

ORTHODOXY AND HERESY IN WESTERN ASIA MINOR

ORTHODOXY AND HERESY IN WESTERN ASIA MINOR
IN THE FIRST CHRISTIAN CENTURY:
A DIALOGICAL RESPONSE
TO WALTER BAUER

By

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ABSTRACT

Was there such a thing as "orthodoxy" in earliest Christianity? That was the question raised by Walter Bauer in his classic monograph, Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity. Bauer argued that the traditional Eusebian reconstruction of the primitive church was markedly defected, and against that reconstruction, he contended that heretical movements of the second century had as good a claim to apostolic traditions as did the catholic movement.

Although I agree with Bauer that the traditional reconstruction of the early church is unsound, I do not find that Bauer has offered a reconstruction engendering any firmer confidence. I challenge Bauer at two points. First, in chapter three, I attempt to determine whether Bauer's reconstruction makes sense of all the evidence. Then, I analyze the process by which groups come to self-consciousness. That is a two-sided matter. One is the fixing of a pool of acceptable diversity in which a group relates itself to the larger world of diversity (chapter four). The second is the process by which a group excludes various other diverse positions (chapter 5). Attention to these matters makes possible a more sensitive evaluation of the complexities that confronted the Christian community as it sought to define itself.

Having confined my investigation to the most significant area of the Christian mission at the turn of the century, my work provides a fresh reconstruction of the primitive church in western Asia Minor at a time when the process of self-definition was becoming the controlling issue.

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ABBREVIATIONS

<u>A.H.</u>	Irenaeus, <u>Adversus haereses</u>
<u>Ant.</u>	Josephus, <u>Antiquities</u>
<u>Ap.</u>	Tertullian, <u>Apology</u>
<u>Dia. Try.</u>	Justin, <u>Dialogue with Trypho</u>
<u>E.H.</u>	Eusebius, <u>Ecclesiastical History</u>
<u>IEph</u>	Ignatius, <u>to the Ephesians</u>
<u>IMag</u>	Ignatius, <u>to the Magnesians</u>
<u>IPhil</u>	Ignatius, <u>to the Philadelphians</u>
<u>IPol</u>	Ignatius, <u>to Polycarp</u>
<u>IRom</u>	Ignatius, <u>to the Romans</u>
<u>ISmyr</u>	Ignatius, <u>to the Smyrnaeans</u>
<u>ITral</u>	Ignatius, <u>to the Trallians</u>
<u>Pol.</u>	Polycarp, <u>to the Philippians</u>
<u>Strom.</u>	Clement, <u>Stromateis</u>

CHAPTER ONE

THE QUESTION OF THEOLOGICAL DIVERSITY IN PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY

I

Diversity within Primitive Christianity and the Theory of an Early Orthodoxy

A. An Original Uniformity?

In the last century and a half of New Testament scholarship, radical changes have been made to the traditional view of the character of earliest Christianity--a view that had been held by the majority within Christendom from the second century onwards. That view was that the earliest church was free from fundamentally diversive theological interpretations in its initial stages.

Specifically, two points were made: first, "authentic apostolic tradition" was proclaimed consistently and without alteration in all areas of the primitive mission; and second, heresy was a later phenomenon and reflected a deviation from this original apostolic tradition.¹

Neither point is granted much credibility today. It is now widely claimed that the original uniformity of Christianity argued for by the second- and third-century catholic church was nothing more than an idealistic and strikingly unhistorical reconstruction

of the church's earliest period--a reconstruction reflecting not the realities of the first century but the ambitions of the second century, in which the developing catholic church excluded certain alternative (and equally ancient) interpretations of the Christian message and brought certain other formerly competing interpretations into a novel synthesis through heavy modification and alteration of their original intent. In other words, the concept of a uniform primitive Christian church is a product, not of the realities of the first century (in which radical theological diversity flourished), but of the wishful thinking of the early catholic element of the second century, engaged in a concentrated struggle to create a monolithic Christianity (reflecting, of course, its own biases).²

That the traditional view requires correction seems well enough established. Its faults are largely due to the polemical and theological contexts in which it was shaped. The developing catholic church was confronted on all sides by various interpretations of the Christian message. Some of these interpretations were stark denials of fundamental elements in the catholic church's understanding of the gospel, yet these various interpretations claimed apostolic roots, just as the catholic church did.³ In the context of these competing claims, it is possible to make sense of the catholic church's denial that rival interpretations had credible apostolic roots. The most obvious way to challenge the apostolic roots of rival interpretations was either to deny that the rival interpretations were as ancient as the

catholic interpretation or to contend that there had been a uniform message at the beginning, to which only the catholic community was faithful.

The repeated criticism voiced by present scholarship is that the traditional reconstruction of the history of the early church has been negatively shaped by the polemical and theological concerns of the age in which that reconstruction was first put forward. On that point, modern critics cannot be seriously contradicted.

B. The Traditional View

1. Eusebius

The traditional view is perhaps best represented in The Ecclesiastical History⁴ of Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea in Palestine about the time of the conversion of Emperor Constantine. His work reflects the basic understanding of the orthodox community during the two hundred years prior to his own time.

The view of the history of the primitive church controlling Eusebius's ecclesiastical history was that orthodoxy had credible apostolic roots, while heresy lacked such primitive roots and credible parentage. In places within that work, Eusebius states that view explicitly: in the earliest period, there was not a diversity of interpretations of the Christian message, but simply one, pure, apostolic proclamation; diversity was the result of the attempt by Satan to introduce false doctrine into the church (E.H. 3.32.7-8; 4.22.4-5). Eusebius's view posits, quite clearly, a first

century relatively free of heresy or of diversity, which for Eusebius was basically the same thing.

