	Cultural Background	New Test./Fathers
Jerusalem (Judea)	Synagogue Ruler 10-12 elder chief elder, president	<u>Monarchical Elder</u>
Corinth (Greece)	Town Meeting	<u>Congregational</u>
Asia Minor (Turkey)	Roman Senatorial	<u>Presbyterian</u>
Ign. Antioch (Syria)	Ruler of Synagogues <i>archon</i> (ruler) over various elders who were head of the synagogues.	Monarchical (Episcopal)
Combinations	Other issues factor in. What if there is no individual prepared to be an elder (Titus 1:5)?	

¹⁰⁴ Zohaites, *CWSD*, 450.

The situation at Jerusalem with James fits nicely into the monarchical pattern. This may have been a unique situation. The Corinthian congregation seemed to represent the open forum of a town meeting form, even in spite of the powerful presences who had labored there. The multiple independent parties and absence of people named for specified offices that were so badly needed indicate that the church was without a strong presence of leadership. Asia Minor, from both the Ephesian letter and the pastorals, seem to be governed by a plurality of elders. Churches were governed by elders who were to direct the affairs of the Church. These three locations represent three configurations that are part of the backdrop of the inquiry into the Sub-Apostolic period.

The Tunnel Period seems to include a new model as Ignatius' Antioch followed a scheme more monarchical than even Jerusalem utilized. There are reasons that will be covered later as to why a bishop in Antioch would view this office as such an eminent position. Paul Meier suggests one correlation between the ruler of the corporate synagogues of Antioch and the bishop of Antioch.

The Jewish community at Antioch seems to have been presided over by some chief officer, whom Josephus calls the "ruler" (*archon*) of the Antiochene Jews. Meeks-Wilken suggest that he was the head of the council of elders (*gerousiarchos*). The elders, in turn, were the representatives of the various synagogues in the city and in the suburb of Daphne. The council of elders (*gerousia*) would thus be the governing body for all Antiochene Jews. One wonders whether the structure of one ruler presiding over a body of elders might have provided a remote model for the one bishop (*episkopos*) presiding over a council of elders (*presbyterion*) in Christian Antioch at the time of Ignatius.¹⁰⁵

Meier's suspicion could be correct. It appears at times that the form of government encountered even in the New Testament seemed to correlate to the models most familiar to the members of the local community. This observation, if correct, suggests the practical nature of ecclesiology and the fact that it is impossible to find support for only one model for all churches for all time. On the other hand, the other extreme would be that the church should mimic whatever form of institution it sees in society, which could lead the church into dictatorship in one place and anarchy in another.¹⁰⁶

It is not surprising, as the chart of internal structures might suggest, that the churches of a given location seemed to imitate some elements of the local community structure. If the best conception for *ekklesia* / church, as Giles suggests, is "community,"¹⁰⁷ and the believers were comprised of a called-out group, then the new constituents would, unless taught otherwise, operate with the same organizing structures but not social rules as they did in the larger society to which they belonged. If the Twelve found no exact form for the church at large, which appears to have been the case, then the offices that did originate with the apostles (bishop, prophet, and evangelist, etc.) would have been used according to the needs of the given location. The overriding principle at work would have been to prepare and mature the people of God (Eph. 4:12-13).

It became obvious that both the offices and the models of government were very elastic across the Tunnel Period. The roles and models that originated in the apostolic period were diversely

John P. Meier and Raymond Brown, *Antioch and Rome*, 31.

¹⁰⁶ Raymond Brown has suggested that the cultural backdrop of Roman imperialism be used to justify Roman Catholicism, Brown and Meier, *AR*, 172ff.

¹⁰⁷ Giles, *WOEITC*, 243.

appropriated from region to region. This diversity could be traced back to the apostolic period.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE REGIONS

In the previous chapter it became evident, as far as current data permits, that common Christian forms appear to have been the first to arrive in each of the major regions around the Mediterranean. The current investigation is in search of certainty and, therefore, lack of data for some regions confined the investigation to areas that have the clearest testimony. A “testimony” will refer to an observation characterizing Christianity for a given time and situation that is instrumental in answering the unity question. As discussed in chapter 2, the regions that allow for reasonable testimonies to be established are: Palestine, Syria, western Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy. In some of these cases only a leading city has testimony. Beginning with Judea and moving toward Italy the investigation obviously becomes a study of the northern regions bordering the Mediterranean.

Thomas Robinson believed that an investigation in search of Christian origins should be weighed in favor of where “the superiority of the materials”¹⁰⁸ will support the best reconstructions. With this in mind, the gaps of documentation in the majority of regions exclude trajectories in the strictest sense. Ephesus stands alone for evidence that emerges to represent a more continuous pattern. However, even with gaps of documentation vestiges of evidence from the Tunnel Period have survived and landmarks for normative Christianity can be determined in some of the other regions. In each region brief snapshots serve as primary markers for understanding Christian development. There are three types of portraits that can be pieced together by the evidence. (1) A *trajectory*,¹⁰⁹ a series of data enabling a chronological history. This requires that silent periods be brief or non-existent. (2) An *explosion*, a portion of data that accounts for a sudden change in regional history. The Pentecost experience of Acts 2 would represent an “explosion.” (3) A *testimony*, isolated details accounting for the status and process of the form for a limited period. The testimony is the major focus of this investigation.

Robinson, who critiqued not only Bauer’s investigation, but also Koester on his conclusions about Christian Gnosticism in Egypt and Brown on his analysis of Christianity at Rome, rendered an invaluable insight relevant for this investigation. He called attention to the question that arises in determining how a document is most helpful in analyzing a Christian form: should the focus be on the writer and his location, or on the reader and their location?

One might wonder how much we can learn about the character of primitive Christianity in Rome from letters written to Rome by persons who never even visited the churches there, let alone worked in them. Yet, that is precisely the case with Paul’s letter to the Romans and with Ignatius’s letter. These letters will show us considerably more about Paul and Ignatius than about the Romans.¹¹⁰

He also pointed to the reverse situation where a document was written expressly to address a situation at another location and may reveal little or nothing about Christianity at the location of the writer. Hence, an awareness of the purpose, genre and circumstances of the documents themselves is

¹⁰⁸ Robinson, *BTE*, 59.

¹⁰⁹ For a discussion of “trajectories” and “explosions,” See Robinson, *The Bauer Thesis*, 139-141. He believes that the “golden calf” of the last few years for scholars has been the notion that trajectories can be identified for each region. Robinson cautions against this; however, for Ephesus and Western Asia Minor, he is very positive that this area can provide fruitful discussion regarding the development of early Christianity.

¹¹⁰ Robinson, *BTE*, 82. Also read his critique of Koester’s analysis of Egyptian Christianity (60-64).

crucial to identifying a testimony for a region.

To evaluate the independent regional testimonies of Christianity in the search for unanimity, four characteristics will be purposely searched for that fall under the general category of unity.

1. A singularity of belief using Apostolic *kerygma* and *didache* as a starting point.
2. An association with other forms of common Christianity.
3. A continuity of fundamental practices such as baptism and the Eucharist.
4. A solidarity of ecclesiastic objective.

To avoid the temptation of proof-texting ancient sources for evidence of uniformity, the method of historical investigation as already stated, is to examine the regions for what the testimony of those regions naturally suggest. After determining what the character of the testimony that each region offers the modern reader, then the four-point inquiry will be more appropriate.

It is not the purpose of this study to press for unnatural or exact unity between landmark testimonies. It is also impossible to conceive of mirror-image Christian forms even within common Christianity. However, if even in the Apostolic age there was an understanding of different appropriations of the gospel for different peoples, deference for different foundations of others, and the obvious fact that errors would occur even among the premier churches, a generous margin is allowed for in looking for signs of singularity of belief, association, continuity, and solidarity of objective in the Tunnel Period.

Singular core beliefs were identified in the discussion of the preaching and teaching of the apostles. The *association* with other Christian forms will be observed by the comparison of references made to other congregations and personalities within landmark testimonies. A *continuity* of practice will be evident in the observation of the two most common practices--baptism and the Eucharist. Baptism occurred as a confessional response to the kerygma and the Eucharist occurred more or less along a 1 Corinthians 11 understanding. The *ecclesiastic objective* is that the church/churches were to preach the gospel to and disciple (instruct) all people of every distinction.

It is obvious that comprehensive testimony for all four characteristics, and for all five regions, is not possible; however, this is not a serious impairment to this investigation. What is lacking in primary evidence for a region can still possibly be discovered for that region by the way a Christianity form associates itself with earlier churches and documents or relates with churches in other regions where there is a more complete testimony. Also, there may be evidence of a consensus on a matter that was not important enough to require a direct treatment.

In light of the criteria of "unity," it is important to note that a second century pagan perceived that dissension within Christian formed quite early. The critic of Christianity, Celsus, when reporting on Christianity in the East, referred to the orthodox as "those of the multitude," or of the "great" church.¹¹¹ Celsus commented on the nature and origins of division.

When they were beginning they were few and were of one mind; but since they have spread to

¹¹¹ Celsus, *True Doctrine*, 5. 59. 61, preserved in Origen's *Against Celsus*. See Gary T. Burke, SC, "Water Bauer and Celsus: The Shape of Late Second-Century Christianity," 1-7.

become a multitude, they are divided and rent asunder, and each wants to have his own party. For they wanted this from the beginning.¹¹²

Celsus was against Christianity as a whole, but he clearly recognized the threat to his paganism, the leading branch of Christianity. He acknowledged that the church began among the Jews and that the church believed in the physical resurrection of Jesus Christ. On closer inspection of *True Doctrine*, only normative Christianity can fill the large shoes that Celsus describes. However, his critique of Christian divisiveness illustrates the importance of the issues raised by this investigation. With the increase of division and parties as the church spread, was there an authentic witness of the original vision in each region that maintained the form and spirit of unity with itself and with common forms from other regions? For obvious reasons, both the eventual canon of the New Testament and the assurance of Salvation History are at stake.

Palestine (Jerusalem)

Christianity in Judea testifies to the almost ceaseless existence of a remnant. Even in light of poor documentation on the belief and practice of the church at Jerusalem, the evidence suggests that a contingency of Jewish Christians representing its earliest form continued throughout most of the Tunnel Period. This was due, in part, to the passion of witnesses to preserve the faith. Jerusalem remained on the hearts and minds of Christians throughout the Post-Apostolic period even though adverse circumstances prevented the church in Jerusalem from exercising significant leadership after the earlier siege and destruction of Jerusalem.

The name Jerusalem is referenced hundreds of times in the second-century Church Fathers. Despite this, it is rarely with reference to the status of the Post-Apostolic church in this city. The very name Jerusalem was affectionately viewed as the home center of the faith. It was firm in the mind of ancient Christians that *it all began in Jerusalem*. Even the apostle Paul displayed such a sentiment in his desire to return to Jerusalem even against the Spirit's counsel (Acts 21:4,12-15).

For obvious reasons, the suffering and resurrection of Jesus would be the vital memory of Christians in Jerusalem for a faith which developed around their community's recollection. However, Raymond Brown places a high emphasis on the first Christian Pentecost as the crest of a new beginning. It wasn't until this Pentecost that we see the culmination of all that the prophets said would be fulfilled.¹¹³

The Pentecost scene in Acts 2:1-12 is fully intelligible only when it is understood against the background of God's giving the covenant on Sinai (which was the salvation-history meaning of the Pentecost feast for many Jews). The common goods of the Jerusalem church and the distribution of them to the needy reflect the desert ideal of Duet 15:4 that there would be no poor in Israel. Even the designation "church" (ekklesia) echoes the Septuagint of Duet 23:3,8 which uses that term for "assembly of the Lord" in the desert.¹¹⁴

¹¹² Celsus, *TD*, 3.10.

¹¹³ On this day many signs and wonders were performed. Philo *De Decalogo* 42, "A voice sounded with fire coming from heaven, filling all with fire; and the flames changed to articulated voices which were entrusted to hearers." The midrashic interpretations of Exodus 19:16-19, 20:18-19 are evident in this passage where God was revealing himself to a large audience. See B. Noack, "The Day of Pentecost in jubilees, Qumran, and Acts," *Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute* 1 (1962) 73-95.

¹¹⁴ Meier, *Antioch and Rome*, 153.

If Brown is correct, this watershed event, which first made Jerusalem the place where “The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem” (Isa. 2:3, Mic. 4:2, Joel 2:28-32) would be seen for all time as a key beginning point. This day would stand as the end of a process in which God, once for all, “entrusted” the faith to his people (Jude :3). It was also in Jerusalem where he subsequently began to testify to it “by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will” (Hebrews 2:4).

Christians After the Fall of Jerusalem

What would become of this fountainhead of the faith during the Tunnel Period? The death of James and the tumultuous events from 66 leading to the siege of Jerusalem in 70 changed Christianity in Judea forever. When terror struck the city, the Romans were probably not able to discern a zealous Jew who worshipped the Christ from a Zealot who stirred revolt. It is usually understood that the majority of the Christians had left sometime near the revolt and the fall of the city. Eusebius indicated that the reason for the departure was part persecution and part revelation.

But the rest of the apostles, who had been incessantly plotted against with a view to their destruction, and had been driven out of the land of Judea, went unto all nations to preach the Gospel, relying upon the power of Christ, who had said to them, "Go ye and make disciples of all the nations in my name." But the people of the church in Jerusalem had been commanded by a revelation, vouchsafed to approved men there before the war, to leave the city and to dwell in a certain town of Perea called Pella.¹¹⁵

There is no way to ascertain when the Christians returned, yet Eusebius' *Proof of the Gospel*¹¹⁶ disclosed a hint about the relation of the Church to Judaism at this point. “And this Mount of Olives is said to be over against Jerusalem, because it was established by God after the fall of Jerusalem, instead of the old earthly Jerusalem.”¹¹⁷ At first it is not obvious what Eusebius referred to. From a casual reading of the lengthier section of Eusebius' *Proof*, VI, 18, it appears that an actual Christian meeting place existed on this mount. He wrote, “The Mount of Olives is therefore literally opposite to Jerusalem and to the east of it, but also the Holy Church of God, and the mount on which it is founded.” This church that met there was contemporary with Eusebius; however, Ernest Martin believes that this section of Eusebius presupposes that the post A.D. 70 Christians met on this mount.

These references of Eusebius show that the Jewish Christians after their return from Pella . . . Right after A.D. 70, homed in on only one area in the environs of Jerusalem as being geographically important to them. That was the southern summit of the Mount of Olives.¹¹⁸

While Martin was more concerned about relocating the traditional Golgotha site to Mt. Olives, and even W.H.C. Frend is somewhat convinced on this matter, the real value of Martin's research is his investigation on the return of Jerusalem Christians after the fall. It is most evident that they were, by then, a very separate group from the Jews of Jerusalem.

¹¹⁵ Eusebius, *EH*, 3.5.7-9.

¹¹⁶ Eusebius, *Proof of the Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981).

¹¹⁷ Eusebius, *Proof*, 6.18. See Heb. 12:12-13. An unusual reference to Jesus' suffering outside the city gate is cited by Ernest Martin as one piece of evidence among many that places the Mount of Olives as the original place of Christ' execution. See his *Secrets of Golgotha* (Alhambra: A.S.K., 1988).

¹¹⁸ Ernest Martin, *Secrets of Golgotha*, 87.

Hegesippus was Eusebius' source for the condition of Christianity in Judea after the fall. Symeon, son of Clopas and Mary, had already replaced James as bishop of Jerusalem. Sometime between the departure to Pella mentioned by Eusebius, and sporadic persecutions, Christians returned to Jerusalem. Eusebius referred to challenges that the Christians encountered under Trajan's rule.

After Nero and Domitian, under the emperor whose times I am now describing, there is a firm tradition that persecution broke out against us sporadically in one city at a time as a result of popular risings. In the course of it Symeon, son of Clopas, the second to be appointed bishop of Jerusalem, as already stated, is known to have ended his life by martyrdom.¹¹⁹

Symeon was "one of the vast number of the circumcision who by then believed in Christ,"¹²⁰ according to Eusebius. The Church at this time was increasingly becoming a Gentile church, and more grim¹²¹ interpretations of the meaning of the fall of Jerusalem began to appear during the Post-Apostolic period. The interpretations usually centered on God's wrath against the Jews for rejecting Jesus. The Jewish Christians associated with Jerusalem and the common Christology were highly regarded by other Christians. There were Jewish Christians who, for one reason or another, either rejected the virgin birth of Christ or his pre-existence.¹²² These Ebionites, as they were called, have obscure origins.

Not only did Symeon live into Trajan's reign, but another descendant "of one of the brothers of the Lord named Jude lived into the same reign, after bravely declaring their faith in Christ ... before Domitian himself."¹²³ Hegesippus is cited in Eusebius as relating further information.

Consequently they came and presided over every church, as being martyrs and members of the Lord's family, and since profound peace came to every church they survived till the reign of Trajan Caesar--till the son of the Lord's uncle, the aforesaid Simon son of Clopas, was similarly informed against by heretical sects . . . [he was] tortured for days on end, he bore a martyr's witness.¹²⁴

The *desposynoi*¹²⁵ emerged in Judea as a class of Christians who preserved the heritage of the Messiah for the Jews in a transitional period. Their mere existence seemed to reflect a unique role in which an authoritative witness to Jews in the homeland could survive both the tragedy in Jerusalem and the final break between Jews and Jewish Christians in the synagogue. No matter how large or small, the evidence suggests that a remnant of Jewish Christians continued to testify in their homeland through most of the Tunnel Period.

How does the existence of a remnant under unfortunate circumstances help this investigation? The testimony indicates that God worked salvation and caused his remnant in Jerusalem to pass the torch, so to speak, on to others. Who was better equipped to preserve Jesus' dream after the deaths of his apostles and brother James but his nephews, other relatives in Judea, and original hearers of the apostles? Justin Martyr used a "remnant theology," in effect, to explain to Trypho how, in the past,

¹¹⁹ Eusebius, *EH*, 3.32.

¹²⁰ *Ibid*, 3.35.

¹²¹ BY "grim" I mean more rigid and severe anti-Jewish interpretations.

¹²² *Ibid*, 3.27.

¹²³ *Ibid* 3,32.

¹²⁴ *Ibid*. 3.32.

¹²⁵ Eusebius I.7.14. A term used to designate Jesus' family and thought to have originated with Clement of Alexandria.

God testified to past generations, although he is not clear on what he means by “generation.”

.. and that certain persons should be sent by Him [the risen Christ] into every nation of men to proclaim these facts, and that rather the men of Gentile race should believe in Him. And this was foretold before His coming; at first, five thousand years; then, Three thousand; then, two thousand; then, one thousand; and, lastly, eight hundred; for, according to the succession of generations, there existed a succession of different prophets.¹²⁶

The generation of original witnesses passed on. There would be no more immediate family members associated with seeing or hearing a direct testimony relating to Jesus. Would there be more witnesses in the ensuing peril for the church in Jerusalem? Before looking further for an answer to this question, a look at Eusebius’ summary of Hegesippus analysis of the church of the Post-Apostolic period is helpful. This comment comes directly after the section discussing the fate of Symeon.

In describing the situation at that time Hegesippus goes on to say that until then the Church had remained a virgin, pure and uncorrupted, since those who were trying to corrupt the wholesome standard of the saving message, if such there were, lurked somewhere under cover of darkness. But when the sacred band of apostles had in various ways reached the end of their life, and the generation of those privileged to listen with their own ears to the divine wisdom has passed on, then godless error began to take shape, through the deceit of false teachers, who now that none of the apostles was left threw off the mask and attempted to counter the preaching of the truth by preaching the knowledge falsely so called.¹²⁷

This statement, like the comments from Celsus, strikes at the heart of where this entire investigation is concerned. The generation following the original hearers of the earliest eyewitnesses would begin around A.D. 110-120. Therefore, what followed from this point on was a faith-based on tradition in the most ordinary sense. By the time of Hadrian, Christians in Jerusalem were losing their historical advantage. The possibility that many mainstream Christians had either vacated Jerusalem, lost their lives or become heretical during the Bar Kochba revolt also exists. Nevertheless, salvation history was not endangered. Evidence suggests that a remnant in Jerusalem continued, not to mention all the forms of Christianity that were thriving in other far-away places.

Christianity in Jerusalem After the Bar Kochba Revolt

Any revolt involving Jews could be a dangerous situation for the Christians. By the time of the Bar Kochba revolt where some 580,000 Jews lost their lives Christianity was known as a distinctive religion. Bar Kochba, according to Justin Martyr, “the ringleader of the Jewish revolt, commanded that Christians alone should be dragged to cruel tortures, unless they would deny Jesus to be Christ and blaspheme him.”¹²⁸ Justin also said to pagan readers that the Jews were “killing and illtreating us, as you do, whenever they have the power, as you may well believe.”¹²⁹ Justin seemed well-acquainted with the struggle between the church in Jerusalem and the Jews. Justin portrayed the persecuted Christians in Judea as believing in Jesus who was,

born of a virgin, growing up to man's estate, and healing every disease and every sickness, and

¹²⁶ Justin, *Dialogue*, 31.

¹²⁷ Eusebius, *EH*, 3.32.

¹²⁸ Justin, *First Apology*, 31.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

raising the dead, and being hated, and unrecognised, and crucified, and dying, and rising again, and ascending into heaven, and being, and being called, the Son of God.¹³⁰

In the *Dialogue With Trypho, the Jew*, Trypho never appealed to an argument of multiple Christian sects in order to challenge Justin. His main contentions were that Christians did not obey the law of Moses, and that he could not believe in the resurrection. The original debate took place in the late 130s¹³¹ and both contenders seemed well acquainted with the form of Christianity emerging from Jerusalem having spent considerable time on Palestinian soil. The Christian teacher, as an argument in his favor, openly invites Trypho to visit the city.

. . . there is now another testament, and another law has gone forth from Zion . . . Come then with me, all who fear God, who wish to see the good of *Jerusalem*. Come, let us go to the light of the Lord; for He has liberated His people, the house of Jacob. Come, all nations; let us gather ourselves together at *Jerusalem*, no longer plagued by war for the sins of her people.¹³²

There must have been a reprieve for the Christians in Jerusalem who represented the “law gone forth from Zion.” Both the city of Jerusalem and its church were evidently in a better spirit in the period following the revolt and the publication of the debate in (or around) 135-155. An important issue in this unity investigation remains. Were Jewish Christians in Jerusalem practicing Jewish customs in this later period?

This can be answered in part from Justin’s debate with Trypho. Justin’s attitude toward Jewish Christians who continue to practice the customs of Judaism is in question. He indirectly answers it by telling Trypho how he would view Jews who continued to follow the ordinances of Moses.

And Trypho again inquired, “But if someone, knowing that this is so, after he recognizes that this man is Christ, and has believed in and obeys Him, wishes, however, to observe these [institutions], will he be saved?

I said, in my opinion, Trypho, such a one will be saved.¹³³

Justin saw this as a matter of “weak-mindedness,” but in no way a hindrance to fellowship in which he said, “we ought to join ourselves to such, and associate with them in all things as kinsmen and brethren.”¹³⁴ He held this position under the twofold clause that the Christian did not persuade others to live this way nor view orthopraxy as anything more than for “virtue” (not for salvation). This concession by Justin may indicate that as long as issues relating to salvation/justification were not in jeopardy, fellowship was fully extended. Nonetheless, Justin admitted that some Christians believed that such people “will not be saved” and he said that “I do not agree with them.”¹³⁵

It appears that there were believing Jews who continued to observe the rites as salvific, Jews who did so as custom, and even Jewish Christians who did not observe them at all. No uniform policy

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Justin, *Dialogue*, 47.

¹³² Justin, *Dialogue*, 24. This section is part of the original debate since it is sandwiched between sections in which Trypho is directly responding to Justin’s belief.

¹³³ Ibid, 47.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

towards this area can be observed; Jews who continued to obey the law for reasons of salvation were usually Ebionites and were considered just outside the fringe of normative Christianity.

There must have been several tensions relating to the various positions of early Christians from the East in regard to benefits of the law. Notwithstanding these tensions, a remnant of Jewish Christians continued to exist who preserved their understanding of native Christianity from an earlier period and were respected by Gentile Christians. Not much is known about their beliefs but the best indicators would suggest an association with the Jesus portrayed by Matthew, key developments cited in Acts, James and the other *desposynoi*, and a newly separated community. If Justin correctly perceived Christianity in Jerusalem, a vestige of Christians continued to hold the faith in Hadrian's reign even after the deaths of James and Symeon.

Italy (Rome)

Evidence for Christianity in Rome during the Tunnel Period is quite varied. This evidence includes letters entitled 1 Peter and 1 Clement, a letter from a Syrian bishop, Ignatius, a peculiar document *The Shepherd of Hermas* and portions of Justin's *Apology* and *Dialogue*. In addition, the Church Fathers, Irenaeus and Tertullian, disclosed key events concerning the church at Rome. One secular testimony for Christianity in ancient Rome comes from the Roman historian, Tacitus.¹³⁶

Tacitus clearly viewed the "multitude" of Christians as a religion separate from Judaism. This early distinction may reflect a break in Christian-Jewish relations related to the expulsions of Jews from Rome in relation to a controversy over a "Chrestus" in A.D. 49/50.¹³⁷ This is not certain. Some eleven to fifteen Jewish synagogues had existed in first-century Rome¹³⁸ representing about ten-thousand Jews during Nero's reign, a small number considering one in thirteen people in the Roman empire were Jews.¹³⁹ The clash in A.D. 49/50 led to the expulsion of many Jews and the Christians thereby attempted to gain separate recognition. This would give them a good footing during a period when being a Jew was a disadvantage. However, by the time the Christians become a multitude in A.D. 63, Tacitus reports that they became Nero's "scapegoat."

First Peter does not indicate much on which to speculate about Rome, if indeed it was written from Rome. However, the apostle is very keen on issues related to difficult relationships with authorities, religious opponents, and pagan antagonists. And while Hebrews was used at Rome, it seems more fitting for an audience in the East that was more closely associated with the temple, not the synagogue. First Clement was the first source with a clearer date that provides insight into the fabric of normative Christian belief in Rome during the Tunnel Period.

1 Clement: "Advice" From Rome

William R. Farmer has pointed out that there was a "rule of tradition" in the thinking of

¹³⁶ Tacitus described how Nero handled the blame for the fire that burned all or part of ten of Rome's fourteen districts. "To suppress this rumor Nero created scapegoats. He punished with every refinement of cruelty the notoriously depraved group who were popularly called Christians. The originator of the group, Christ, had been executed in the reign of Tiberius by the procurator, Pontius Pilate . . . Nero had self-acknowledged members of this sect arrested. Then, on their own information, large numbers were condemned—not so much for their arson as for their hatred of the human race . . . (*Annals* 15.44).

¹³⁷ See the comments on Acts 18:2-3 from Brown/Meier, *AR*, 100. Also Suetonius, *Claudius* 25.4.

¹³⁸ H.J. Leon, *The Jews of Ancient Rome* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1960), 136-66.

¹³⁹ G. Edmundson, *The Church in Rome in the First Century* (Bampton Lectures; London/NYC: Longmans, Green, 1913), 7. The population of the Roman world was about 54-60 million.

Clement of Rome that corresponded to the later *regula fidei* ("rule of faith").

Thus, we see that 1 Clement exemplifies the *regula fidei*, right down to the catechist's right and duty, after embellishing and pointing up the conventional topics of the *regula*, to bring forth his own particular application.¹⁴⁰

Clement saw Isaiah's Suffering Servant passage as a precise prophecy concerning Jesus. He quotes this passage at great length in 1 Clement 16 and applied it directly to Jesus. This passage clearly shaped his understanding of the atonement as he alluded to in 21.6--"Let us fear the Lord Jesus Christ, whose blood was given for us.

While Farmer is correct in connecting 1 Clement with views consistent with the "rules" of others, there are only two passages that easily transfer to the form of a "rule." One of them was used by Clement of Alexandria where he opened up his *Stromata* with Clement of Rome's mini-article of faith (1.1).

"Let us conform to the glorious and holy rule of our tradition;
indeed, let us note what is good and pleasing and
what is acceptable in the sight of him who made us.
Let us fix our eyes on the blood of Christ and
understand how precious it is to the Father, because,
being poured out for our salvation,
it won for the whole world the grace of repentance (7.2-4).

The following passage from Rome's correspondence with Corinth agrees with normative Christianity and expresses easily discernible tenets of faith.

The apostles received the gospel for us from the Lord Jesus Christ;
Jesus the Christ was sent forth from God.
So then Christ is from God, and the apostles are from Christ.
Both, therefore, came of the will of God in good order,
Having received their orders and being fully assured
by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ
and full of faith in the word of God,
they went forth with the firm assurance that the Holy Spirit gives,
preaching the good news that the kingdom of God was about to come. (42.1-3)

Space does not permit a full explication of 1 Clement, a correspondence of "advice" (58.2) from the church of Rome to the church at Corinth relating to an issue of a schism. Nevertheless, it is obvious up front that this lengthy letter includes many quotations and allusions to NT documents that indicate its normative association. For example, 1 Clement 17.1 references Heb. 11:37, 36.1-5 quotes other passages in Hebrews, 24.5 quotes Mark 4:3 and parallel passages in other Gospels, 46.8 quotes Matt. 26:24 and/or Luke 17:1-2, 47.1-3 references 1 Corinthians 1 and 3, and 49.5 quotes 1 Pet. 4:8.

Up until this point the church at Rome seems to have seen itself in a continuity with a Petrine

¹⁴⁰ William R. Farmer, *Galatians and the Second-Century Development of the Regula Fidei* (SC V4 N3, Fall 1984) 152.

and Pauline legacy. 1 Clement 2.4 refers to “all the brotherhood,” a broad statement in light of all the formal heresies that Bauer supposed to be successfully spreading through the ancient world. Considering that Clement’s lengthy letter is not doctrinally oriented, and he put little effort in qualifying brotherhood in terms of belief, this would indicate that the schism in the Corinthian church was personality related and local to that congregation. This letter was not pressing for a new belief, and makes extensive use of the Old Testament as a foundation for its teaching and directives.

While data on practices such as the Eucharist and baptism are lacking, Clement esteems NT literature in which these practices are quite clear--1 Corinthians and 1 Peter. The ecclesiastical mission is clear in Clement's reference to well known and unknown martyrs. In 5.5-6.2, he commended to the church at Corinth Peter and Paul who both had “given his testimony,” (5.3,7) and who “taught righteousness to the whole world,” and certain women who endured “tortures but they safely reached the goal in the race of the faith” (6.2).

The church at Rome, as far as evidence allows, indicates a general Apostolicity of belief, a matter-of-course association with other established churches, an assumed continuity with past forms, and a solidarity of ecclesiastical objective. It is characteristics such as these that are probably the reason Bauer perceived the church at Rome as the driving force of “orthodoxy.”¹⁴¹ He wrote, “only in the case of Rome can we state confidently that orthodoxy possessed the upper hand.”¹⁴² Robinson, while associating Christianity at Rome with the historical mainstream form, cautions historians from drawing conclusions on the radical or conservative tendencies of the Church in its relation to Judaism.¹⁴³

Especially in light of Bauer’s concession, the testimony of Christianity in Rome provides sufficient evidence to conclude the establishment of normative Christianity throughout the Tunnel Period. But there is more to be said about the testimony of Rome.

Rome's Early Position

Further testimony for the church at Rome corroborates with the previous conclusions of the character of the Roman church, but an additional reality had already emerged. Brown believes that the church at Rome saw itself as a continuation of the Jerusalem legacy.¹⁴⁴ In other words, from an early point it undertook the challenge in filling a leadership void in the Sub-Apostolic church.

From the opening line of 1 Clement, it becomes apparent that the advice of the church at Rome was sought out--“we acknowledge that we have been somewhat slow in giving attention to the matters in dispute among you” (1.1). After the answer was given, the church wrote, “We have written enough to you, brothers, about the things which pertain to our religion and are particularly helpful for a virtuous life” (62.1). The longstanding members of the church at Corinth sought help from the Roman church. Why?

The answer may lie in the letter itself. In advising members in Corinth on how to take their proper position, Clement wrote “Not all are prefects or tribunes, . . . but each in his own rank executes the orders given by the emperor and the commander. The great cannot exist without the small, nor the

¹⁴¹ Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy*, 229.

¹⁴² *Ibid*, 193.

¹⁴³ Robinson, *BTE*, 77-81. By "radical" he refers to the more confrontational approach of Stephen and Paul. By conservative, he is alluding to the church in Jerusalem’s sensitivity toward Jews.

¹⁴⁴ Meier and Brown, *Antioch and Rome*, 153.

small without the great” (39.2-3). While the argument was not stated regarding Rome’s acclaim, the idea of one community looking to a pillar community is quite compatible with this philosophy.¹⁴⁵ The letter used this reasoning to encourage order within the church at Corinth; however, such logic could also explain why one church was a leader within a region. This status was, tentatively, compatible with Thessalonica’s standing in Macedonia (1 Thess. 1:8, 2:14). However, little insight is provided in the NT or in Clement’s day as to how the churches received their status. Speculation about status arising from a church’s strength, size, legacy, and other factors could be reasoned out, but there are no clear answers.

The letter from Ignatius to the Romans stood out from his other letters. He freely advised four of the churches, based on what he learned from their representatives. For Ephesus he wrote with unusual regard and yet he was willing to advise them in perhaps a peer manner. However, with Rome he did not advise at all but asked that they not intervene in his martyrdom (2.2, 6.2), and he gave them numerous compliments. His deference for the church at Rome is seen in 3:1. Ignatius praised the Roman church, because though “you have never envied anyone; you taught others.” He then wished that the “instructions which you [Romans] issue when teaching disciples will remain in force.” Ignatius, a possible leader over much of Syrian Christianity, seems to have seen Rome as a guiding church.

The Shepherd of Hermas does not contribute much to the discussion of the testimony of the pillar role of Rome, nor detract from the orthodox posture of Rome, although it has some aberrant ideas. Justin, arriving at Rome sometime after A.D. 137, provided the next picture of the church at Rome.