Walter Bauer, the chief critic of Eusebius, became, at times, almost enraged over what he conceived to be a blatant falsification of the history of the early church by the biased Eusebius (152-3; 161; 194 / ET:149-51; 158; 192).⁵ Yet, however much Bauer may have had grounds to distrust (or to dismiss outright) the reconstruction of Eusebius, that reconstruction was one that, either implicitly or explicitly, was held by every second- and third-century writer on the side of the developing orthodox church whose writings are known to us. The following writers are particularly significant.

2. Irenaeus

A view similar to that proposed by Eusebius is used in some detail by Irenaeus to discredit the gnostic systems that threatened the orthodox community in the second century.⁶ Irenaeus is especially well-known for promoting the idea of apostolic succession. The claim to apostolic succession was designed to restrict reliable apostolic tradition to the developing catholic church by placing the orthodox bishops, and only these bishops, in a credible and ordained line stemming from the apostles (A.H. 3.3.3; 3.4.1). Further, Irenaeus contrasted the unity of the catholic church with the diversity of the gnostic systems in his attempt to deny to the heretics any valid claim to apostolic tradition (A.H. 1.10; 1.11.1).⁷

3. Ignatius

Ignatius, one of the earliest Fathers whose letters can be dated with some certainty, offers no developed view on apostolic succession and no explicit view on the matter of the unity of the orthodox in contrast to the diversity of the heretic, both of which are primary ideas in Irenaeus's polemic. That the thought of Ignatius could have easily developed in the direction of that reflected by Irenaeus and Eusebius is certain, however, from the emphasis Ignatius placed on such things as the unity of the church under the bishop, the need to hold to the particular teachings taught in the bishop's church, and the sense that the apostolic message was to be found in the bishop's church--and only there.⁸ Had Ignatius been granted the option to choose between the view of the primitive church offered by Eusebius and that offered by Bauer, it is clear where his preference would have lain.

4. The New Testament

The Book of Acts is the classic example from the New Testament materials of an attempt to promote a reconstruction in which the diversity of the primitive era is reduced to a minimum. The Tübingen School used this document as the main support in its argument for a second-century synthesis of movements that in the first century were in opposition.⁹ It is not important to our question here to determine to what extent the Tübingen analysis of the thrust of the Book of Acts was correct. Suffice it to point out that the author the Acts does seem to reduce some of the diversity

of the earliest period.¹⁰

The question of how to interpret the numerous comments about tradition and truth in some of the other writings in the New Testament is a matter of dispute. Scholars who think that a sense of orthodoxy came late judge the sometimes sharp lines drawn by Paul and John, for example,¹¹ in terms of ethics rather than in terms of doctrine, or practise rather than belief.¹² Scholars who believe that a sense of orthodoxy was early find in such sharp drawing of lines clear evidence for a early sense of orthodoxy.¹³ Each side seems unconvinced by the other's reading of the material.

5. Origen: an exception?

Some have argued that Origen was the one Father who held a more critical view of the diversity of the primitive period. In appendix 1 below, it is shown that though Origen may have had a more critical view of primitive diversity, it is not in the context of Bauer's questions that Origen's view can serve as a credible correction of the overstatements made by the other Fathers. Origen, as clearly as any church Father, denies to the heretics of the second and third century any right to their claim to authentic tradition or apostolic parentage. That, in itself, widely separates Origen from Bauer's understanding of primitive diversity--in spite of whatever other comments Origen may have made about early diversity.

II

The Current Discussion of Primitive Diversity

A. The Assumption of Diversity

Modern scholarship has generally dismissed the traditional (or Eusebian) reconstruction of church history--a reconstruction that posited a uniformity in the early Christian proclamation and that denied to the heretics any valid claim to apostolic tradition. We can note the increasing confidence with which the Eusebian scheme has come to be challenged. Even in 1963, when Arnold Ehrhardt could complain that Bauer's work had not been given the attention it deserved, Ehrhardt was, nonetheless, able to say without fear of serious challenge that there was likely no original uniformity in the primitive Christian community.¹⁴ In the much more recent McMaster Project on Jewish and Christian Self-Definition in the Greco-Roman period,¹⁵ George MacRae notes that "diversity is now assumed."¹⁶ R. A. Markus, in the same volume of the McMaster Project, speaks of the "canonicity of diversity" to which the church is committed.¹⁷

B. Ferdinand Christian Baur and the Tübingen School

The contributions of two German scholars are chiefly responsible for the repudiation of the traditional understanding of the nature of the earliest church. Ferdinand Christian Baur, and under his influence the Tübingen school, asserted that radical

diversity existed in the primitive church during its earliest years. Baur contended that the view of the primitive Christian community reflected in the book of Acts and in other later works represents a synthesis of what, in the first century, had been opposing movements.¹⁸ Numerous refinements and serious qualifications were made and are continued to be made to the Tübingen view, but its basic thrust remains unchallenged:¹⁹ the catholic church of the second century reflects a unity not found in the first century and consists of a reconciliation or synthesis of major first-century interpretations of the Christian message, which in the first century stood apart--perhaps even in stark opposition.

C. Walter Bauer

In spite of the revolutionary changes brought to a study of early Christianity by the Tübingen school, it was Walter Bauer, three-quarters of a century later, who contributed most significantly to the repudiation of the general view of the character of earliest Christianity. His work, Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity, convinced many that significant theological diversity was reflected in the church from its earliest stages, and it is with that work that a considerable part of this thesis will engage.

The critical observations both of the Tübingen school and of Walter Bauer present a serious challenge to the traditional view of the character of the early church.