Justin was martyred around A.D. 166. He told the prefect who interrogated him that “I am now living in Rome for the second time.”¹⁴⁶ If his first two apologies date around A.D. 150-155, it is safe to suggest that his experiences in both Ephesus and Rome would have shaped his knowledge.¹⁴⁷ In his later *Dialogue*, in which he admitted that he would place interpolations at a later time, it has even delved beyond the debate with Trypho into a side comment about the heretics, Marcion and Valentinus, who were deposed after the original debate. These works were used by Irenaeus and others to fight against heresies. Justin’s entire reason for being at Rome, seemingly by the mid- to late-140s, was to face the two leading heretics on behalf of Rome.

What I am about to demonstrate on secondary testimony is that Rome was not in a lead position of Christianity because of its own testimony or assumption of power, even though Rome seemed to have stepped into the gap and given directives to more than one place. Rome had this position because near the end of the Tunnel Period a battle over essential doctrines was brought to Rome. Why was it brought there? No one can be sure, but we know that heretics wanted to try their chances there. What was about to ensue was two doctrinal contests--one antinomian, the other, Gnostic.

The Beginning of Formal Orthodoxy

As Rome was about to encounter two effective heretics, its own stature was becoming more obvious. Justin Martyr came to Rome and faced the challenge of novel Christian forms. A small school

¹⁴⁵ The fuller discussion from Clement is 39.1-38.4.

¹⁴⁶ *Martyrdom of the Holy Martyrs*, 2.

¹⁴⁷ This conclusion assumes that the sole reference from Eusebius is correct on Justin’s whereabouts before coming to Rome. Even if he was wrong, and there is no reason to doubt him, Justin otherwise seems to have come from the east.

of Justin was established in Rome, if it can be called that, in which he undertook the quest of explicating and defending Christian origins. It is generally held that he even wrote a treatise against Marcion that was used by Irenaeus and Tertullian.¹⁴⁸ The research that Justin underwent, combined with his previous experience in Ephesus, made him a great ally in Rome.

Valentinus was in Rome for about thirty years (136-165).¹⁴⁹ His break with the church in Rome was at the very beginning of this period. Tertullian said that he at once sought out the office of the bishop.¹⁵⁰ He failed in this attempt, was confronted concerning his teachings, gathered his disciples which he had been making in secret, and left the church. In the process it became evident that he was at great odds with the church. According to Irenaeus, "they disregard the order and the connection of the Scriptures, and so far as in them, lies, dismember and destroy the truth."¹⁵¹ The actual error was Christian Gnosticism. Valentinus set up churches and, according to second century Christians, his was the largest and most powerful of all sects.

Marcion of Pontus was a wealthy shipmaster.¹⁵² His father was a bishop in Sinope and by this time Christianity in northern Turkey should have been rich in both literature and tradition. In his pre-canonical period of Christian roots he became a collector of Christian documents including a so-called letter of Paul's to the Laodiceans. Marcion eventually went to Rome where he gave a great gift¹⁵³ and shortly thereafter tried to obtain the lead position in the church. He was eventually discovered for what he was--an antinomian who believed in two Gods, a creator-god who was evil and an alien god.¹⁵⁴

That Marcion was a trailblazer in the ancient Christian world is an understatement.¹⁵⁵ He not only was among the first to launch a movement with set beliefs and canon, his own discoveries of Christian origins surpassed any surviving evidence. Justin relates,

And there is Marcion, a man of Pontus, who is even at this day alive, and teaching his disciples to believe in some other god greater than the Creator. And he, by the aid of the devils, has caused many of every nation to speak blasphemies, and to deny that God is the maker of this universe, and to assert that some other being, greater than He, has done greater works. All who take their opinions from these men, are, as we before said, (5) called Christians; just as also those who do not agree with the philosophers in their doctrines, have yet in common with them the name of philosophers given to them.¹⁵⁶

Even though Justin was the first to write a work on Marcion, only this description in the *Apology* survives. In Marcion's pioneering spirit, he created the first New Testament canon with his, *The*

¹⁴⁸ Eusebius, *EH*, 4.18. Eusebius refers to a book by Justin against Marcion.

¹⁴⁹ Lebreton and Zeiller, *The History of the Primitive Church* VII, 627. See Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, III, iv,3.

¹⁵⁰ Tertullian, *Against Valentinus*, 4.

¹⁵¹ Irenaeus, *AH*, 1.8.1.

¹⁵² Tertullian, *Against Marcion*, 3.6, and *Against Heretics*, 30.1. Possibly the most thorough analysis of Marcion in recent times came from Adolph von Harnack in his *Marcion: The Gospel of the Alien God*.

¹⁵³ Tertullian, *The Prescription Against Heretics*, 30.3.

¹⁵⁴ Tertullian, *AM*, 2.17. Tertullian writes, "It is true that Marcion has been bold enough to erase from the gospel this testimony of Christ to the creator." Marcion had evidently edited apostolic works to fit into his program.

¹⁵⁵ A study of Marcion is hampered by the one-sidedness of all the extant sources on him. For a further look at the issues in understanding Marcion, see Gerhard May's *Marcion in Contemporary Views: Results and Open Questions* and, Han J. W. Drijvers, *Marcionism in Syria: Principles, Problems, Polemics, and R. Joseph Hoffmann's How Then Know this Troublous Teacher? Further Reflections on Marcion and his Church* 6,6 Fall 1987-88.

¹⁵⁶ Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, 26.4-5.

Apostle, and *The Gospel*.¹⁵⁷ A mutilated Gospel of Luke and a compilation of highly edited selections of eleven letters of Paul made up Marcion's Bible, so to speak. His churches sprung up everywhere.

Rome was soon to become a place where a practical working canon, not much different than today's New Testament was featured. And as the ancient religious societies, including Christianity, were drawn to testify in the capitol, maybe it was necessary that the Christian ideal have one city that became associated with orthodoxy/heresy issues, the fuller canon, and be a pillar church to influence other prominent churches. As it became known that Rome served as a home for both defenders of orthodoxy and heretics, Christians associated with normative traditions would be watching. It is not known how fast or how far the news of Rome's battle with Valentinus and Marcion spread by A.D. 150. Already, by the mid A.D. 140s, the followers of Valentinus and Marcion were organizing, and the latter had been the first to form a canon. The necessary response of mainstream Christianity was to do the same. The churches that contributed to Rome's triumph over the heretics, and others who sympathized with them, were the ones who made up the Catholic orthodox church of the following period.

The events at Rome surrounding the Marcionites and Valentinians contributed to the progress of unity for the period after 150. These new movements enable the historian to see the advance of normative Christianity when forced to clarify itself under pressure. Although the details of these defining events only surface later, it is certain that what happened in Rome between A.D. 136-150 served as a catalyst and clarion call to other premier churches associated with mainstream Christianity to define their borders.

Syria (Antioch)

Syrian Christianity began on solid footing. It was among the first place where Gentiles were converted. Barnabas, Saul, Simeon, and Lucius were among the apostles, prophets, and teachers of this area. This was the first mission area to apply the Jerusalem decree described in Acts 15. The evolution of the church in Syria from the Acts portrait through the Post-Apostolic period is an enigmatic study, in part, because of the uncertainty of the provenance of key documents. Ignatius of Antioch was an important figure for mainstream Christianity, even beyond this region. In addition, there were the heresies and their founders, such as Saturnilos, that testify to some form of Christianity outside of the mainstream.

Post A.D. 70 Jewish Christianity

Although each seem to reflect Syrian or Palestinian origins and/or usage, it was difficult to link Matthew, Jude or the Didache to a specific location. The following analysis has Syria in view, yet, the provenance of these three works may be broader.

The first two works clearly reflect a pre-Ignatian period. Matthew (A.D. 50-70) is one of the sources used to describe common Christianity of an earlier period. Matthew anticipates a Jewish Christian reader (Matt. 5:17-20,21,27,31,33,38,43) and contains evidences of the four points on unity of belief, solidarity, practices, and objective; however, it is difficult to tell just how much Matthew impacted Syrian usage.

¹⁵⁷ Tertullian, AM, 5. This fifth book is dedicated to Marcion's literature.

Jude (A.D. 60-70) is also helpful, but its greatest aid in this investigation might be the attitude it reflected for non-Apostolic forms of Christianity. Already, at the beginning of the Tunnel Period, extremely strong tensions are reflected in Jude. The delay of the *parousia* (appearance, of Christ) has produced "scoffers" (:18). As apostles were unavailable to combat false teachers, the opportunity was afforded for certain men to secretly slip into the Church (:4). The author of Jude sets out to say that he would not elaborate on their common faith (:3), and instead he identified characteristics of erroneous Christian forms, such as: (1) libertine lifestyles, (2) rebellious attitudes, (3) speculative views of the created order, (4) indulgent and without conscience, and (5) protesters and flatterers. This would indicate that Apostolic beliefs had been successfully propagated and therefore Jude was attacking the fruit of false believers. His original desire to talk about the "faith" was more for edification.

The letter Jude does not actually provide any insight as to locations, people, or ecclesiology. Nonetheless, the situation portrayed in this letter would adequately explain a need for authoritative church officers, well defined ecclesiology, pre-creedal forms, controlled meetings, and a detailed routine for handling rivals, such as was in place by the time of Ignatius. If the letter reflected a new problem in Syria and Ignatius had roots in the new milieu that was developing there, then some of the cut and dried proto-orthodoxy of Ignatius is explainable. The approximate four-decade span between Jude and the bishopric of Ignatius is plenty of time to account for the crystallized protocol that he utilized.

The Didache has elements that seem to reflect the pre-Ignatian period, for the most part, but its evolving features are hard to specify with certainty. The sections that referenced the ministries of apostles, prophets, and teachers seemed to represent a time nearer to the Apostolic age. However, the present redaction implies that a development has occurred with bishops and deacons "Therefore appoint for yourselves bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord, . . . for they, too, carry out for you the ministry of the prophets and teachers. You must not, therefore, despise them, for they are your honored men, along with the prophets and teachers (Didache 15:1-2).

If this document did not originate from Syria, its fuller form was probably edited there. The intentional switch to bishops and deacons is designed to acknowledge that a change has taken place. The fact that the presbyters were not mentioned and that the bishops were mentioned in a plural sense implied that the revision occurred prior to Ignatius' emphasis on the monarchical bishop at a time when elders and bishops were one and the same as they appear in the New Testament.

John Riggs has demonstrated that the Didache 9 and 10 are eucharistic christianizations of Jewish prayers and thanksgivings associated with a communal meal.¹⁵⁸ Didache 9 is a conversion of the tenth Benediction of the *'Amidah* and D 10 is of the *Birkat Ha-Mazon*.¹⁵⁹ It is not surprising that the Eucharist directives of 1 Corinthians 11 borrowed from Jewish antecedents, including the last supper the apostles had with Jesus, for the supper was practiced solely by Jewish Christians in the earliest years before missionary activity.

The change of fasting from traditional days of Monday and Thursday to Wednesday and Friday point to a period when the believers existed closely with "hypocrites", for they were to "not let their (your) fast coincide" with the hypocrites, which presumably were mainline Jews. (Didache 8.1). The

¹⁵⁸ John W. Riggs, *SC*, "From Gracious Table to Sacramental Elements: the Tradition-History of Didache 9-10" (Vol 2 ,No. 4 Summer 1984, 83-101).

¹⁵⁹ Riggs, *Ibid*, 91.

unguarded language clearly reflects a Jew vs. Christian situation.

Baptisms were proscribed in the three-fold manner which was more widespread in the second century but different from the baptisms practiced in Acts. The difference between the baptism in Jesus' name and three-fold baptism illustrates diversity.¹⁶⁰

Now concerning *immersion* (βαπτισμα) *immerse* as follows: after you have reviewed all these things, *immerse* "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" in running water. *But if you have no running water*, then immerse in some other water; and *if you are not able to immerse* in cold water, then do so in warm. *But if you have neither*, then pour water on the head three times "in the name of Father and Son and Holy Spirit" (Didache 7:1-4).

There is a pattern of concessions going on in the mind of the writer. This was a very practically-minded document and the editors of this portion went through a series of, "what ifs," realizing the situations that were probably frequently asked in difficult situations.

The teachings about the Eucharist and baptisms were intended to remain in general continuity with traditions; however, the baptism expression has varied. The baptism expression is one instance in which Matthew's gospel and Didache were tied together. Didache was a book of procedures which explains why there was little in terms of doctrinal belief. All in all, Didache aids in an understanding of evolution of Christian "practices" and in affirming that Jewish Christians continued to have a Jewish orientation in their worship, but, were separating further from Judaism in general. Evidence of a serious rift with other Jews is indicated in Jude and even selections of Matthew that describe Jesus' interactions with Jews (Matthew 23-25).

The Beliefs of Ignatius

The clearest testimony to Christianity that is explicitly Antiochene comes from Ignatius in about A.D. 107/117. Even though he writes from Smyrna, he was the bishop of Antioch. He would have been able to experience the legacy of Sub-Apostolic Christianity and himself wrote clear Apostolic beliefs within four credo statements (Eph 7.2 and 18.2, Mag 11, Irall 9.1, Smyrn 1.1-2). In a reconstruction of these statements, redundancy was eliminated to construct Ignatius' protocol of belief.

Be fully convinced, there is one physician, our God,
Jesus Christ, who is both flesh and spirit,
truly of the family of David with respect to human descent,
Son of God with respect to the divine will
and human power,
unborn and yet conceived by Mary and
truly born physically of a virgin,
according to God's plan,
both from the seed of David and of the Holy Spirit.
God in man,
true life in death,

¹⁶⁰ The variation between baptism in Jesus' name in Acts and triune baptism of the Didache can be explained in numerous ways. The emphasis on "the name of Jesus" was of the utmost relevance in Acts where the original audience that conspired with the crucifixion would now associate with the one they had earlier crucified. As to whether Jesus meant for the triune phrasing in Matt. 28:18-19 to be applied to the authority of a baptism or the expression that was to be utilized is of debate. The author of the Didache clearly has this expression in sight and has made a decision to affirm the use the expression itself.

baptized by John in order that all righteousness might be fulfilled by him and in order that by his suffering he might consecrate the water. who both ate and drank; who really was persecuted under Pontius Pilate, who and truly crucified, being nailed in the flesh for us and died under the governorship of Pilate and Herod the tetrarch while those in heaven, on earth and under the earth looked on, who, moreover, really was raised from the dead when the father raised him up from the fruit his divinely blessed suffering we derive our existence, in order that he might raise a banner for the ages through his resurrection for his saints and faithful people, whether among Jews or among Gentiles, in the one body of his church.

He typically used phrases such as "totally convinced" or "fully convinced" before stating these convictions. And if someone brought another view to his listeners, he cautioned them to "be deaf" (Trail 9.1). His beliefs clearly established him along a mainstream Apostolic course. His credo was midway in development between the earliest two recorded sermons of Acts (Acts 2:22ff, 3:12-26) and creeds of later periods.

His attitude toward other churches that lay along common forms is also evident. To see the relationships between churches, the introduction from Lightfoot's *The Apostolic Fathers* provides some insight into the nature of his encounter with Christians in Asia Minor.

After his arrest (it is not known why and under what circumstances he was arrested) in Syria, which left the church in Antioch leaderless and vulnerable, Ignatius was sent to Rome in the custody of a detachment of ten soldiers (the leopards of Rom 5.1) to be executed. At a fork in the road at some point along the way through Asia Minor, probably Laodicea, the decision was made to take the northern route through Philadelphia to Smyrna, thus bypassing the churches that lay along the southern route (Tralles, Magnesia, and Ephesus). It is probable that when the northern road was chosen, messengers were sent to these churches informing them of Ignatius's itinerary, and they evidently dispatched delegations to meet him in Smyrna.¹⁶¹

Ignatius sent gracious letters to these churches in response to their encouragement. He wrote the letters after obtaining insight into the condition of these churches from their delegates. The interaction in this instance between Christians of different regions was circumstantial--not planned; while Bauer would attempt to draw conclusions from the cities and churches who were not represented, this would be an injustice to the unusual situation in which there was limited time for preparations.¹⁶² Ignatius was probably respected by the churches and delegates for the same reason

¹⁶¹ Lightfoot-Harmer-Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers: Second Edition* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 129-130.

¹⁶² Bauer makes too much out of the fact that Macedonia was not represented in the Ignatian correspondence. He admits that he is using "conjecture and nothing more," yet he then concludes without testimony from the argument of silence that "post Pauline Macedonia [is] among those districts reached by Christianity in which 'heresy' predominated (Bauer, *OHEC*, 75).

he was assailed by the Romans--he was a dominant influence of Eastern Christianity in a premier apostolic church.

Earlier he asked the church in Rome, through a letter, to send a servant as an ambassador to encourage the church at "Antioch in Syria," and at the same time, he wrote that "the neighboring churches have sent bishops, and other presbyters and deacons" (*Rom* 10.1-2). It is clear that some of the Asian churches were involved in this venture (*Smyrn* 11.1-2), but, "neighboring churches" may have been referring to Syrian churches helping the church in Antioch.

With the weakening of the Antioch church upon his capture, Ignatius solicits prayers for the "church in Syria" (*Rom* 9.1), which sounds collective. He learned of their "peace" (safe condition) when the detachment and associates who followed Ignatius stopped in Troas (*Phil* 10.1, *Imyr* 11.2, *IPol* 7.1). He was welcomed in Philippi enroute to Rome where there is no more word of Ignatius (*Poly Phil* 1.1, 8.1).

In the end, it was Polycarp of Smyrna who formed a council to replace Ignatius as "God's courier" of Syria (*Poly* 7.2). It is of importance to note the essential criteria that Ignatius required for his replacement, that he be "especially dear and resolute." This suggests that his replacement must be able to have an affectionate trust from others and be of deep conviction. The entire episode of Ignatius's capture and journey demonstrates positive association between historical churches in four regions--Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy. Most of these churches were begun in apostolic times.

Ignatius seemed to imagine that churches everywhere were like the ones that he was familiar with; they were collectively part of a "banner of the ages." With this thought Ignatius sounds reminiscent of Paul with concepts of world conquest and testifying to the principalities. The people in "the body" are the fruit of Jesus' death and resurrection. He was gospel-centric (evangelical) in his ecclesiastical objective. His mission objective was ever clear when he wrote to the church in Ephesus, "Pray continually for the rest of mankind as well, that they may find God, for there is in them hope for repentance. Therefore allow them to be "discipled" (μαθητευθηναί) by you" (*Eph* 10.1).

Baptism was analogous to one's consecration and shield, symbolizing their oath as soldiers of Christ (*Eph* 18.2, *APoly* 6.2). The Eucharist for Ignatius was a celebration and a pledge in which one expressed commitment to the real existence of the flesh of Jesus Christ (*Eph* 13.1, *Phil* 4, *Smyr* 6.2).

Statements in Ignatius' so-called personal creed were undoubtedly designed to remind his hearers where the lines of demarcation were drawn regarding fellowship. For him, normative Christianity excluded Docetists (*Trail* 10, 6.1-2, 11.1) from the fellowship of the Church. Ignatius was not drawing the line of fellowship on doctrinal matters only, but also on the spirit of schism—"if anyone follows a schismatic, he will not inherit the kingdom of God" (*Phil* 3.3).¹⁶³ His attitude about schism is also seen in his views of authority.

Ignatius on Authority

Ignatius is usually associated with the rise of the monarchical bishop, authoritarian devices, and preoccupation with martyrdom. In actuality, all three were subtle twists of elements tracing back to apostolic times. It has already been established that a president or lead-elder dates back to James and

¹⁶³ Ignatius' vernacular sounds like Paul (*Gal*. 5:21, *1 Cor*. 6:9) and spirit of separation sounds like John (2 *John* 7-9).

may have found its way early into Antioch. His statements concerning martyrdom were made under the pressure of his impending fate and reflect a view of exaggerated courage.¹⁶⁴ His views on the authority of church officers require a closer look.

Terrence Mullins wrote on the subject of Ignatius' view of authority.¹⁶⁵ Mullins elaborated on the New Testament usage of the *hypotassein* concept, "used to express the idea that everything is subject to God, who orders all of human life and who has placed all things under Christ. The Christian way in the New Testament is to be subject to God in Christ; sin constitutes a refusal to submit to the divine order."¹⁶⁶ He saw the New Testament order in three ways--immediately, mediately through submitting to other people, and mediately through submitting to institutions which he has ordained. Of this third method of subjection, Mullins said it "is a surprising, though logical, extension of the general teaching about submitting to God."¹⁶⁷ He wrote that the submission is to the office, not the person, citing Ephesians 5:21, Romans 13:1-2, Titus 3:1, and 1 Peter 2:13.

Mullins found Ignatius' thinking on authority was not as Christological as found in the New Testament, but "specified in ecclesiastical directions."¹⁶⁸ Interpreters from a "high church" background rely on Ignatius for support and those from a congregational background see this development in Antioch as a sad development leading to Roman Catholicism. However, neither position captures the spirit in which Ignatius made his main appeals. His letter to the Trallians contained part of his thinking on the matter.

For when you are subject to the bishop as to Jesus Christ, it is evident to me that you are not living in accordance with human standards but in accordance with Jesus Christ, who died for us in order that by believing in his death you might escape death. It is essential, therefore, that you continue your current practice and do nothing without the bishop, but be subject also to the presbytery as to the apostles of Jesus Christ, our hope, in whom we shall be found, if we so live (Trall 2.1-2).

There are three explanations to Ignatius' emphasis on subjection to the church officers. These are of vital importance for understanding how any semblance of unity would be maintained in Syria and even Asia Minor.

1. There were no apostles alive and Ignatius clearly believed that the church in apostolic times was to be subject to the apostles. In their absence, the other officers of the church stepped into their shoes.

2. Ignatius sought to ward off the influence of heresies and schismatics. Almost every passage that emphasizes unity with the officials and/or controlled meetings, such as feasts where the bishops are present, are found in a context of heresies and schisms (see Trall 6-7, Smyrn 8-9, Phil 7-8, Mag 7-8, Eph 6). Ignatius saw the appointed roles as a means to keep unity in a divisive age. Leaders were chosen for their knowledge of the deep things of the faith and the average new convert did not carry anything close to a New Testament with them.

¹⁶⁴ Ignatius appears to have reflected on Paul's fate (2 Cor. 4:11-12 and 2 Tim. 4:6).

¹⁶⁵ Terrence Y. Mullins, *SC*, "Word Study: The use of *hypotassein* in Ignatius."

¹⁶⁶ Mullins, *SC*, 36.

¹⁶⁷ Mullins, *SC*, "Word Study," 37.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid*.

3. Ignatius believed that subjection was a helpful indicator of one's spirituality. His logic somewhat corresponded with Jesus' statement of John 15:20b, "if they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also." He believed that submission to one was submission to the other. Of course, he presumed the leadership of the church in his day was in subjection to Christ. This is evident in Trail 3.1, "Similarly, let everyone respect the deacons as Jesus Christ, just as they should respect the bishop, who is a model of the Father, and the presbyters as God's council and as the band of apostles. Without these no group can be called a church."

One should not think that Ignatius and his associates did not have controls or limitations on power of abuse for this view of local ecclesiology. Ignatius' beloved pupil, Polycarp, taught that Christians should "be subject to one another" (Poly Phil 10.2). Ignatius himself did not believe in absolute authority. He wrote to Polycarp that "A Christian has not authority over himself; rather he devotes his time to God" (Poly 7.3), and to do nothing "without God's consent" (Poly 4.1). Even Ignatius knew the limits of his own authority for he wrote, "I do not give you orders like Peter and Paul: they were apostles" (Rom 4.3). Lastly, there is a manner in which the strict controlled meeting practice was both recent and temporary, a concessionary measure for a strenuous situation. As he wrote, "It is essential, therefore, that you *continue your current practice* and do nothing without the bishop" (italics mine, Trail 2.2).

While the philosophy of the internal church structure of Ignatius seems rigid, the increase of dissenting voices and initial absence of apostolic voices makes for a unique milieu in Syria and Asia Minor.

Tensions with Jewish Christianity

Ignatius respected the Jewish origins of Christianity. He had a clear Christological reading of the Scriptures. In his letter to the Philadelphians, he mentioned "the archives" twice (Phil 8.2). The first reference was evidently the Scriptures that now make up the Old Testament. The second reference was associated with "his cross and death and his resurrection and the faith which comes through him." He uses a Christological hermeneutic to read the OT Scriptures. In this regard, Clement and Justin followed this practice. Yet, in his attitude about Judaism in general, he might have been different.

Because Jewish Christianity was mainstream in apostolic times,¹⁶⁹ Ignatius' attitude toward Jewish opponents is significant in this investigation. There are principally six passages (Smyr 1.2, 5.5, Mag 8.1-9.2, 10.3, Phil 5.2-6.1, 9.1-2) that indicate possible Syrian Christian attitudes toward Jews. Ignatius' attitude toward the Jewish heritage of the Christian faith is not in question (Phil 9.2). His articles of faith frequently alluded to the fact that Jesus was from the seed of David (Eph 18.2, Trall 9.1, Rom 7, Smyrn 1). His attitude about Christians learning from circumcised (Jewish) Christians is also unquestionable. He made an awkward statement, "For it is better to hear about Christianity from a man who is circumcised than Judaism from one who is not" (9Phil 8.2). However, if they failed to talk about Christ, they are "as tombstones."

A troublesome issue with Ignatius was his attitude about whom he inferred "live in accordance

¹⁶⁹ Jewish Christianity is referring to Jews who worshipped Christ along the Lukan tradition (Acts); they kept the customs of the law, but believed they were justified through faith in Christ. By mentioning Jewish Christianity as mainstream, I am not referring to the Ebionites, who may trace back to an early period.

with Judaism” (Mag 8.1). He said that if Christians did this we “admit we have not received grace.” This is difficult to interpret. Were the Jewish Christians merely living by Jewish orthopraxy, or according to the sacrificial system? Shortly after this, he called practices such as “keeping the Sabbath” antiquated (9.1) because those who came into a new hope live in accordance with the Lord’s day. He alleged that the prophets lived in accordance with Christ as his disciples in advance (8.2, 9.2.). This was his rebuttal to finding fulfillment in being a Jew--“It is utterly absurd to profess Jesus Christ and to practice Judaism. For Christianity did not believe in Judaism, but Judaism in Christianity, in which every tongue believed and was brought together to God” (Mag 10.3).

Two explanations could account for this polemic. First, Christians in Syria were developing an attitude in which people, even the Jews, were to abandon what the Church considered unimportant for purposes of uniformity. Or, second, Jewish Christians were misinterpreting the value of keeping certain Jewish customs, thus minimizing grace and becoming divisive. The first issue would be one of ecclesiastical conformity and the second would be one of Judaizing. It cannot be settled decisively in this treatment, so admittedly, a tension appears to exist which relates to unity in the postapostolic church. Certainly, there were important issues open to different views.

Other than the offices of the *ecclesia*, there are other hints of how unity of belief was maintained in early second-century Syria. Catechesis using the Old Testament is one of them. There is every reason to believe that Ignatius’ admonishment to Christians in Smyrna would be applied to Syria as well. To those in Smyrna he wrote, “Do pay attention, however, to the prophets and especially to the gospel, in which the Passion has been made clear to us and the resurrection has been accomplished” (SmyrN 7.2). To Ignatius this was the proper way to avoid the influence of contentious people. By studying the prophets and, especially, the gospel which is rooted around the meaning of Christ’s death, the Christians were catechized.

Heresy of Saturnilos

Saturnilos began teaching in Syria at the end of the first century. His teachings demonstrated two important features. Saturnilos' view of Christ was docetic according to Irenaeus, and "he has also laid it down as a truth, that the Savior was without birth, without body, and without figure, but was, by supposition, a visible man." ¹⁷⁰ It is evident that Ignatius knew how to address these issues in Asia Minor because his pre-creedal forms appear to have been written, in part, to refute this kind of teaching. According to Irenaeus, Saturnilos was also very speculative, dreaming at length about the angels and other celestial beings. The followers of Saturnilos were similar to the opponents in Jude, and later Gnosticism. But the evidence is too inconclusive to make an equation.

Saturnilos’ teaching fell into a number of the general categories that were outside of apostolic Christianity and were therefore considered unacceptable. Saturnilos’ framework would have easily been adaptable into second-century Gnosticism; however, Irenaeus did not leave any clue of an emphasis on gnosis as a principal element in Saturnilos doctrine. A fundamental anti-Jewish God attitude, spark of life motif, and anti-procreation position reflected the great possibility for becoming Gnostic. Yet, Saturnilos can be considered proto-gnostic, and certainly docetic. Irenaeus wrote that he led away multitudes.

Antioch-Syria of Ignatius had a strong essence of normative Christianity. The adjective,

¹⁷⁰ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 1.24.2.

"normative" especially applies here because Ignatius clearly attempted to steer the Christians that he encountered into a similar protocol. His seven letters revealed more about his theology and his assumptions about how churches were to operate in the early second century than they did about the prior development of the church in Antioch.

Based on the ministry of Ignatius, for the period around A.D. 107/117, we can know the many of the beliefs of a Syrian bishop, and the relations between the church in Syria and those in Asia Minor. From this and additional documentation usually associated with Syria, there appears to be a general continuity and adaptability of practices such as baptism and the Eucharist, and the clear mission objective of the church. A general unity existed between some renowned churches in Syria, Asia Minor, and Italy for at least some time.

Greece (Corinth)

The greatest testimony for Greece will involve the issues of relationships. The connection of the church at Corinth in Greece to apostolic Christianity is easy to establish, but the church was deficient in its ability to consistently remain in internal accord. For various reasons, I suggest that a most prominent challenge for churches in this area of the ancient world would have been related to harmony and discord. Going back to the earliest times, it is apparent that a competitive spirit influenced the shape of Christianity in Greece. In particular, the evidence for Christianity at Corinth in A.D. 53 and 96 suggests how such a persistent difficulty was confronted.

The Two Sides of Unity

Unity is not a matter of core doctrine only. If it was, the church at Corinth would have received a different letter from Paul in approximately A.D. 53. It does not appear that doctrine lies near the center of either treatise. The church at Corinth of both periods faced persistent inner strife more than they faced heresies, although heresy and aberrant views were a real threat to the Corinthians. However, the Corinthians needed to learn about love, equality, and submission to be united from within. 1 Corinthians emphasized mutual appreciation as one of the remedies to the problems of that day (1 Cor. 12:12-25), and 1 Clement agreed with this and adds the need for an ecclesiastical compliance. As it will be evident, mutual and ecclesiastical submission practiced internally affected the Church corporately.

I will briefly mention the proto-orthodox position of Corinth. First, there is the strong connection between the *kerygma* of Acts and the paradigm of 1 Cor. 15:3-5. This connection is well established and even Clement was aware of the connection between the church in Corinth and its famous letters, 1-2 Corinthians.¹⁷¹ A relation between the believer's resurrection and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ was restated in Clement's day. (24.1 and 42.3). Further examination of proto-orthodoxy in Corinth would merely be redundant in light of what the situation of Corinth can teach us anew that other regions cannot.

The letter from the church at Rome to the church at Corinth in about A.D. 96 was a direct response to an "unholy schism" (1:1). Even 1 Corinthians was written in part in response to a party spirit. What was there about Corinth that lent itself to such problems? Was the culture of Greece too

¹⁷¹ See 1 Clement 13.1, 1 Cor. 1:31, and 2 Cor. 10:17. Also, 1 Clement 37:3 comp 1 Cor. 15:23.

accustomed to individuality? This appeared to be the case, but the reasons may never be known. However, but the remedy was more apparent.

There could be many explanations for the individualistic culture of Corinth. It could have been in the so-called town-meeting forum that Corinthians were accustomed to, or the less virtuous side of the competitive Isthmian games held near Corinth, or the pride of individual accomplishment that permeated Greek culture. Whatever the sources, it was the response and correctives that were supplied to the church at Corinth that become relevant here.

The prescription of 1 Cor. 12:12ff and 1 Clement 37.1-38.2 complement each other. In fact, they both taught the value of the lesser and the need for order. Paul's illustration came from the human body and 1 Clement's from the military. The author(s) of 1 Clement switched the argument to the body metaphor used by the apostle Paul in 37.5. The slight differences between the two illustrations is that Clement's emphasized ecclesiastical rank. His "rank" illustration suggested that the "greater" and the "lesser" both needed each other. Hence, his concepts of greater and lesser were not about equality or value, but of position and order. It is obvious to see how this terminology could have become something altogether different, but at this point, Clement's concern was for "mutual subjection, that the whole body may be saved" (37.5).

For those representing the position of 1 Clement, the situation in Greece was lethal. About "one or two" (47.6) members seized the chief posts of the church and "set themselves up as leaders of rebellion and dissension" (51.1). The Corinthian church was to "root this out quickly" (48.1). Any who were exposed in this inquest were to "confess his transgressions" (53.3). As a matter of emphasis, 1 Clement reaffirmed that confession was the only requirement of the one who sinned (52.1). However, later he mentioned that they should "accept discipline leading to repentance" (57.1). In the interim, extensive scrutiny was to be made on this matter until the congregation was returned to its former state.

In discussions of the early Church, unity is usually thought of in terms of beliefs and attitude or spirit. The situation in Corinth illustrates the essential unity of spirit. This unity emphasizes yielding on positions and submitting to the recognized office holders---the elders.

Means Towards Unity

1 Clement contained numerous citations that are helpful for understanding the essential testimony of Corinth. Because the strife at Corinth appears to have been more over position and less on doctrine, the means that Clement suggested toward achieving unity aimed to correct attitudes within the church and carried over to the ecclesiastical objective of the congregation of both Rome and Corinth. Clement's letter indicates an effort on Rome's part to influence a solution in another congregation. Nonetheless, the suggestions were "advice," that the author(s) of 1 Clement believed were of God, not a directive from a superior who was qualified to give directions because of a position held by consensus. It was the reputation that Corinth was building with outsiders of the faith that particularly agitated Rome into some form of action.

. . . think about those who have perverted you and diminished the respect due your renowned love for the brotherhood. It is disgraceful, dear friends, yes, utterly disgraceful and unworthy of your conduct in Christ, that it should be reported that the well-established and ancient church

of the Corinthians, because of one or two persons, is rebelling against its presbyters. And this report has reached not only us, but also those who differ from us, with the result that you heap blasphemies upon the name of the Lord because of your stupidity, and create danger for yourselves as well (1 Clement 47.5-7).