D. The Importance of Walter Bauer to the Present Discussion

The importance of Bauer's work in focusing the current debate concerning orthodoxy and heresy does not mean that the Tübingen challenge to the traditional reconstruction of church history was of little consequence; it simply means that it was Bauer's posing of the question that brought the full significance of early theological diversity to general recognition.

Although serious qualifications have been offered to Bauer's work, Bauer's attack on the Eusebian view of early church history is generally accepted as valid, if not in details, certainly in its basic thrust. Markus, in his contribution to the McMaster Project states that a project like the McMaster one is possible only as the Eusebian scheme breaks down, and he credits Bauer's work for providing the severe jolt that the "notorious" Eusebian scheme needed.²⁰ Daniel Harrington, who has some serious reservations about Bauer's thesis, states in a review of the impact of Bauer's work that early diversity is now well-established.²¹ Patrick Henry, who has some sympathy for the Eusebian scheme, nonetheless agrees that the Eusebian scheme no longer shapes the scholar's view of primitive Christianity to the extent it once had. He says:

In much current writing about Christian origins, the Fathers are no longer put on par with the heretics; they are put on the defensive, and it is assumed that the heretics are the true religious geniuses....The historian is not content to assure the heretics a fair hearing;

the historian has become an advocate in their cause.[22]

Robert Wilken, in reviewing the influence of Bauer's work, cited this passage from Henry.²³ Of course, Henry was exaggerating, as Wilken pointed out. But Wilken, himself one of the translators of the English edition of Bauer's work, admitted that Henry had a point.

Although Bauer's work is now fifty years old, it remains at the centre of the current discussion of the character of primitive Christianity for a number of reasons. For one thing, it was not translated into English until 1971. It is usually recognized that Bauer's work did not have an impact proportionate to its brilliance until this time, or perhaps a few years earlier, when, in 1964, the second German edition appeared.²⁴ Arnold Ehrhardt, in his own significant contribution to the debate published just two years earlier, had complained that Bauer's work "found far too little of the attention it so richly deserved--and still deserves."²⁵ The next ten years changed that. The second German edition was released, which Robert Wilken describes as "the single most important factor in the study of early Christianity in the last generation in the United States."²⁶ (Wilken wrote that in 1981.) The English translation was completed by a number of recognized scholars of early church history: Achtemeier, Kraft, Krodel, O'Rourke, Wilken, to name some.²⁷ Seminars were organized to wrestle with the issues raised by Bauer. One such

study group was held in Edinburgh, which sparked the interest of James Dunn, whose work, Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: An Inquiry Into the Character of Earliest Christianity,²⁸ has done much to disseminate or at least to reinforce Bauer's primary ideas, though that may not have been Dunn's intention.²⁹ I refer to these (the second German edition, the English translation, the recent seminars), and I cite from recent authors to show that even today Bauer's work still bears directly on much of the debate.

Given the general acceptance of Bauer's critique of Eusebius and the widespread acceptance of Bauer's own reconstruction, it is clear that one must take Bauer's theory seriously today. This is why the work I present here has been carried out in dialogue with Bauer's hypothesis. I have not, however, maintained the same scope or limits reflected in Bauer's work. My primary interest is in the Christianity of western Asia Minor, especially as it offers insight into the character of primitive Christianity. That is not exactly Bauer's focus. Yet, certainly at the heart of my work lie the disturbing questions Bauer raised about the character of early Christianity.

E. Problems with Bauer's Approach

My attention to Bauer's hypothesis should not imply my acceptance of that hypothesis. I am convinced that Bauer's understanding of orthodoxy and heresy does not provide the kind of insight into the character of earliest Christianity that is widely

attributed to it.

Admittedly, Bauer must receive a considerable share of the credit for the attention now being focused on the character of primitive Christianity. And his concern that the heretics be heard as much as possible from their own perspectives³⁰ calls us to a more responsible evaluation of the various interpretations of the Christian message proclaimed in the early period. These are worthy contributions to our field.

But Bauer's work is limited at fundamental points. For one thing, it provides a serious challenge only to the Eusebian reconstruction of early church history; it does not provide significant insights into the fundamental character of orthodoxy and heresy or of early Christianity. Too much credit, perhaps, is given to Bauer's work by the comment of Bultmann:

...Bauer has shown that that doctrine which in the end won out in the ancient church as the "right" or "orthodox" doctrine stands at the end of a development or, rather, is the result of a conflict among various shades of doctrine, and that heresy was not, as the ecclesiastical tradition holds, an apostasy, a degeneration, but was already present at the beginning--or, rather that by the triumph of a certain teaching as the "right doctrine" divergent teachings were condemned as heresy...[31]

Many scholars besides Bultmann have accepted Bauer's reconstruction and accepted, too, the assumption that the "antiquity" of heresy or the lack of uniformity in the proclamation of the Christian message in the first century is adequate cause to

reject "orthodoxy" as a meaningful concept to describe any particular tendency of the first century; in other words, "orthodoxy" is, for many, merely a word that describes what comes out of the Rome-dominated drive towards theological uniformity in the second and third centuries--its application to the church of the first century is misplaced and reflects theological and polemical concerns, not historical reality.³² But such a conclusion requires more support than Bauer's work supplies. That work provides an adequate basis for no conclusion other than that early Christianity was diverse and that the Eusebian scheme is defective as history.

F. The Fundamental Question

The theory of an early, and perhaps even definable, orthodoxy in the early period of the church can be seriously entertained so long as we can posit a uniform message proclaimed by all of the church's propagandists in all areas of the church's mission in the earliest period. Even when we are forced to admit a diversity of interpretations of the Christian message for the earliest period, the theory of an early, definable orthodoxy might still be entertained, provided that one of the many diverse interpretations stands out as apostolic and has clear connections to second- and third-century orthodoxy, while the other interpretations lack apostolic support and stand as forerunners of the later heresies.