This “disgrace” was first made known by a “report” which eventually initiated the 1 Clement response. Somehow, the church in Rome knew that their involvement was welcomed by some--those sympathetic with some deposed elders. Some important conclusions for this investigation can be drawn from this incident. (1) A sense of a “brotherhood” existed. (2) The highly acclaimed Corinthian church had been beset with problems because of the actions of very few. The church itself was in error against its elders. (3) Those who differed from the brotherhood were aware of the problems at Corinth. (4) Image was important because it left room for outsiders to blaspheme God, by supposedly ridiculing the larger collective church. (5) The church at Rome had a particular view on the matter and the church at Corinth, which was normally “excellent and steadfast” (1.2), was in this incident, embracing “stupidity.”

How could Clement and his company be so certain that the young leaders were wrong? Even though we run the risk of not having their side of the story, certain facts testify against the young leaders in spite of issues of motives and ambition. It is important to note that Clement does not presume that the schismatics were initially wrong on an issue, but that they took the matter into their own hands and divided a church. The facts as handed down through 1 Clement weigh heavily against the young protestors. First, only one side appears to appeal for outside help. This side did not adopt that attitude that Clement upholds --- it is better to be taught, or even relocated, “I will go wherever you wish” (54.2) and allow God to work the truth out than be party to a schism (48.6, 54.2). Instead, they took things into their own hands. Secondly, they single-handedly deposed “duly appointed” elders (54.2).

First Clement demonstrates eleven principles relating to the issue of unity. These focus on building a more complete internal ecclesiastical unity that was, previous to this letter, absent.

1. Rome has assumed a posture of being an instructor.
2. Only the position of the previously unbesmirched elders was recognized.
3. It was pointed out that the actions of one church affected the peace of another (46.9).
4. One church (probably through a few elders and a spokesman named Clement) who wrote to another church (1.1).
5. Humility was stressed as the key to solving the problem. Disunity was a spiritual problem, not a problem of unjust recognition or different views.
6. Unity was maintained through heartfelt intent (34.7). This suggested that unity was not guaranteed, but happened through fixing the mind on God, seeking out what was pleasing and acceptable to him, accomplishing what was in harmony with his will, and following the way of truth (35.5).
7. Subjection to one another was consistently emphasized. This was emphasized as mutual, in relation to ones gift.
8. A propriety of rank and “proper order” was recognized (41-42).
9. Other churches recognized the appointed posts that kept in step with the apostolic tradition.
10. Both “men from youth and old” whose lives were “blameless” were sent to represent Rome

(63.3). These men were to act as impartial witnesses to a situation which reflected a schism between younger and older personalities.

The church at Rome believed that they were writing “through the Holy Spirit” (63.2). While some might take this to assert that the church at Rome thought that it was writing Holy Scripture, there is a more logical explanation. The Roman contingency believed that their advice was consistent with living without “regret” (58.2). In addition, since the advice from Rome was in step with apostolic precedent, even with an Old Testament respect for authority, they believed that their agenda was in step with the Spirit (See Acts 15:28).

There were obvious parallels between the Jerusalem council affecting the whole church in approximately A.D. 50 and this letter of congregational concern a half century later. There were also obvious differences. Similarities were the spirit fostered by brotherhood, submission, and proper order. The differences related to the different nature of the problem at Corinth, and an increasing institutionalism at Corinth.

The testimony of Christianity at Corinth indicates, to an extent, that churches within regions cared for and were dependent on the input of churches from other regions. The internal conditions of a church in one place (Corinth) would affect the testimony of that church to outsiders, thus affecting the image of the whole. The ancient church clearly cared about its image, because, in their mind it was not their church to protect or corrupt, it belonged to Christ. The situation in Greece at Corinth testifies to the need for one established church to appeal to another equally historical and apostolic church for guidance in internal affairs because their condition affected the whole.

Western Asia Minor (Ephesus)

Robinson believes that Ephesus and western Asia Minor is where questions of orthodoxy and heresy should be put to the test. “The documentary evidence for Christianity in western Asia Minor is so extensive that it is almost astounding,”¹⁷² and “In fact, the material from western Asia Minor offers considerably more controls than we are likely to find for any other area.”¹⁷³ This region offers more possibilities for substantial study for almost any realm of investigation.

While investigating Ignatius of Antioch in order to obtain Syrian positions, some of the situations in western Asia Minor were already discussed. This portion of the investigation will focus on Ephesus as an established center, and will consider the nearby cities only when pertinent. Even though nearby Smyrna has more impressive literary testimony than other entire regions do, only Ephesus can claim a consecutive testimony. A series of landmark testimonies will be pieced together to envision a trajectory.

The famous church at Ephesus played an essential role in the collection of New Testament documents and had a continual presence throughout early church history. Asia Minor is the only region in which a trajectory can even be considered. Brief references to support evidence for normative Christianity in other cities in western Asia Minor as well as evidence of the prominence of Ephesus in the perception of other churches in Asia Minor will be given in this section. Nonetheless, Ephesus is the city of choice.

¹⁷² Robinson, *BTE*, 101.

¹⁷³ *Ibid*, 106.

The primary postapostolic sources for western Asia Minor include: Johannine documents, six of Ignatius' letters to the five churches and one associate, Polycarp's letter to the Philippians (Poly *Phil*), Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*, and the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*.

The Johannine Period

John was probably in Ephesus at some point between A.D. 70 and 80. Irenaeus indicates that the synoptic Gospels were written first, and then, "afterwards, John, the disciple of the Lord, who also had leaned upon His breast, did himself publish a Gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia."¹⁷⁴ John's residence in Ephesus would explain why the church in Ephesus was addressed first in the Revelation of Jesus Christ while he was in exile.

The internal evidence of Revelation can broadly resonate with tensions with Rome anywhere from A.D. 63-118 as the apocalyptic style moves abruptly between current, past, and anticipatory events. Revelation is difficult to date on internal evidence alone. Eusebius accepted Irenaeus' testimony—"the end of the reign of Domitian."¹⁷⁵

The severe unguarded rhetoric of Revelation concerning Jewish opponents fits post Second Temple-Judaism when demarcation was well established (2:9, 3:9). The twelfth of the Eighteen Benedictions¹⁷⁶ of the East reflects an era in which Christians are no longer welcome in the synagogue.

Whereas at one time Rome was relatively unaware of the Christian enterprise, and the synagogue represented an evangelistic opportunity, the churches in Asia Minor were in a new situation. They are in an adversarial position with Domitian and the Jews. And, as the last living apostle of Jesus was restrained by the authorities, and the much-anticipated *parousia* seems to have been delayed, the message of Jesus presented by Revelation is not surprising—"hold on." The Jesus of Revelation appears in a cosmic sense as he walks among seven churches of western Asia and evaluates their progress and condition in the current tribulation.

The various forms of μαρτυρία (testimony) and μαρτυς (witness, martyr) occur far more frequently in the Revelation than in any other New Testament book. It might be said that for this period, μαρτυς should be translated as "witness," a term more commonly used to describe the followers of Christ than believer or disciple during this period in Asia. It was associated with suffering and willingness to suffer unto death. Eventually, it became synonymous exclusively with dying for Christ through its common transliteration "martyr" and the deaths of many witnesses. The term "saint" is the most common term in Revelation to describe those who followed Jesus.

Ephesus is first on the list of the seven churches for obvious reasons. It had the responsibility to live up to a Pauline and Johannine reputation. A strong proto-orthodox essence must have existed in Ephesus for Jesus commended this church for their intolerance toward wicked men and for accurately scrutinizing false apostles (2:2). He also applauds their disdain for the practices of the Nicolaitans (2:6). But there was also the serious admonition from Jesus about their falling from their original devotion (2:4). This was serious, especially under the current troubles in Asia Minor, yet the church was as much

¹⁷⁴ Irenaeus, *AH*, 3.1.1.

¹⁷⁵ Eusebius, *EH*, 18.1.2.

¹⁷⁶ This particular variant of the twelfth benediction of the *Shemoneh 'Esreh* is contained in Schürer, *History*, 2:454-63. Some versions of this benediction (such as also contained in Schürer's *History*) do not contain the same anti-Christian polemic.

of a bulwark of sound doctrine as it ever was as presented to be in Acts or Paul's letter to Ephesus.

The milieu for Ephesus and its associate churches suggests that there were forceful aberrations of Christianity in their midst, and even within some of the mentioned churches. By piecing the commendations and lessons from condemnations, a protocol for detailing with heresies and amoral Christians include:

1. Intolerance toward confirmed wicked people (2:2, 20)
2. Testing the apostleship of others (2:2)
3. Despising false practices (2:6)
4. Rejecting false teaching (2:14-15)

It is obvious from the two references of the Nicolaitans that this group propagated both false teachings and false practices (2:6, 15). Most of the issues that appear in the investigation of Tunnel Period Christianity show that variant practices are a secondary concern to doctrine. Irenaeus points to what he has come to learn of the "practices of the Nicolaitans."

The Nicolaitans are the followers of that Nicolas who was one of the seven first ordained to the diaconate by the apostles. They lead lives of unrestrained indulgence. The character of these men is very plainly pointed out in the Apocalypse of John, [when they are represented] as teaching that it is a matter of indifference to practice adultery, and to eat things sacrificed to idols. Wherefore the Word has also spoken of them thus: "But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate."¹⁷⁷

While the mighty Ephesus church was able to suppress this erroneous influence, Pergamum was not as discerning. Robinson believes that the Nicolaitans are probably a recent development and not necessarily a massive enterprise. He writes, "The Nicolaitans are comfortably a part of the church that the Apocalyptist addresses. Separating lines between "orthodox" and "heretic" are just being drawn."¹⁷⁸ That they were "comfortably" part of the church is suspect, because more information is needed, though this may begin the classification of names with particular heresies or practices in Asia Minor, i.e., Jezebel and Nicolas.

If John had presumably been in his later teens¹⁷⁹ when he was called by Jesus while assisting his father (Mark 1:19-20), then he was well into his eighties when Trajan's reign began in A.D. 98. It can be deduced from Irenaeus that John's death was probably about A.D. 100,¹⁸⁰ but before he died, John

... returned from the isle of Patmos to Ephesus, he went away upon their invitation to the neighboring territories of the Gentiles, to appoint bishops in some places, in other places to set in order whole churches, elsewhere to choose to the ministry some one of those that were pointed out by the Spirit.¹⁸¹

John, continued for a short time to strengthen the central and eastern areas of the empire.

¹⁷⁷ Irenaeus, *AH*, 1.26.3.

¹⁷⁸ Robinson, *BTE*, 146.

¹⁷⁹ His age can only be speculated between 15 and 25 (Mark 1:20). He and his brother were working for their father, Zebedee.

¹⁸⁰ "Then, again, the Church in Ephesus, founded by Paul, and having John remaining among them permanently until the times of Trajan, is a true witness of the tradition of the apostles." (Irenaeus, *AH*, 3.3.4)

¹⁸¹ Eusebius, *EH*, 3.23.11.

Irenaeus is our best source. The fact that he was a disciple of Polycarp who was a hearer of John is significant.

Ignatius and Ephesus

John's death brings us fully into the postapostolic era. The so-called Tunnel Period really begins in Ephesus around A.D. 100. Some ten or fifteen years after John's death, a picture of the Ephesus church can be viewed through the eyes of a Syrian bishop, Ignatius. It is not known if Ignatius ever visited the church there. His information comes from a relationship with the bishop Onesimus and a Servant (deacon), Burrhus and two other leaders—Euplus and Fronto. Ignatius gives us insight into the respect that others must have held for the Ephesus church from outside of Asia and the nature of that church's pre-existing theology and strength.

Ignatius held the church at Ephesus in highest regard. It is evident to Ignatius that the congregation continued to have a reputation for doctrinal discernment.¹⁸² This bishop from Antioch was more careful to qualify his statements about the church at Ephesus than he was for other nearby churches.¹⁸³ His tone for the churches at Rome and Ephesus is different than for the other churches. Ignatius wrote two seemingly creedal statements (Eph 7.2, 18.2) in his letter to Ephesus that are phrased as reminders, not new information. He wrote that it was he who needed to be taught by them (Eph 3.1). His letter better resembles peer support from an ally than top-down direction from a superior. He wrote them, "I am not commanding you,"¹⁸⁴ but rather, he encouraged them and reminded them of wholesome attitudes throughout the letter. Based on this testimony, it stands to reason that the church at Ephesus was looked at as a bastion of approved Christianity through at least the early second century.

One of the notable developments at Ephesus was that Ignatius could refer to a singular bishop Onesimus. While Ignatius is commonly thought of promoting the idea of a monarchical bishop, it cannot be assumed that some form of it did not already exist prior to his passing through the region. The church at Ephesus appears to have been at ease with its current church structure--"it is proper for you to act in harmony with the mind of the bishop, as you are now doing" (Eph 4.1).

There was an apparent increase in errant groups and Ignatius also gave attention to these. The church at Ephesus was already familiar with such challenges and his admonitions were already part of their protocol (6.2, 9.2.).

For a final observation about "orthodoxy" at Ephesus, Ignatius was quite comfortable to mention incarnational thinking--"when God appeared in human form to bring the newness of eternal life" (19.3).¹⁸⁵ This bold language resonates with earlier thought in Ephesus. It is strange that some of the latest Johannine material which would establish such ideas, but not necessarily the same theological language, does not appear to have been available to Ignatius.

Justin and Ephesus

Justin, from Flavia Neapolis of Samaria, became a Christian around A.D. 130. He had been a

¹⁸² "... you have nothing more to learn from anyone" (Eph 6.2).

¹⁸³ For an example, "let no one deceive you, just as you are not now deceived" (Eph 8.1).

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Eph 19.3.

philosopher in Ephesus and would become the first Christian apologist and the earliest champion for orthodoxy, not yet termed, and was the foremost contemporary Catholic rival to Marcion. Justin serves as a transitional character for both Ephesus and Rome, bridging the period between ancient connections to the subapostolic era and the era of orthodoxy.

Outside of the New Testament, it could be argued that Justin is the richest source of Christian antiquity. He was an investigator of Christian origins and was willing to debate on such matters. According to Winona Scholasticate, a translator of Justin,

his (Justin's) means of information reached back into the apostolic Age itself. He was acquainted with Christians of advanced age 'of every race,' who had been believers from their childhood. He was, moreover, a person of inquisitive temper: and his life was spent in various localities, and in intercourse and discussions with men of all sects and opinions. He was apparently what we should call an itinerant teacher.¹⁸⁶

Justin was first informed about Christianity by an older man while in Ephesus. It was Eusebius who placed him at Ephesus.¹⁸⁷ He had met this aged Christian while on a walk. The unknown Christian drew out Justin's thinking and then after discerning the void that Justin's philosophy had left, proceeded to speak of the prophets and then about Christ. Justin was deeply impacted,¹⁸⁸ as he tells Trypho.

When he had said this, and much more which we have not now time to repeat, he left me, bidding me to attend to what he said, and I saw him no more. But a flame was immediately kindled in my mind, and I was seized with an ardent love of the Prophets, and of those men who are the friends of Christ; and reflecting with myself on what I had heard, I saw that theirs was the only sure and valuable philosophy: thus it was that I became a Philosopher, and I could wish that all men were of the same mind as myself, not to turn from the doctrines of the Savior.¹⁸⁹

Justin, more than any Christian before A.D. 200 besides the apostle Paul, gave the clearest testimony to a personal pilgrimage toward Christian conversion. His conversion and subsequent dialogue with Trypho provide insight into the Christianity he learned while in Ephesus. It must of been here at Ephesus that he learned that John wrote Revelation.¹⁹⁰ His two major extant works, *Dialogue With Trypho the Jew* and his *First Apology* are filled with valuable information concerning Christ and the apostolic church that he most likely learned in Ephesus. Even though the final version of both date after A.D. 150, he probably wrote the *Dialogue* in about A.D. 137 and the *Apology* around A.D. 150.¹⁹¹ And even though the latter was possibly written from Rome, it is relevant that his roots were further east. A provenance at Ephesus explains how various sayings of the Lord which appear in Justin are not

¹⁸⁶ Winona Scholasticate, *The Works of St. Justin the Martyr* (Oxford: London, 1811), iii.

¹⁸⁷ Eusebius 4.18.7. Eusebius had other documents from Justin that are no longer extant from which to locate Justin.

¹⁸⁸ The account of his conversion begins in *Dialogue* 3. Note Justin, *Dialogue*, 2. "I devoted as much time as possible to a Sage, who had lately arrived at our city."

¹⁸⁹ Scholasticate, Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho, the Jew*, 8.

¹⁹⁰ Eusebius 4.18.10, "And he (Justin) mentions the Apocalypse of John, saying distinctly that it was the apostle's."

¹⁹¹ Justin admits doing redaction in advance. He informed Trypho that he would "compose a work of our whole conversation, as far as I am able, and insert my confession of this I admit to you." *Dialogue* 80. He probably went to work on the draft shortly after the debate just after Hadrian's sacking of Jerusalem. Justin was free to update this tractate once or regularly in which we know he did for he includes the Marcion and Valentinus as leaders of heresy (*Dialogue*, 35).

found in the four Gospels.¹⁹² The East was richer in Gospel literature and such sayings are not typically found in documents that originated in Rome where Justin finally ended up. His Ephesian connection made him a valuable asset to the church in Rome.

The joint roles of teacher and philosopher best describes Justin. Although the latter sometimes shaped his teaching, there is no doubt about what Justin believed in terms of dogma. In his defenses of the faith, he propagated the following convictions.

the prophets foretold we found the
 "coming Jesus our Christ . . .
 (who was) born of a virgin,
growing up to man's estate,
 and healing every disease and every sickness,
and raising the dead,
 and being hated, and unrecognized,
and crucified under Pontius Pilate, and dying,
 and rising again,
and ascending into heaven,
 and being, and being called, the Son of God.
that Jesus Christ is the only proper Son
 who has been begotten by God.¹⁹³

This is not a complete statement of Justin's theology, but it is at the core of it. These phrases were found with reference to baptismal confessions, follow-up catechumenate material, or defense (*apologia*) treaties within his works. He was heavily involved with Christological issues. The virgin birth of Christ was an important theme in his two most famous works.

For the current investigation it is needless to elaborate on Justin's description of Christian meetings,¹⁹⁴ Eucharist,¹⁹⁵ and baptismal procedures.¹⁹⁶ However, it is important to note that they are more detailed descriptions of what was already discernible in mainstream Christianity. What was developing with Justin at the end of the Tunnel Period is a higher view of the documents which now make up the New Testament. He used phrases such as "it is written"¹⁹⁷ to refer to New Testament documents. The Gospels were considered "memoirs" of the apostles.¹⁹⁸ It appears, therefore, that Justin perceived that his practices followed the examples as found in the memoirs and other venerated documents. It is not surprising that Justin was among the earliest to see Apostolic writings at an almost Scriptural status, probably because Ephesus played a significant role in the development of the New Testament canon.

Ephesus and the NT Canon

The lives of Apollos, the apostles Paul and John, Ignatius, and Justin spanned some ninety years

¹⁹² See Helmut Koester's chapter "Gospel Quotations of Justin Martyr" in *Ancient Christian Gospels and their History and Development* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press, 1990), 360-402.

¹⁹³ Justin, *First Apology*, 31, 23, 46 and *Dialogue*, 85.

¹⁹⁴ Justin, *First Apology*, 67.

¹⁹⁵ Justin, *First Apology*, 66.

¹⁹⁶ Justin, *First Apology*, 61.

¹⁹⁷ Justin, *First Apology*, 49.

¹⁹⁸ Justin, *First Apology*, 66.

of leadership and insight in Ephesus. Numerous documents of common Christianity were either written or read here at this great city. The literary testimony of Christianity at Ephesus continued into the next century as did its sound doctrinal foundation.

Eugene E. Lemcio made two assertions about the church in Ephesus. He saw this church as a location of "the canon's prototype" and as a "microcosm for Christianity as a whole."¹⁹⁹ His thesis on the canon deserves special attention. He reviewed the primary evidence:

the New Testament specifically assigns 1 & 2 Tim. and Revelation (1 Cor. was written from Ephesus). Patristic tradition adds John's Gospel and Ephesians. Scholarly consensus supports the former (along with the letters) and least concurs on the congenial association of the latter. A case can be argued for Luke-Acts ...²⁰⁰

Lemcio made his case that Ephesus was a literary lodestone and a centrifuge for New Testament Christianity and he built his case for tying Luke/Acts to Ephesus. His observations are based on the following characteristics:

1. *Unity of documents.* (Johannine and Lukan). He notes the similarities that Luke and John have concerning the role of John the Baptist.²⁰¹
2. *The importance of a continuity* of "salvation history" and "unity" as essential themes for the church in Ephesus.²⁰²
3. *The emphasis on Jews who believed* in Jesus (Acts 14:1, 20:21, John 8:30-31, 11:45, 12:11)
4. *The concern of inclusion* of the Samaritan believers and of the followers of John the Baptist (Acts 8:12, 18:24-26, 19:1ff and John 1:35-37, 3:25-29-4:39-42). This is striking because John's original ministry and Samaria were "worlds apart"²⁰³ from Ephesus.
5. *Ephesus receives so much time and space* in the "Lukan enterprise."²⁰⁴ Of course, Luke accompanied Paul to Ephesus.
6. *The sense of guardianship* for orthodoxy was emphasized in Acts depiction of Paul's farewell with the Ephesian elders and in 1 John.

The church in Ephesus had a long-standing tradition of being a bastion. Paul's longest stay was in Ephesus. Ephesus is associated with his famous farewell concerns, letters written by him from there. In addition, the aged apostle John's late association with Ephesus and the testimony within Revelation to the same church's correct belief shows a consistent pattern. There was the high esteem from Ignatius, and the associated testimony of Justin, converted in Ephesus to a singular and highly guarded tradition at Ephesus. Western Asia Minor seemed to have been of the strongest areas of ancient mainstream Christianity, if not a beacon of normative Christianity for the entire church near the northern parts of the Mediterranean.

234. ¹⁹⁹ Eugene E. Lemcio, Ephesus and the New Testament Canon, *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library*, 69 (1986), 232,

²⁰⁰ Lemcio, 220.

²⁰¹ Ibid, 218-219.

²⁰² Ibid 219.

²⁰³ Ibid 219.

²⁰⁴ Ibid 218.

Similarities and Differences

Because Christianity varies at one locale over time, the question of similarities and differences as it applies to any one congregation between A.D. 62 and 150 can require a lengthy answer. However, there are notable comparisons and distinctions that can be made on a broader scale.

First, the testimonies only offered limited certainties, based on the circumstances. Jerusalem successfully persisted in holding a living connection to its Christian past. Rome had the strong literary base to Apostolic teaching and documents and viewed itself as a leader among the churches. Antioch held a strong proto-orthodoxy, a high view of ecclesiastic authority and perceived a sense of brotherhood. The attestation of Corinth reveals that churches could become involved in the affairs of other churches. Again, a sense of brotherhood existed. For Ephesus, a loose trajectory reveals that a consistent character of correct belief was one of this church's strengths. The collection of much of the New Testament is owed to the legacy of this church. As much as a family resemblance seems to have existed between the churches, diversity was quite apparent.

Ecclesiology varied over time and by location. Antioch was pressing for a monarchical leader long before other places. There is no evidence, other than much later retrospection, that Rome, Corinth, or even Asia Minor had such a position in place before A.D. 100. It is likely, however, that a key person was already identified in each church in places like western Asia Minor that the church allowed for its natural development after contact with Ignatius.

Some churches seemed like sources of leadership during various periods, while other locations seemed in need of outside support. Greece was the recipient of two letters of directives during this period,²⁰⁵ as were a number of churches of western Asia Minor. While Jerusalem was the first leading church, Ephesus seemed to have been of the most prominent stature until the death of John; Rome was next. Their claims were quite different. Jerusalem was where the Church began with Jesus and where the longest standing elders were posted. After A.D. 70, it became weakened for various reasons. The place of Ephesus was associated with the longest living apostle, John. The elevation of Rome was altogether different. It was based on the legacy of two apostles, its political significance, its concern for other churches, and the fact that many doctrinal battles were brought to Rome. What resulted in Rome would be of interest to other churches.

The differences of emphasis placed on various beliefs between regions varied. The mention of the virgin birth was more important in Syria, where Ignatius encountered Docetism, than at Rome where it is hardly associated with the vast literature used in the West.

Justin traveled from the east to the west and noted that there was a difference of opinion in the benefits of a Christian practicing Jewish customs. His view demonstrated more charity than others who disallowed any use for keeping with one's Jewish past.

Another great difference within common Christianity of the northern Mediterranean was the variety of genre and related emphasis within different sources. For instance, Ignatius of the east emphasized beliefs in each of his letters, while the authors of 1 Clement and the *Shepherd of Hermas* emphasized behavior. Writers from both ends of the Mediterranean emphasized the need for submission to the recognized posts in the churches. These differences seemed to have been related to

²⁰⁵ *1 Clement and Polycarp to the Philippians.*

the circumstances. The *Shepherd of Hermas* is at times mundane, even though it is an apocalyptic writing, than what one finds anywhere in the East from the same period.

The testimonies are unplanned pictures, though no simultaneously frozen pictures are evident. And even though there is no apparent contradiction between the testimonies and the four-fold unity thesis, the emerging picture of a basic unity is disjointed because each of the pieces of evidence are disconnected from the others.

THE BORDERING PERIODS

In order to best evaluate my assessments of Christianity in the Tunnel Period, the findings will be explained as a process between the two bordering periods: the Apostolic period and the Catholic period. The period from roughly A.D. 62-150 must not be seen as its own experiment, neither affected by the preceding period or affecting the following period.

Developments within the Tunnel Period are identified from the available *testimony* of a region which presumes gradual changes unless there is evidence otherwise. It is possible that explosive changes sometimes takes place, such a crisis event is the exception. David Bercot, in his work *Common Sense*, cautioned hypothesis of early Christianity which assumed large changes between Apostolic Christianity and Post-Apostolic Christianity without reason.

Today, we live in a fast-changing society; a society where change is *expected*. Change is usually welcomed today. But this trend is a new phenomenon in human history. In fact, our society has changed more in the past 250 years than it did in the previous *four thousand* years. Before the Industrial Revolution and the political revolutions of the 1700s, people strongly believed in doing things the way their ancestors did them. This was true in both the secular and the religious realms.²⁰⁶

The developments of the Tunnel Period must account for a reasonably explained link between the Apostolic period and the Catholic period for the regions within the investigation. After restating the developments of the earlier period (A.D. 30-62), moving to the period after the investigation (A.D. 150-200), and finally covering key glimpses from within the Tunnel Period, an expanded overview of A.D. 30-200 will follow.

Summary of the Situation Before A.D. 62

Both unity and diversity were present in the earliest church. The fellowship was an example of unprecedented unity on one hand, and diversity and tension on the other. Its unity was based on the content of the apostles preaching and teaching, which centered on the person and work of Christ. Most of what would be called division such as groups heralding false teaching and spirits of dissension were eventually not recognized as part of acceptable Christianity. However, there existed a great deal of latitude in the earliest times to encompass people from each of the Jewish sects.

There is also much evidence of diversity and even a fair number of tensions that remained part of the Apostolic history—the chief one was the Jewish Christianity of Jerusalem contrasting other missions, especially the apostle Paul's. While the Apostolic unity was impressive, it was not superficial and was quite vulnerable at times.

During the period which included the deaths of important Christian figures--James, Paul and Peter--there was an increase of dissenters, which resulted from a disappointment of unknown proportion over the delay in the *parousia*. Jerusalem was immediately facing a dire crisis associated with the conflict of A.D. 66-70. Churches in Antioch, Asia Minor, Greece, Galatia, and Rome would become important.

²⁰⁶ David Bercot, *Common Sense: A New Approach to Understanding Scripture* (Tyler: Scroll, 1992), 148-149.

This period ended with great success and imminent dangers. The successes included the ever-increasing expansion of mainstream Christianity. It traveled beyond what even any one person could know in an age where information traveled slowly. Separation and eventual isolation occurred when the earliest emissaries of Christ reached far-off territories; their success and failures would take a very long time to be reported to apostles which were always on the go themselves. Only Jerusalem with its *Diaspora* connections and its natural base for the movement could be remotely in touch with the expansion of the Church until the A.D. 60s.

With such success came indigenous perils that were so particular for each region and location that the apostles typically warned about them in most general terms. “The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons” (1 Timothy 4:1). Those “things” would vary from place to place. Impostors, counterfeit stories, hypocritical teachers, and others who would bring the authentic Christianity into disrepute were anticipated.

Between A.D. 58 and 67 the apostle Paul testified to both fantastic success²⁰⁷ and grave threats²⁰⁸ facing the church. The situation that the following generation was about to face within a short time was as follows:

1. There was a reasonably defined *gospel-kerygma* and *didache* that common Christian forms could discern. It was cherished and guarded.
2. There would be multitudes of churches which continued for an indeterminable time with the tradition they received from the apostles.
3. There would be numerous congregations which would encounter false members who, through power struggles, would successfully cause dissension, even while keeping the same basic beliefs.
4. There would be those who misunderstood the origins of their faith and would digress without knowing it. I mention this as a probability in an ancient world context where “Christian” sources could not always be easily confirmed and remote peoples were especially vulnerable to syncretism.
5. Due to isolation in some cases, churches and even entire territories would develop along different lines and different speeds on such issues as church government, views of Jew/Gentile relations, and other practices.
6. Alternative views of Christian origins were developing and even documents may have been compiled (none are extant) to account for such versions.
7. Each church and region did not have the same Apostolic documents at their disposal, and may have had pseudonymous works without their knowing it.
8. There were well-known persons and acquaintances of the apostles who were compelled to keep the faith, as they knew it, intact.
9. Each church and region was mostly on their own to keep their congregations intact, however, interaction with loyal allies of the Apostolic church was desired to protect the churches.

²⁰⁷ Col. 1:5-9.

²⁰⁸ Acts 20:28-31 and 2 Tim. 4:4.

From 150-200: Irenaeus and Tertullian

As Christianity entered the second half of the second century, those long-standing churches which were established by apostles or their disciples, looked to writings in their possession that eventually made up the New Testament. These writings were used authoritatively in response to the Valentinus and Marcion churches. As these alternative churches spread rapidly throughout the empire, the resultant separation of believers along the lines of "orthodoxy" and "heresy" first came to the forefront in the classical sense. The church in Rome was at the forefront of the battle where it had been since the mid A.D. 130s.

By A.D. 150, Marcion and Valentinus were well on their way to establishing denominations in the true meaning of the word. Presumably, the verdict had been given within a decade or so about the Roman church's excommunication of the original renegades at Rome. Irenaeus²⁰⁹ from Gaul, an evangelist and heresiologist, was involved in the debate. A few decades after the expulsion of Marcion and Valentinus, he commented on the state of the mainstream Christian church,

As I have already observed, the Church, having received this preaching and this faith although scattered throughout the whole world, yet, as if occupying but one house, carefully preserves it. She also believes these points [of doctrine] just as if she had but one soul, and one and the same heart, and she proclaims them, and teaches them, and hands them down, with perfect harmony, as if she possessed only one mouth. For, although the languages of the world are dissimilar, yet the import of the tradition is one and the same. For the Churches which have been planted in Germany do not believe or hand down anything different, nor do those in Spain, nor those in Gaul, nor those in the East, nor those in Egypt, nor those in Libya, nor those which have been established in the central regions of the world. But as the sun, that creature of God, is one and the same throughout the whole world, so also the preaching of the truth shines everywhere, and enlightens all men that are willing to come to a knowledge of the truth.²¹⁰

Sometime near A.D. 177, well after the period of this investigation, Rome was still vulnerable enough to heretical influences that Irenaeus left his post as evangelist of Gaul to attend to the battle. Previously, Irenaeus had been a missionary sent from Asia Minor under Polycarp to evangelize in France and later he was needed in Rome. He was a well-informed disciple on Apostolic Christianity through his apprenticeship with Polycarp, who had known the Apostle John. This leads the historian to question an early Roman See but admit an early catholic sense of unity.

The later tradition that attempted to build a See of Peter was only able to do so retroactively--not from surviving testimony from the apostles or of those in this period. Irenaeus rejected the idea of a dominant person ruling the church--"Nor will anyone of the rulers in the churches, however gifted he may be in the point of eloquence, teach doctrines different from these (for no one is greater than the Master)."²¹¹

Christians like Justin and Irenaeus came to Italy over a period of about twenty-five years and thereby preserved the well-being of the Roman congregation. In light of the Valentinus, Marcion, and even Montanist developments, the convergence of ideas battling for superiority in a place of foremost

²⁰⁹ See Roch Kereszty's *The Unity of the Church in the Theology of Irenaeus*, SC, 4,4 Winter 94, 202-218.

²¹⁰ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 10.2.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*

importance became a crisis point for the whole church, whether it knew it immediately or not.²¹² A great watershed event--the settling of *what is Christianity*--took about ten to fifteen years to establish in Rome (A.D. 136-150). This event was the battle for ancient orthodoxy against Gnosticism and Antinomianism. From that point on, between Justin's appearance, the pen of Irenaeus, the result was threefold: the emergence of the "rule of truth", an informal working New Testament canon, and a demarcation among Christians that caused a great stir for nearly a half century. With a good deal of fluidity on the canon, where one stood on the Apostolic tradition of the "rule of truth" would determine their eventual status within or without the Church. The "rule" served as a paradigm to recognize Apostolic documents and determined the lines of orthodoxy and heresy.

While the conflict with Valentinus began the questions of orthodoxy, it was Marcion that drew the most attention. Justin wrote a defense against Marcion that has not survived. Irenaeus tackled his errors and Tertullian wrote the treatise *Against Marcion*. Each of these writers wrote at different times and even depended on each other, emphasizing the concerns of the whole church.