But both views outlined above--at their core reflective of the

traditional or Eusebian understanding of diversity--are suspect. They fail to give full due to the presence in the first century of views judged as heresy by the second-century orthodox church or to give adequate attention to the radical diversity in theological interpretations of the Christian message in the first century which, through a process of synthesis and modification, were shaped into a novel, or significantly altered, orthodoxy of the second century.

Our problem is that when we speak of diversity that is judged by the early catholic church as inadequate (i.e., heresy) or of diversity incorporated into the theological position of the catholic church (i.e., orthodoxy), such diversity, as recognized diversity--whether suspect or approved--is not part of the traditional reconstruction of the history of the primitive Christian community. On this point, Bauer's work is invaluable. Like the works that followed in its wake, it offers a serious, though not always convincing, challenge to the historically inaccurate and theologically motivated theory of a primitive uniformity of the Christian message, promoted by the second- and third-century catholic element. And in light of the marked diversity in the primitive period, as long as the debate about orthodoxy and heresy defines its focus in terms of uniformity, Bauer's theory will appear to offer a coherent analysis of the history of the early church.

But any theory that demands uniformity within the sphere of a credible orthodoxy cannot hope to offer a satisfactory reconstruction of the primitive Christian movement, for such a

theory lacks sufficient sensitivity for the way in which diverse elements can be united into a non-contradictory unity,³³ and that, primarily, is the fault of Bauer's thesis. Several scholars are now recognizing this. Raymond Brown points to:

...an increasing chorus of objections that Bauer's hypothesis...leaves unanswered fundamental questions. For instance, was what emerged from the diversities by "winning out" more faithful to what Jesus of Nazareth taught and represented than were the Christian views that lost the struggle? [34]

Although Brown's statement is laden with qualifications (each of which is probably necessary), his point cannot easily be set aside. Earlier, Hans Dieter Betz challenged the participants in the debate concerning orthodoxy and heresy to consider two crucial questions: one, "which of the different interpretations of Jesus are to be called authentically Christian?" and two, "what are the criteria for making that decision?"³⁵

Related to the posing of these new questions, there has been a tendency in the discussion concerning orthodoxy and heresy to deal with as early a period as possible. For example, Georg Strecker, who edited the second edition of Bauer's work, provided an appendix on Jewish Christianity. He expressed some surprise that Bauer had not considered the Jewish-Christian interpretation, which Strecker believed could most convincingly refute the Eusebian view of early church history.³⁶ James Dunn, another scholar clearly influenced by Bauer's questions, directs his attention to the first

century, and although he credits Bauer's work with having brought about the change from the assumption of the unity of earliest Christianity to the assumption of the diversity,³⁷ he obviously thinks that the first century provides the more fruitful field in which to wrestle with the questions related to orthodoxy and heresy in the early church.³⁸

The discussion of the Christianity of the first century (rather than of later centuries, the period to which Bauer directed his attention) requires some understanding of the way in which diverse elements relate themselves positively to other elements. Bauer's discussion deals with only conflicting relationships, in the period when lines have been quite clearly drawn.

G. The Task in this Thesis

A reexamination of Bauer's reconstruction is needed. I supply that in chapter three by looking at the crucial junctures in Bauer's scheme. Although I do not intend my discussion there to provide a comprehensive reconstruction of the history of the primitive Christian community, I do present it as a necessary and far-reaching corrective to Bauer. This provides some contribution to the broader question of orthodoxy and heresy in primitive Christianity.

The second task of this thesis is to wrestle with the implications of the well-established diversity we find in the interpretation of the Christian message in the first century. In

chapter four, the emphasis on unity (rather than uniformity) will provide the primary perspective for a more responsible consideration of the forces defining Christianity and giving it its sense of coherence.

Finally, in chapter five, I will discuss the factors that yield insight into the relationship of orthodoxy to heresy, especially in regard to the process by which the self-understanding of the orthodox becomes increasingly defined in such a way that various interpretations are rejected. All three chapters taken together will provide a general context in which the concept of "orthodoxy" can be intelligible in the first century.

III

Terminology

Finding adequate and acceptable terminology is a problem in itself. Our terminology must not only be descriptive; it must be accurately descriptive, and it must be purely descriptive (i.e., neutral, non-polemical, and free of prejudgments).

A. "Orthodoxy" and "Heresy"

For many, the terms "orthodoxy" and "heresy" fail on both points.³⁹ They take the terms to be intrinsically polemical (and thus, offensive); in their view, the terms assume an idealistic

and historically inaccurate black-and-white distinction between sound and suspect belief (and thus are misleading).

In spite of that objection, I have already, in a few short pages, used the words "orthodoxy" and "heresy" several times, and as these pages stretch into chapters, the use of these terms will multiply. I maintain that it is possible to qualify the use of these terms in such a way that they make sense from the perspective of the historian, without demanding the historian's submission to the theological implication of these terms from the perspective of the catholic church.

My proposed limitations are brief. "Orthodoxy" is to be used for those theological positions that came to be incorporated into the developing catholic church. "Heresy" is to be used for those theological positions that were excluded from the developing catholic church. In other words, whatever is judged by the catholic community to be true, that I call orthodox; whatever is judged by the catholic community to be false, that I call heretical. It is another matter whether these terms, as used historically, specify, as well, what beliefs are true and what beliefs are false from any perspective other than that of the early catholic community. It may be that the lines between what is true and what is false will need to be redrawn. It is doubtful, however, that the primitive church can be adequately understood if the lines are eliminated. But, again, that is the kind of question that a thesis like this is

intended to throw some light on.

A further accommodation in the terminology that I use is that often I have used the terms "early catholic church" or simply "catholic church" for what is often called the orthodox church. But I have not made that a hard-and-fast rule, for I do not see that it is either a necessity or an improvement to disposed altogether of the term "orthodox church."

B. Gnosticism

Then there is that body of terms related to gnosticism. I have not found it necessary to distinguish sharply among gnosis, proto-gnosticism, gnosticism or docetism.⁴⁰ Wherever I could clearly qualify my subject, I have done so. For example, I have sometimes used the term "second-century gnosticism" for the full-blown gnostic systems opposed by men like Irenaeus. And I have restricted the term "docetism" to the groups attacked in the Johannine and the Ignatian letters. Whether docetism can properly be included under gnosticism is difficult to say,⁴¹ and generally I intend neither to include it or exclude it but simply to identify a group about which at least the charge of docetism is credible.

The problem of what to do with gnostic-like elements in the first century remains. I am happy to leave ambiguous what was ambiguous, and as far as I can determine, the early stages of

gnosticism and the relationship between the numerous gnostic-like ideas reflect what was probably a real enough ambiguity within the earliest period itself.⁴²

IV

The Primary Area for Study

A. The Major Centres

Only four centres commend themselves as areas for potential insight into the character of primitive Christianity. They are the cities of Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus and Rome. I speak of cities rather than some larger political or social unit because the four cities mentioned above seem to have exercised a special role in the shaping and propagation of the Christian message and seem to have dominated the larger political units of which they were leading cities.⁴³ We could broaden our categories, I suppose, and speak of Palestinian, Syrian, west Asia Minor and Latin Christianity,⁴⁴ but that does not really seem to be necessary, given the clear leadership within the church that the assemblies in these four cities exercised.

In a study such as this, one could, on the one hand, attempt to examine each of the several centres we know to have been important in the early period, or one could, on the other hand, select the centre most likely to yield the surest results, and exclude the other centres from investigation. I have chosen the

latter route for two reasons. First, of the four primary cities, only Ephesus seems to offer the extensive kind of material we need for our study. (I say this fully aware of the trend in some recent studies to concentrate particularly on Antioch and Rome, sometimes at the expense of Ephesus.)⁴⁵ Second, with that trend to concentrate on Antioch and Rome, the contribution of Ephesus to the development of Christianity is often forgotten. This is perhaps especially so in regard to the significant contribution of Ephesus in working out clear boundaries between adequate and suspect belief. My examination of Ephesus and western Asia Minor is intended to commend this area as one yet deserving of considerable attention.

My choice of the area is, primarily, a practical one--the issues I wish to consider are more likely to be resolved from an examination of Ephesus than of other significant centres of Christianity. An additional but secondary gain from this study will be that a neglected centre of the early church will be given some recognition for its significant contributions to what has been generally known as orthodoxy.

In the next chapter, I will explain in detail why Ephesus and western Asia Minor is the area where the question of the nature of the primitive Christian community is most likely to be resolved. Here I wish to explain briefly why an examination of other significant centres is less likely to resolve the question of the character of earliest Christianity.

B. The Church at Rome

First, regarding Rome: it was the church there that Bauer proposed as the driving force in the formation and the consolidation of the second-century orthodox movement.⁴⁶ But several things make Rome an unfruitful centre for the study of our questions.

For one thing, we have only scanty information about the condition of the church in Rome until well into the second century.⁴⁷ Even the Rome of the 90s (the earliest period of that church's history discussed by Bauer)⁴⁸ is considerably later than Jerusalem of the 30s, Antioch of the 40s or Ephesus of the 50s. Further, the quantity of literature that is associated with Rome for the early period is strikingly meagre compared to the quantity of material associated with Ephesus.

Conceivably, a rigorous examination of the first-century materials relevant to Rome might supply us with valuable information about the state of earliest Christianity there.⁴⁹ For the questions of orthodoxy and heresy, however, little is likely to be found. The earliest picture of the church in Rome is one of the church against its persecutors (e.g. the fire at Rome under Nero and the concerns expressed in the letter known as 1 Peter); internal church conflicts are not addressed. That does not mean, as Bauer assumed, that Christianity in Rome was relatively uniform and free of heresy.⁵⁰ It simply means that the evidence we have for the

earliest period of the Roman church relates to problems apparently considered more serious to the survival of the church than whatever doctrinal disputes may have been present. We do know that by the middle of the second century a host of heretics had found their way to Rome.⁵¹ Undoubtedly, the Roman reaction to these heretics is of considerable significance in the history of the conflict between orthodoxy and heresy, but Bauer certainly failed to represent the situation accurately when he contended that the response of the church at Rome was the first organized response to the problem of heresy, as several of his critics have been quick to point out.⁵²

I set aside, then, the centre that Bauer considered fundamental to the question of orthodoxy and heresy in primitive Christianity. I do so not because Rome is without its problems with heretics but because relevant literature for the church there is either late or scarce.