Tertullian said that a Roman, Cerdo, was "an abettor of this blasphemy,"²¹³ another personality that did not have his way at Rome. Cerdo could not bring together the OT God with the God of Jesus Christ. Tertullian may have struck at the heart of Marcionism when he said, "the Marcionites build up their stupid system, bring forth a new god, as if we were ashamed of the old one."²¹⁴ Tertullian deduced from Marcion's writings that the heretic was attempting to explain from Isa. 45.7 that the Creator-god was the one who "created evil."²¹⁵

Tertullian unveils the thrust of Marcion's *Antitheses* (contradictory propositions) which was a polemic against the irreconcilable variance between the law and the Catholic gospel.²¹⁶ Marcion's gospel was a result of an anti-law argument, and hence, he became the foremost antinomian in all church history. Marcion attempted to drive a wedge between Paul and the Christianity of the other apostles, primarily around the Gal. 1:6-7 and 2:4 verses. As early Christians easily handled this error,²¹⁷ the chief refutations used against Marcion was the newness of his doctrine and the lack of ancient witnesses.²¹⁸ Point by point Tertullian, relying on the resources from Justin, exposed Marcionism.

Tertullian confidently expressed himself in other places²¹⁹ that true Christianity found itself in most of the known territories. The witnesses who took sides on the defining events at Rome stretch from North Africa, Asia Minor, to France. Tertullian describes of the successes of Christianity.

The Moors, the Marcomanni, the Parthians themselves, or any single people, however great, inhabiting a distinct territory, and confined within its own boundaries, surpasses, forsooth, in numbers, one spread over all the world! We are but of yesterday, and we have filled every place among you--cities, islands, fortresses, towns, market-places, the very camp, tribes, companies, palace, senate, forum—we have left nothing to you but the temples of your

²¹² From the earlier chapter on the nature of documentary evidence, there were three types: trajectory, isolated testimony, and explosion. The events in Rome form the latter because there was a great number of rapid changes as a result of the Valentinian and Marcionite heresies.

²¹³ Tertullian, *Against Marcion*, 1.2.

²¹⁴ *Ibid*, 1.8.

²¹⁵ *Ibid*, 1.2.

²¹⁶ *Ibid*, 1.19.

²¹⁷ *Ibid*, 4.17.

²¹⁸ *Ibid*, 1.19.- 21. And 4.4.

²¹⁹ Tertullian, *An Answer to the Jews*, 7.

gods.²²⁰

From even the testimony of Celsus, the pagan unbeliever and opponent, there was the “great church” which had spread far and wide. By A.D. 180 it could reasonably have been assumed that the mainstream Christian movement was in a disjointed union. Disjointed because of poor communications, slow travel, and the occasional aberrants that rose up from within. In union because the adversaries were usually on the outside and more effectively exposed everywhere along the same lines of the Apostolic tradition--the rule of faith.²²¹ It was this same tradition that worked as an inner canon that excluded erroneous doctrines, proponents and their literary works.

Glimpses Within A.D. 62-150

A multitude of passages emerged during the transitory period of the Apostolic and Sub-Apostolic period that are concerned with guardianship (1 Tim. 6:20; 2 Tim. 1:13; Heb. 2:1-3; 2 Pet. 3:17; 1 John 2:20-27, 4:2-3; 2 John 9-10; Jude 17-19). These confirm the concerns of the apostles. The comments of Hegesippus also corroborate with this, describing some of those who “lurked somewhere under cover of darkness. But when the sacred band of apostles had in various places reached the end of their life, . . . godless error began to take shape.”²²²

Besides the obvious action of tightly holding on to their Apostolic roots and placing an increasing value on their writings belonging to an earlier period, the churches within the Tunnel Period responded to "godless error" in at least three ways: (1) placed a greater emphasis on a solitary spokesman in each of the churches, namely a bishop. (2) existed in company with other forms within common Christianity. (3) practiced a general demarcation and disassociation with erroneous forms of Christianity. The latter was less formal and more instinctive. These three responses resulted at their own rate in each of the regions and did not necessarily mature evenly within this period.

Church Government and the Rise of the Monarchical Bishop

Jerusalem had long held a lead-elder post from as far back as one can determine. Eventually this office was called “bishop” by Eusebius. Jerusalem may or may not have been a prototype for the monarchical bishop practice. Clement of Rome and Ignatius of Antioch provide the two clearest snapshots in the development of the bishopric. There is much debate among scholars in the interpretation of the chief passage of Clement (1 Clement 44-45).

1 Clement supported the “permanent character” (1 Clement 44:2) of the office of the bishop which seems to be interchangeable with presbyter/elder (44:3-4). By *permanent character*, the definition given by 1 Clement was a succession of appointments upon the death of the person holding the post. This section was concerned with the ever-presence of an Apostolic voice. In an age with no apostles and no imagined collection such as the New Testament, these positions seemed pivotal.

It is key to evaluate the place of the bishop for Ignatius in light of the church at Ephesus before appraising this development from isolated texts that are usually critically scorned. The following characteristics mark Ignatius' view of the episcopate through the example of Onesimus.

²²⁰ Tertullian, *The Apology*, 37.8.

²²¹ See L. Wm. Countryman *Tertullian and the Regula Fidei*, SC, 2,4 Winter 82, 208-227.

²²² Eusebius, *EH*, 3.32.

1. Onesimus served as somewhat of a local point man, much as Polycarp did for Smyrna. The well-being of the local church for Ephesus was related to other churches through this position and relationship.
2. Onesimus was loved by his congregation as he loved them as well (1.3).
3. Bishops, like Onesimus, were appointed throughout the world to represent the mind of Christ to the world (3.2).
4. The bishop was spiritual and worthy of imitation (1.3, 5.1). In fact, he functioned as a surrogate of Christ, "regard the bishop as the Lord himself" (6.1).
5. The bishop acted as a conductor of a symphony and a lyre in which the strings were the elders, and members of the congregation made up the voices of the choir (4.1-2). Ignatius' illustration was inspirational, emphasizing harmony.
6. There was a strong sense that the meetings were officiated by the bishop (5.2-3), and was the most superior situation in which to meet. However, when two or three met to pray, they did have the "power."

When looking at the churches in western Asia Minor at the time of Ignatius, one discovers that a particular ecclesiology was being pressed for practical reasons. When a congregation was facing a difficulty, the role of the bishop was stressed, even with excessive pragmatism (Mag 7.1). The bishop exerted a greater *control* than might have been imagined from earlier forms of common Christianity. Dissenting influences were found near each of the other churches.

The church in Magnesia needed to be concerned with Judaism or Judaizing Christians (Mag 8.1ff, 10.3). The Christians in Tralles had to watch out for some strange heresy which might be planted among them (Tral 6.1-2). There were also evils seeking a root among the Philadelphians (Phil 2.1, 3.1-3, 6.1, 7.1-2). Judaism was part of the backdrop for this city/church. Smyrna faced serious threat from Docetists and some form of Christianity that renounced grace (*Smyrn* 2.1, 4.1,5.-3,6.2,8.1).

The letter to the Ephesians was written from Smyrna where Polycarp resided, (Eph 21.1). The letters to the Magnesians, Trallians, Romans, and the Philadelphians were written from Smyrna while Ignatius was with the church in Ephesus (Mag 15.1, Tral 13.1, Rom 10.1, and Phil 11.2). It is not clear when he wrote to the Smyrneans, although it may have been near the end of his stay. The severe situation at Smyrna may have affected the way that Ignatius' pressed for priority of the monarchical bishop in other letters.

The strongest statements concerning the role of the bishop came in his letter to Smyrna. Ignatius had just been spending time with Polycarp and other bishops from Ephesus. A whole host of servants appeared to have been with him as well. He had been evaluating the situation there, only to find that the docetic controversy had affected the flock. His response included controlled meetings. The famous Polycarp, an Apostolic father and pupil of John, was the bishop. Ignatius stressed that there should be no baptism, love feasts, or Eucharists without the bishop. The doctrines of the docetic group were a direct threat to all of these. It is possible that only the great Polycarp, the trusted bishop, would be able to counter these undermining doctrines. Polycarp, in turn, was concerned about the docetists when writing to the Philippians (7.1), yet he did not emphasize Ignatius' monarchical bishop.

Ignatius wrote the other letters with the serious situation at Smyrna in mind, and I suggest that he advocated a more pragmatic church polity as a measure for other churches as well. Even though the monarchical bishop appears to have been in place already, the strictest sense of these measures may

have been a concession to keep the churches in western Asia Minor safe. Ignatius imagined the *parousia* as imminent. It was clear to him that he and the other leaders must carry through with tasks that the apostles beforehand accomplished.

Through the influence of Ignatius neither Corinth (A.D. 96) or Philippi (A.D. 117/130) had the same form of church structure as did Antioch or western Asia Minor. Nor did Greece have the monarchical bishop as has been traditionally associated with Clement's Rome. In addition, neither did 1 Clement suggest this pattern while its authors attempted to provide input to Corinth, nor did Polycarp do so with Philippi. Nor is it clear that there was a *lead-bishop* Clement of Rome, for his name does not even appear in the text of 1 Clement. This document is from one church to another church. I suggest that there was an acceptable diversity in congregational governments and that Greece, by A.D. 96, had not yet subscribed to this pattern.

Rome was, however, employing this role by the A.D. 130s. The very mention of this office comes during a time of multiple voices seeking to influence the church there. Within a decade, Cerdo, Valentinus, and Marcion were seeking a hearing there and the latter two, allegedly, sought out the lead post in Rome--bishop. It is possible that the large attraction of Rome and the attention given this church necessitated establishing a reliable voice against heresy. 1 Clement is weak evidence for the monarchical bishop, yet strong evidence for the presbytery, a cooperative leading group of elders. Even in that, there could have been a spokesman name Clement. For Rome, the monarchical bishop, as later known, developed sometime between A.D. 110 and 130.

For Jerusalem, Antioch, Rome, and leading cities in western Asia Minor which adopted Ignatius' practice, each had monarchical bishops by the A.D. 130s. Other places would follow suit during the "Catholic period" from A.D. 150-200. The diversity of ecclesiology would disappear in larger churches, although for rural districts and towns during this period we know nearly nothing.

Inter-relations of Christian Forms between Regions

Throughout the Tunnel Period, there was a number of examples of Christians interacting and testifying about Christianity in other regions. In addition, never is a city or region disassociated because of a dissident form that existed there. It seems that the early witnesses of common Christianity believed that their own kind were represented everywhere; although it cannot be expressly proven now that this was the case. What can be proven is that the Christians of the normative kind believed that their breed existed from the beginning and that their reach was ever-extending. A "brotherhood" was imagined by some, if not all, of these five churches. Beginning with each lead church of this investigation, I will briefly cite occasions where relations between common forms are affirmed.

For Rome, Ignatius of Antioch honorably mentions Rome. This status of the city was testified to by the activities of Justin, who was from the East, and Irenaeus from France, who had been in Asia Minor with Polycarp. Justin presumably traveled from Ephesus where he was converted, having two tenures in Rome and seemed to be an explorer who was familiar with the church at all levels of society. In addition, members of the church at Corinth sought Rome's help in a crisis.

For Greece, the Philippians were addressed by Polycarp of Asia Minor. However, Ignatius did not address any of those churches in Greece, which was probably because he was unaware of the route that his captors were taking. The Corinthians were given lengthy addresses from the Romans.

The letter of 1 Corinthians seems to have been in the hands of many churches. Even 1 Clement eventually gained attestation in other churches; however, the leading church of Greece, Corinth, did not seem to have the stature that Rome and Ephesus did.

Ephesus and six other Western Asia Minor churches were recognized in Revelation, and each were aware of the status of the others. Ignatius wrote differently to Ephesus and Rome than he did to Smyrna. The former two appear to have had a higher stature and legacy in Syria. It also was evident that Ignatius thought that churches as he knew them were spreading everywhere in a similar fashion.

Apparently, the Jerusalem church of the Tunnel Period did not produce surviving documents. However, from the earliest of times, the church at Rome was taught to honor Jerusalem (Romans 15:24-26). If imitation is any indicator, it appears that Rome sought to do for the larger church what Jerusalem had done in times past. Justin, who represented both Asia Minor and Rome, believed that a showing of exemplary Christianity still would be testified to in Jerusalem.

Although the evidence of interaction is limited before A.D. 150, it increased in frequency by the time of Irenaeus and Tertullian. In spite of the meager quantity of references to relationships between the regions, every reference between common Christian forms of each region was positive, always respectful even when admonishing, sometimes affectionate, and definitely loyal. The relations between leaders/churches showed a common understanding and same ecclesiastical objective. Each were open to the influence of the other in the process of testifying to the gospel at their own locale.

The Co-Existence of Diverse Forms of Christian Groups

Some of the clearest evidence of dissenting forms existing alongside mainstream Christian churches comes from Revelation. There is a strong reality of these dissensions in the epistles of John and other literature; however, in cities in Revelation these dissenting forms were actually named. In Ephesus (Rev. 2:6) and Pergamum (Rev. 2:10), the Nicolaitans posed a problem. In Ephesus it was the “practices” of this detracting sect that was an offense, whereas in Pergamum it was their “teaching.” Ephesus stood strongly against them, and the church was held in high regard because they hated the “practices” of the Nicolaitans.

For this investigation it is relevant to point out that not only can an erroneous teaching cause dissension among Christian forms, so can wrong practices. Irenaeus said that the Nicolaitans “practice adultery, and eat things sacrificed to idols.”²²³ He admitted that he took his cue from John in Rev. 2:14-15; however, in Revelation this charge was leveled at those who followed the “teaching of Balaam.” Revelation then continued to state, “Likewise you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans,” in which the “Likewise” does not mean that they endorse the same things, but that Jesus also had this against the Christians at Pergamum. As it stands, we do not know what the “practices” were, only that some deeds were far enough off center to warrant a reproof.

First John also portrays those who “went out from us” as being false believers to begin with. Who was “us,” for John? The group that John addresses believes that the earliest Christian form was the one that went out from the beginning (1:1). They hold to the original message concerning Jesus’ real and incarnate life (1:2-3), and the fact that he was the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world

²²³ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 1.26.3.

(2:2). Discipleship was also implied within Johannine Christianity (1 John 2:6). 1 John represents clear lines of demarcation.

It is important to note that Revelation portrayed Jesus as being upset by a tolerant attitude about non-Apostolic teaching. In the same era, the elders in Rome who wrote 1 Clement, were as adamant. In the context of the overthrow of the elders, the writers stated,

“Be contentious and zealous, brothers, but about things that relate to salvation. You have searched the Scriptures, which are true, which were given by the Holy Spirit; you know that nothing unrighteous or counterfeit is written in them. You will not find that righteous people have ever been thrust out by holy men.”²²⁴

Whatever lay behind the problem between the younger usurpers and the elders at Corinth, ultimately, it was in some way a matter of “salvation,” and Rome was certain that the Christians themselves would be able to discern the error with the use of the Scriptures. There would be no acceptance of the dissenting group from the authors of this letter, but, upon repentance, there would be forgiveness. This letter was stern concerning dissenters and graceful with regard to those who turned from error. The Old Testament, as was obvious from the context was meant by “Scripture,” was sufficient for laying down the principles behind righteousness and unrighteousness.

Ten to twenty years later Ignatius was also sharp in his approach to dissension. Much has already been said about his associating unity within the congregations to their loyalty to the approved bishop. The strongest indicator about how Ignatius of Antioch dealt with dissenting forms may be seen in his letter to the Trallians.

I urge you therefore--yet not I, but the love of Jesus Christ--partake only in Christian food, and keep away from every strange plant which is heresy. These people, while pretending to be trustworthy, mix Jesus Christ with poison--like those who administer a deadly drug with a honeyed wine, which the unsuspecting victim accepts without fear, and so with fatal pleasure drinks down death.²²⁵

Ignatius was consistently intolerant of dissenters. Justin seemed to examine beliefs in their own right with more of an open mind. This usually led him to the same conclusion as his predecessors. There were matters which Justin consigned to human opinion --- eschatology and other developments. None of these areas were the issues that John encountered in Asia Minor, nor appear to have been causing the problems at Corinth, nor churches that Ignatius became familiar with. Justin also had an entire treatise against heresies that he offered to give Trypho which has not survived.²²⁶ Even though his other writings are like a catalogue containing select issues, we are without his exact procedure concerning heresies. We do know that he believed dissenters did not produce martyrs, they followed the devil, they were no more legitimate than those who carry the names of philosophers, and embraced a different philosophy than the one whose name they carry.²²⁷

There are more questions to be asked about tensions with Jewish Christian forms.

²²⁴ 1 Clement 45.1-3.

²²⁵ Trall 6.1-2.

²²⁶ Justin, *Dialogue*, 26.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*

Unfortunately, they cannot be adequately answered because of a lack of evidence. The whole issue of which Jewish forms survived A.D. 70 is a challenge. Some of the sharp rhetoric of Ignatius would have been at odds with some of those Christians who were in Jerusalem some sixty years before. How early did anti-Semitism occur?

There was a sharp line drawn between common Christian forms and those which practiced false teachings of the gnostic orientation, Docetism, and libertinism. Those who taught serious errors on matters of salvation and perpetuated practices contrary to the Apostolic heritage were also censured from the fellowship, or at least, this was the typical directive.