C. The Church in Jerusalem

Both Jerusalem and Antioch have their appeal as centres in which something might be learned about the character of primitive Christianity, especially regarding any early attempt to discriminate between sound belief and suspect belief. Jerusalem was the mother-church, and we do know of a dispute that occurred there relatively early (the dispute between the "Hebrews" and the "Hellenists").⁵³ We also know that a theological difference may have been at the root

of this conflict, though the Acts' account that the dispute had a practical side (the hellenists' widows were neglected) is not to be dismissed.⁵⁴

Yet, though this problem in Jerusalem may be of significance in a discussion of orthodoxy and heresy, we really know so little about the issue and its resolution that most of what we could say would be speculation. Some scholars, to be sure, have attempted to trace the history of the hellenists after their departure from Jerusalem (a departure which, according to the author of Acts, was due to external persecution rather than to internal church hostilities in the Jerusalem community).⁵⁵ But significant disagreements in the reconstructions of the history of the hellenists exist.⁵⁶ Even if, then, the conflict between the Hebrews and the Hellenists may have been of considerable significance (as seems likely enough), the literature is generally obscure on the point and the dispute thus provides little more than muted testimony for our discussion of the conflict between orthodoxy and heresy. And, more important, the central issue of the dispute, whatever it was, has little connection with the issues of the classical heresies we generally think of when we discuss orthodoxy and heresy in the early church.

Again, the lack of written material from the Jerusalem community poses a problem. Although isolated attempts have been made to place particular documents in the Jerusalem area, little has

been plausibly established.⁵⁷ Jerusalem is barren compared to Ephesus.

D. The Church at Antioch

Antioch is little different. We know of a dispute in the early period; a theological issue seems to be at stake (though it seems it was the practical aspect that was emphasized);⁵⁸ and the conflict seems to result in some kind of separation, though neither a temporary nor a permanent division of the Christian community need have occurred.⁵⁹ From that time, admittedly, Antioch seems to have ceased to be a primary base for Paul's ministry. John P. Meier not only argues that Paul was defeated in Antioch (as many scholars have argued), but he contends that Paul turned from Antioch to Jerusalem.⁶⁰ This questionable judgment was based mainly on the accounts of Paul's visits to Palestine recorded in Acts.⁶¹ One might just as credibly contend that Jerusalem simply continued to function for Paul as it always had (as the mother-church to which all owed special allegiance); what changed may have been simply the base for operations (from Antioch to the more westerly centres of Corinth and Ephesus), and this change may have reflected practical considerations rather than polemical or theological ones.

Certainly, the issues in Antioch are nothing like those that are central to the classical disputes between orthodoxy and heresy.

Whether Paul turned from Antioch to Jerusalem, and having turned, made some sort of novel alliance with Jerusalem, his writings do not suggest that he judged the leaders of Antioch as outside of the community of the redeemed. This does not mean, however, that Paul refused to draw the line between the tolerable and the intolerable (contrary to Bauer, 236-7/ET:234-5). Paul can, and does, exclude some believers,⁶² but the leaders of Antioch (or of Jerusalem) never are placed in that group. Whatever we may say, then, of Paul's break with the church at Antioch and his organization of a fairly independent mission, Paul does not see the break in terms of a separation between orthodoxy and heresy, though in the case of some Christians, he seems to view separation in precisely those terms.⁶³ Thus, Paul's dispute in Antioch would not seem to parallel the situation we confront when the classic questions of orthodoxy and heresy are raised.

Nor is this the only reason to pass up a study of Antioch for a study of Ephesus. Ephesus is considerably more attractive in the quantity of literature available too. Unlike Ephesus, which has several documents both early and relevant to the question of heresy (see the next chapter), Antioch has almost no literature that can be associated with it with any certainty, and even what might be, with some generosity, ascribed to it, lacks the kind of interest in the problems of orthodoxy and heresy that is central to numerous documents associated with western Asia Minor.⁶⁴

E. The Centre for this Study

We are left with Ephesus and the area of western Asia Minor. What does the Christianity of this area tell us about the character of earliest Christianity, and, particularly, how does this Christianity aid us in determining the significance of the diversity that marked the Christianity of the earliest period?

These are our general questions.

CHAPTER TWO

EPHESUS AND WESTERN ASIA MINOR: THE KEY CHRISTIAN CENTRE 70-100 C.E.

I

Important Early Christian Centres

Four cities stand out as important Christian centres in the early period. They are, as I have noted in the introduction, Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus and Rome. My omission of Edessa and Alexandria is intentional, for though Bauer considered them key centres, their importance in the earliest period cannot be demonstrated.¹

I have already explained why Jerusalem, Antioch and Rome are unlikely to provide the kind of material we need to gain significant insight into the character of earliest Christianity, especially as our questions relate to the ability, or the attempt, on the part of the early church to discriminate between adequate and inadequate belief. In this chapter, I turn my attention to Ephesus and the west Asia Minor area.

First, I will discuss the features of the material associated with that area that give some promise of insight into the character of early Christianity. Then I will discuss, somewhat briefly, the

political and religious character of the area. This will help to set my study within the broader context in which the developing church found itself. I have divided this latter section into two parts: the Pagan Character of the Area and the Jewish Character of the Area. A number of comments will be made about the Christian character of the area as well, but these will be of a general nature. The detailed examination of the character of the Christianity of western Asia Minor is the primary interest of this dissertation as a whole, and chapters three and four are given entirely to this question.

II

Ephesus and Western Asia Minor: The Extensive Documentary Evidence

Ephesus and the region of western Asia Minor are, for a number of reasons, an attractive area to which to address our questions. First, the disputes raised here have, at their heart, the fundamental issues of the orthodoxy/heresy debate. Second, the literature relevant to the questions of orthodoxy and heresy is surprisingly extensive when compared to that which has survived from any other region. In fact, almost all of the classic attacks against heresy in the early period come from the Asia Minor area.