Salvation History

The term Salvation History, as far as this investigation is concerned, has to do with the continuous work of God in history, to provide a testimony to his existence, and to call men to him. It presumes, based on the Old Testament paradigm and the principles replicated in New Testament times, that God always has provided a covenant, and at least a remnant, and means to realize his calling. Creation itself served as a testimony for God to others so that they could seek him out and know him (Romans 1:19-20, 2:7). Because salvation had become specifically associated with the name and person of Jesus (Acts 4:12), and was testified to in many ways (Hebrews 2:2-4), the further history of salvation depends on a continual witness to Jesus Christ. The current investigation is not concerned with all aspects of this theme; however, somehow, through living witnesses and exemplary evidence known through surviving documentation there would be a succession to the earliest community.

For the period between A.D. 62 and 150, I am concerned with the success of a community connected to the apostles in passing on the salvation first preached by those who knew Jesus. What did those who carried on after the apostles collectively testify to concerning the Apostolic gospel?

In his treatise with Trypho, Justin possibly hyperbolized²²⁸ the fact that Christianity was now spreading further than Judaism had ever reached.

not even now does your nation extend from the rising to the setting of the sun, but there are nations among which none of your race ever dwelt. For there is not one single race of men, whether barbarians, or Greeks, or whatever they may be called, nomads, or vagrants, or herdsmen living in tents, among whom prayers and giving of thanks are not offered through the name of the crucified Jesus.²²⁹

The expansion of Christianity was no doubt continuing in this period of anxiety and uncertainty. Justin, first debating this point around A.D. 137-140 and admittedly embellishing the debate later after A.D. 150, wanted to be associated with the ever-expanding Christianity. Although he could not authoritatively affirm what each version of Christianity in the ancient world was, he had some reason to believe that there were churches in many regions and many levels of society in the likeness of what he knew.

All pre-dispositions on the issue of Salvation History affect the investigation of the Tunnel

²²⁸ Terrance L. Tiessen, *Irenaeus on the Salvation of the Unevangelized* (Metuchen: Scarecrow, 1993), 74. Tiessen was interested in the ability of Justin, Irenaeus and Tertullian to discern how far Christianity had reached.

²²⁹ Justin, Dialogue, 67.

Period. As David Bercot points out, some groups have preyed on this dark tunnel for explicating the basis for their own existence. “Did the first few generations of Christians after the apostles faithfully preserve ‘the faith that was once for all handed down to them?’ Or did Christianity collapse right after the apostles died, as sects like Jehovah’s Witnesses claim?”²³⁰ Bercot examined charges of both “deliberate” and “accidental” changes for Christianity of the second century. As a lawyer who has worked extensively with and translated second-century documents, his own estimation of this period is that the tradition (beliefs and practices handed down) of the larger church for the following period “remained intact”²³¹ with only slight changes. On this point I concur.

An Expanded Look at the Church from A.D. 30-200

It is now possible to look for the projectiles and occurrences that brought the Church from its beginnings at Jerusalem to its collective contest against antinomianism and Gnosticism, which were now represented by separate denominations.

While Jesus was with his Galilean disciples after the resurrection, he charged them to “Go, disciple the nations, baptizing them . . . and teaching them everything I have commanded you” (Mat. 28:18-20). Shortly after that, Jesus had ascended into heaven. When about 120 disciples were waiting in Jerusalem for the Spirit and a sign of power, they received what they had waited for and began their commission. This all began at Pentecost in which *Diaspora* representation supplied them with a large audience, many of which participated in Jesus’ suffering. From a great repentance and conversion at the preaching of Peter, three thousand were baptized. From this point on and for many years Jerusalem provided the year in and year out leadership that enabled the Church to face hurdles such as the admission of Gentiles and the circumcision controversy. Further sites were established in Antioch and Ephesus and distinctive missions were recognized by the leading apostles.

Eusebius gives a description for the period following the deaths of the apostles and their successors, “These earnest disciples of great men built on the foundations of churches everywhere laid by the apostles, spreading the message still further and sowing the saving seed of the Kingdom of Heaven far and wide through the entire world.”²³² In the earlier period, there were witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus (1 Cor. 15:5-6). In time, there were mostly those who knew the witnesses. Later on, an emphasis was put on the permanent character of the posts appointed by the apostles and the testimony of those churches themselves. Even these positions were endangered if they did not remain faithful to Jesus. A positive comment for the following period under Hadrian comes from Hegesippus through Eusebius, “Like dazzling lights the churches were now shining all over the world, and to the limits of the human race faith in our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ was at its peak.”²³³ Meanwhile, it was also facing a serious threat of those who held different versions of Christianity--Menander, Basilides, Saturnilus, and Cerdo.

Personalities from the periods of Trajan through Hadrian, like Ignatius, were crystallizing their Christian formulations. Others like Justin would be traveling and gathering data on the origins of the Christian faith. Whether a local bishop or a traveling philosopher, nearly all seemed cognizant of the growth that the mainstream church was having. Interactions between regions were being sought out

²³⁰ Bercot, *Common Sense*, 145.

²³¹ Bercot, 146.

²³² Eusebius, *EH*, 2.37.

²³³ *Ibid*, 3.7.

by the end of the 90s and even cooperation was beneficial (3 John :8). In the following period exhortations and encouragements were offered between churches whether they were solicited or not. Opportunities to find out about the well-being of churches from other regions were seized. A general interest in the condition of the Church was felt everywhere.

Memoirs and written formulations were becoming more important than they were in the past. Within twenty years or so of the conflict in Rome over Valentinus and Marcion heresies, a new period emerged which embraced precise creedal formations, hermeneutical principles, and discourses on the importance of apostolic tradition. It was these factors that led to the gathering and identification of literature that was acceptable for teaching and worship. Extraneous documents continued to be used for a long time, much past 200; however, the most ancient documents bearing the strongest Apostolic stamp of antiquity and usage were the primary sources of teaching in the Church.

Between A150-200, leaders from all over the Mediterranean championed Apostolic *kerygma/didache* and associated practices, and worked together to help the position of Rome, which is where a plumb line was eventually recognized. The leadership of evangelists, teachers, and bishops from France, Asia Minor, and Africa together affirmed the Catholic and orthodox position of the Church.

From A.D. 30 to 200 the methods of ministry and ecclesiology changed significantly. The sources of authority switched from apostles and their preaching, to the churches, their leaders, and surviving documents. In all, it was the same church that had matured and become an institution.

CONCLUSIONS

Common Christianity has been examined in the five regions for which the most available and reliable data exists. These regions are basically geographically adjacent to each other and provide a glimpse at the question of unity in a portion of the ancient church. It is noteworthy that for other regions where apostles and other emissaries traveled documentary evidence is not sufficient from which the modern researcher could draw certain conclusions. At this point, it is sufficient to say that my conclusion is vastly different from Walter Bauer's. I believe that there was a real unity, but this unity was displayed by different features because of factors beyond their control.

Before concluding with remarks on the nature and state of church unity, I will explain my original presupposition, contrasting my approach to that of Walter Bauer.

Presuppositions of the Investigation

Because an investigation of this sort cannot possibly begin without at least some presuppositions, I will mention six major predispositions, including my own, that have affected every attempt at this investigation. Each of these places a bias on the usefulness of the documents of ancient Christianity.

(1) The Anti-Catholic Protestant scholarship shows up in how one negatively treats developments that later were incorporated in Roman Catholicism. Institutionalism and the monarchical bishop are viewed through later argumentation and not as they actually happened. (2) Bauer's spell on liberal investigations makes the Roman church of the second century a culprit, and suggests devious motives and a conspiracy to misrepresent the truth of Christian origins. (3) Cultism and Sectarianism disdains the Post-Apostolic church because they do not hold to their type of particularism. (4) Hyper-Pauline Evangelicalism holds that the early church produced a dearth of Pauline theology; however, this position fails to recognize that the second-century Christians had already integrated Paul's intentions and perspectives into the predominantly Gentile church. Paul was only one of many Apostolic authorities in the earliest period. (5) Eusebian Romanticism accepts exaggerations and legends without inquiry and becomes enamored with classical Christianity without facing realities of the evidence itself.

The sixth view, which is the one with which I began, is a postulation of a positive belief of God's role in Salvation History. It seems to me that the other views are either prone to deconstructionism or reconstructionism. The dogma of Salvation History would not have been completely endangered by the conclusion of a disunified church. However, the question of whose rule of faith and canon to accept would have become very precarious. A Salvation History could have technically been preserved in a disunified church much in the same way it could have been in a disunified Israel. Nevertheless, evidence excludes the idea of a normative Christianity at odds with itself.

It is not unusual to arrive at a conclusion of sharp contrariety to the position of F.C. Baur and the Tübingen School. There is a general perception among scholars that F.C. Baur failed to properly explicate Christian origins because he utilized a questionable paradigm while approaching Christian evidence. It is another thing to controvert the alleged findings of Walter Bauer. His posture on the origins of ancient Christianity continues to receive serious consideration.

Walter Bauer's Conclusion

Before explaining my position on unity in the ancient period, I must present some assessments as to why Bauer arrived at a very different conclusion on the makeup of early Christianity. This was due in part to his methodology, which involved calling attention to geographical areas instead of a conventional focus on the surviving documentation. He used the documents only after he had already predetermined what form of Christianity thrived and appeared strongest in the given area. This approach seems to have been guided by his presupposition about the documents themselves. His method is the downside of his otherwise thorough look at Christian forms.²³⁴

Bauer also assumed that each region was primarily given over to a single form of belief regardless of what orthodox documents testified. This was his hypothesis--not a proof that he was able to establish. He would decide on which form the region was given over to, even though there was no contemporary documentary evidence for it. In order to identify the strands of evidence that would postulate a particular form for a given area, Bauer set aside much of the New Testament. On occasions he would expose the subtle data in the New Testament involving diversities, yet miss the glaring testimonies that more reasonably explain the rise of orthodox Christianity. He also referred to the later apocryphal Gospels extensively as being normative for a given geographical area for earlier periods. Thus late second-century antinomianism or Gnosticism, in Bauer's view, reflected a corresponding sect or gathering of the first century.

Bauer did serious redaction work with Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical History*. He believed Eusebius to be "a man whose devotion to the truth and whose honesty are above suspicion."²³⁵ However, he frequently made allusions such as that Eusebius "has been deceived," or has "utter ignorance" of a given situation.²³⁶ After stating that Eusebius's devotion and honesty are above reproach, it is amazing to what extent Bauer questioned the factual assertions and motives of Eusebius in his chapter on "The Use of Literature in the Conflict."²³⁷ Admittedly, Eusebius' history tended to be quite idyllic; however, Bauer attempted to demythologize the Eusebian portrait of early church history to an unnatural conclusion. In every tension between the ecclesiastical and the heretical, Bauer sees another equally or more legitimate form of Christianity being the non-orthodox form.

It is not surprising that Bauer concluded his inquiry with the judgment that there were many equal and ancient forms of Christianity that were opposite from each other. This is to be explained by his beginning point and method.

1. He was trained under those who possessed a low view of Catholic Christianity, basically his Tübingen perspective. Robinson wrote that, "though in Bauer's making of the church at Rome the bogeyman of second-century Christianity, we doubtlessly see a historian who had not completely freed himself of the influences of his roots within Protestantism."²³⁸
2. He persistently read his own assumptions into areas on which the sources when it would shed negative light on the orthodox position. Bauer commented on the fact that "believers from Philippi had appealed to Polycarp for help (Polycarp Phil. 3.1. and 13.1-2), while

²³⁴ Michel Desjardins, *Bauer and Beyond: on Recent Scholarly Discussions of Hairesis* in the Early Christian Era, *Second Century*, 8 (summer 1991) 65-82.

²³⁵ Bauer, *Ibid*, 10.

²³⁶ *Ibid*.

²³⁷ *Ibid*, 147ff.

²³⁸ Robinson, *BTE*, 15.

- apparently those of Thessalonica had not."²³⁹ Instead of using the evidence to lead him, he led the evidence, which he admitted was "conjecture"²⁴⁰ into a scenario in which he incriminated Macedonian Christianity.
3. The entire approach of *Orthodoxy and Heresy* read more like a suspicious prosecution than an inquisitive investigation. He turned every morsel of evidence that he could into an argument for superiority of heresy in a given region while ignoring evidence that vindicated the defendant: orthodoxy. He conceded that there are four churches in Asia Minor which "held to a form of Christianity that allowed Ignatius to consider them to be his special allies."²⁴¹ However, for the other churches he used unconvincing verdicts of Christianity in Antioch, Philippi, and Polycarp's Smyrna²⁴² as reasons to be cautious about generalizing on the orthodox character of Christianity in Asia Minor. For instance, he wrote of the "icy silence"²⁴³ of John and Ignatius about the churches at Colossae and Hierapolis.
 4. He almost completely ignored a wealth of data on western Asia Minor and avoided a treatment of this key region.²⁴⁴

In spite of Bauer's failure to properly illuminate the character of ancient Christianity, he shed new light on just how seriously heresy challenged orthodox forms. It is unfortunate he did this by questioning the integrity of those abundant witnesses whose testimonies to Christian origins corroborate on the major details of Christian antiquity. Although he does not do this in an unsavory manner, his defective conclusions have been taken at face value. The prevailing mistrust of ancient orthodoxy which has found its way into popular publications can be partly credited to Bauer. He has made his mark on a renewed, but naïve, fascination with Christian Gnosticism, a preoccupation with alternative Gospels, and an unusual interest in orthodox scandals that is visible at a glance at the local bookstore.²⁴⁵

I have already conceded that the outcome of Walter Bauer's research has yielded some good; however, I conclude my comments on Bauer's research with the following statement: If the same rules and playing field in which he engaged the New Testament writers and Ignatius and Eusebius were employed in an investigation of his own convictions and biases, his *Orthodoxy and Heresy* would be envisioned as a revisionist attack on Christian antiquity from an avowed Christian relativist.

The State and Nature of Unity in the Tunnel Period

It is important to qualify such terms as unity. Certain aspects under the auspice of unity were just not possible in the ancient world. Global organization and particularly safeguarded secrets were fanciful impossibilities. Such barriers as language and culture in a world of typically slower progress and communication meant that this investigation was unable to examine any unanimity at a specific moment in time.

²³⁹ Bauer, *OHEC*, 74.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁴¹ Bauer, 77. The four churches were found at Ephesus, Magnesia, Tralles and Philadelphia.

²⁴² *Ibid.*

²⁴³ Bauer, 80.

²⁴⁴ Robinson, *BTE*, 93ff. Thomas Robinson believes that Ephesus and Asia Minor were overlooked by Bauer and would have been the testing place for Bauer's thesis. A look at the table of contents of *Orthodoxy and Heresy* and a look at the documentary evidence of early Christianity raises a question. If Ephesus is a major documentary center of Christianity in the ancient world, why such a gulf in Bauer's research?

²⁴⁵ There are two recent works that show the influence of Walter Bauer's perception of ancient orthodox Christianity. See Helen Ellerbe, *The Dark Side of Christian History* (San Rafael: Morningstar Books, 1996), p. 1-2, and Bart Ehrman, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

Considering external and internal factors, unity in the early church must be postulated in its own setting. Because the Christian forms of each of the five inspected regions developed at different rates in response to different situations, four features were examined: (1) A singularity of Apostolic belief (*kerygma* and *didache*). This correlates closely with the concept of a rule of tradition and rule of faith. The central idea of a rule or canon of belief was clearly prevalent throughout the Tunnel Period. (2) An association with other mainstream Christians. (3) A continuity of practices such as baptism and the Eucharist. (4) A solidarity of ecclesiastic objectives. These four attributes capture how Christians in one locale might perceive Christians in another place. Under the circumstances already considered and for the four features already identified, the question of unity of the ancient church between A.D. 62 and 150 will be answered with a yes.

There was unity in the Sub-Apostolic Church from A.D. 62 and stretching to 150. From the events climaxing in Jerusalem concerning Jesus Christ, through the first *kerygma* from Peter at Pentecost and the necessary clarifications through the Jerusalem Councils, and the ministry of Paul all the way through the intrinsic proto-creeds of Ignatius and Justin, there exists a discernible unity of belief. This unity of belief primarily involved the person and work of Jesus Christ. Additionally, it involved the initiation practice of baptism and continuing practice of Eucharist. Each time Christians spoke of these two experiences with others who had inherited the like formulations through other churches, two important things happened. First, a shared experience created a heartfelt appreciation for the Christian enterprise in other places. Second, a process of learning from one another and their resources enabled them to more firmly understand their common faith. Although diversity of expressions were certain, Christianity in these five close regions learned from one another rather than diversifying to independent religions. In their minds, they were *one gathering*. Their common objective was to see that every level of society from the Roman senate to the nomad in the covered carriage had an opportunity to the same gospel and incorporation into the *ekklesia*.

The unity enjoyed by the early church between A.D. 62 and 150 might not be as idyllic as some imagine. It is certain that they did not hold regular world conferences, have a common allegiance to a pontifical representative or standardized and formal creed. Nor did they possess an agreed list of authoritative documents. They even did not even have the same opinions on religious matters such as eschatology, or the permissibility of Jewish Christians continuing their ancestral customs. Their understanding of ecclesiology varied from one location to another.

Nevertheless, such diversity would be expected in such a milieu, if not under all periods. Under the circumstances, the unity of common belief, association, practice, and objective seems to be about the best it could have been. These were strained circumstances for an illegal religion in the ancient world of Roman occupied territories on the northern part of the Mediterranean. The answer to the unity question is a qualified but confident "yes."

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