Within the sixty years from the founding of the church in Ephesus to the martyrdom of Ignatius, the bishop of Antioch, who left extensive correspondence with the churches in western Asia

Minor, document after document raises some question about the problem of heresy. To begin with the latest literature: of the seven letters written by Ignatius, five were addressed to churches in western Asia Minor; one was addressed to Polycarp of Smyrna, a bishop of one of these churches. In each letter, Ignatius confronts the problem of heresy head-on.² The same issue is at stake in the letter of Polycarp to the Philippians, written only a few days later.³ The slightly earlier Apocalypse, in its introductory "seven letters" to west Asia Minor churches, focuses on suspect teachings in these churches.⁴ The Pastoral epistles, with connections to Ephesus and Crete are somewhat more difficult to date but certainly earlier than the letters of Ignatius,⁵ reflect a similar concern and call for some discrimination between adequate and inadequate belief;⁶ so, too, the Johannine material--especially the letters, where we find perhaps the sharpest lines drawn between acceptable and suspect belief of any of the writings in the canon.⁷ (It is a matter of some dispute whether the Johannine material reflects the situation in western Asia Minor, though a credible argument can be made that it does.)⁸ The author of the Book of Acts provides further evidence of the problem with heresy in the churches of western Asia Minor. Although numerous churches are mentioned in the work, Ephesus plays a key role to the story in a number of ways.⁹ Of particular importance to our discussion here is Paul's final speech to the elders of Ephesus. Its theme is the prediction of the rise of heresy in the church after Paul's

death (Acts 20.17-38). The letter to the Colossians reflects a problem with suspect views in a church about a hundred miles to the east of Ephesus, and the letter addressed to the Ephesians reflects some of the same concerns.¹⁰

Several other early documents may reflect the concerns of the churches in the area, though in none of the following documents is the problem of heresy accented. Some, if not all, of the prison epistles are thought to have been written from Ephesus.¹¹

Chapter 16 of Romans is believed by many scholars to have been originally a separate letter to Ephesus, though the case is not convincing.¹² 1 Peter includes the province of Asia in its address, and 2 Peter professes to be to the same area.¹³

Further, there is Paul's own witness to the success of his mission in Asia Minor, recorded in a letter written from Ephesus to the church at Corinth.¹⁴ Some scholars have placed the Epistle to the Hebrews in this area, as well.¹⁵ Koester argued that, of the Synoptic Gospels, only Matthew does not reflect the western Asia Minor church situation. The Gospel of John, he thinks, could also be from this area, though he believes that Syria is the more likely setting.¹⁶ All things considered, only two of the twenty-seven documents of the New Testament are without some connection to western Asia Minor, though some of the connections are, admittedly, not compelling.¹⁷

With such a quantity of literature, we have the potential, at least, for finding answers to our questions about the character of

early Christianity, especially as it may reflect a consciousness of orthodoxy and heresy. In fact, the material from western Asia Minor offers considerably more controls than we are likely to find for any other area. Within a seventy-five mile radius, ten churches are addressed, and generally these are churches in the most important cities.¹⁸ A number of these churches are addressed by more than one church leader,¹⁹ and for the church at Ephesus we have several church leaders who address the situation there.²⁰ Several of the churches are addressed by the same church leader.²¹ Obviously, such a situation as we have here is preferable to a situation in which we have one solitary voice addressing a single church, as would be the case for the primitive church in almost any other area.²²

More significantly, as I have already noted, most of this material takes the problem of heresy seriously; indeed, it is the primary concern of much of the material. We have, thus, both in quantity of material and in the content of that material, a situation for western Asia Minor unmatched by any other area to which to address the questions of the orthodoxy/heresy debate.

Granted that western Asia Minor provides us with a significant quantity of literature that takes the problem of heresy seriously, the question remains whether the area is of sufficient importance in early Christianity to represent anything more than a theological back-water or an esoteric dead-end in the early church's history. Unless the Christianity of western Asia Minor stands within the

mainstream of the traditions that flow into the Great Church, our observations about the self-understanding of the Christians in this area may give us few clues about the nature of earliest Christianity generally.

Two trends should be noted here. One trend recognizes that Ephesus was a key centre in the church's missionary expansion and in its theological development. The other, quite in contrast, dismisses outright, or passes over in silence, the contribution of Ephesus to the developing church.

III

The Importance of Ephesus Recognized

Numerous comments have been made over the years concerning the importance of Ephesus and the west Asia Minor area to the developing church. The most influential attempts to argue for the importance of Ephesus are now somewhat dated. Adolf Harnack spoke of Ephesus as the "third capital of Christianity" and said that for a while "it looked as if Ephesus was actually destined to be the final headquarters of the faith."²³ B. H. Streeter recognized that after 70 C.E., Ephesus, along with Antioch and Rome, were the important Christian centres. Streeter admitted that after 200 C.E., Alexandria replaced Ephesus as a leading centre, but that change does not affect the period of our study here.²⁴ G. S. Duncan²⁵ and E. J. Goodspeed²⁶ both recognized the importance of Ephesus and promoted that view in some detail. Goodspeed even argued that

by 90 C.E., Ephesus was the leading centre and quoted with approval Harnack's comment that Ephesus was the second fulcrum of Christianity after Antioch.²⁷

Numerous other scholars have given passing attention to the prominence of Ephesus and the west Asia Minor area in the primitive church. F. F. Bruce thinks that Asia was, for centuries, the strongest Christian province,²⁸ and James Moffatt was prepared to say that, in the early period, it was Asia Minor, not Rome, that was the leading force in the Christian movement.²⁹ Helmut Koester speaks of the "quick-growing" Christian communities of Asia Minor;³⁰ J. G. Davies spoke of Asia Minor as the Christian country "par excellence" at the end of the Apostolic age,³¹ Jean Daniélou recognized that Ephesus was a centre for Christianity in the late first century,³² and Raymond Brown, in his discussion of the Johannine community (which he placed in the west Asia Minor area) states that, given the presence of Christian groups representing a wide spectrum of Christian interpretation, this area could not have been a "back-water."³³

Although passing reference generally is given to the importance of Ephesus and western Asia Minor in histories of the early church, even this passing reference is now frequently challenged, or consciously disregarded. W. H. C. Frend's recent work on the early church is a refreshing exception. He says that western Asia Minor was the main centre for Christianity for a century and a half,³⁴ and he calls Ephesus the "radical point"

of the church.³⁵

IV

The Importance of Ephesus Challenged or Overlooked

Several trends in New Testament scholarship reflect the growing neglect of the importance of Ephesus in histories of the primitive church. For one thing, it is now customary to speak of Paul's defeat in Antioch, and to contend that his mission took on a colouring not reflected by the larger church.³⁶ Since Ephesus was the chief city of Paul's most successful mission, the kind of Christianity we find there is somewhat discredited because of Paul's supposed defeat and separation from the mainstream.³⁷ The second trend is closely related to the first. The supposed defeat of Paul in Antioch is, from another perspective, the victory of Peter.³⁸ The third trend is the recognition that Paul was either misunderstood, or simply not regarded at all, by the orthodox church engaged in a violent struggle with gnosticism in the second century.³⁹

Paul's formative influence on the church is often, in light to these trends, taken to be minimal: his impact on the first-century church is proportionately reduced.⁴⁰ When this is done, Antioch and Rome appear attractive as centres for the study of early Christianity.⁴¹

Frequently, Ephesus is not even mentioned as ever having been

one of the chief centres of early Christianity; the centres of importance are listed in the following chronological order:

Jerusalem first; Antioch, for a brief time, second; and Rome, by the early second century, the third centre of the church. Kirsopp Lake said that after Antioch, it was Rome that was the most important centre, even in the first century.⁴² Jaroslav Pelikan follows the same order: after 70 C.E., he says, it was not Rome and Jerusalem but Rome and Syria that were the chief centres of the church.⁴³ Although Pelikan is here emphasizing the shift from Jerusalem to Syria, he assumes the importance of Rome while neglecting western Asia Minor.

One might well ask: where is Ephesus? Is it such a minor centre in early Christianity that it cannot hope to compete with the centres of Jerusalem, Antioch and Rome? Or, can it perhaps demand for itself a place as the primary centre of Christianity in the late first century, between the recognized centres of Antioch and Rome?

V

Indicators of the Importance of western Asia Minor in the Primitive Church

A. The Canon

The canon, itself, points to the importance of Asia Minor in the primitive church. As we have already seen (pp. 29-33), numerous writings of the canon reflect an Asia Minor context; in fact, no other area is so well represented in the canon. We would exaggerate

the point were we to call the canon an "Asia Minor" canon, but if any area has a special claim to the canon, it clearly is this area.

The plausibility of the theory of a collection of Paul's letters in Ephesus,⁴⁴ and of the impulse towards defining the canon, particularly against the influence of Marcion,⁴⁵ point to Asia Minor as anything but an isolated theological backwater.

B. A Centre of Emigration from Palestine

According to a tradition recorded in Eusebius, a number of prominent Palestinian Christians immigrated to western Asia Minor (E.H. 3.31.2ff; 5.24.2ff). Some scholars have argued for a significant immigration to Asia Minor about the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, and even if a significant immigration cannot be established beyond doubt, it seems likely that many others besides prominent leaders would have made a similar move to the area.⁴⁶ Whether these Christians immigrated there because the church was well established in this region, or for some other reason, the immigration would, in any case, strengthen the prestige of the church in the area, as some of the immigrants were prominent church leaders.

C. Prominent Church Leaders

Paul was not the only first-generation Christian of some note to be associated with western Asia Minor. The Apostle John and the mother of Jesus are associated with the area too, as are Philip and

his daughters.⁴⁷ Another apostolic witness, an Aristion, is mentioned by Papias.⁴⁸ Possibly some memory of Timothy's presence there is reflected in I Timothy.⁴⁹ And even Peter is associated with the area.⁵⁰ Around the turn of the century, there may have been a John known by the name, "The Elder."⁵¹ And, of course, there is Papias, the bishop of Hierapolis, and Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna.

How reliable the traditions concerning the earlier figures are, is a matter of dispute.⁵² Most of the reports come from Eusebius. Eusebius says he is dependent for his information on a letter from Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus when Victor was bishop of Rome (c. 191). Polycrates was attempting to deny to Victor the kind of power Victor was assuming over Ephesus and western Asia Minor in regard to the Easter controversy, and as a counter-claim against this extension of power, Polycrates claims that Ephesus has a great company of credible bearers of apostolic tradition.⁵³ In this context, Polycrates would not have consciously passed over apostolic witnesses associated with western Asia Minor. That his list is as restrained as it is (at least for the apostolic witnesses)⁵⁴ speaks for its accuracy.

For the special position of Ephesus, Ignatius's comments are particularly noteworthy. He speaks of the church's "much beloved name" and of it being a church "blessed with greatness" (IEph intro). Later in the letter, he speaks of the church as "famous from eternity" (8.1). These notes of praise stand out in light of

the absence of comparable comments in the letters to the other churches.

A century later, a comment by Origen may reflect the continuing importance of Ephesus. Origen notes that one of his opponents had written a document alleged to be a report of a disputation between the two. The debate had never taken place. Origen was aware that copies of this document had appeared in Rome, Antioch and Ephesus.⁵⁵ Although Ephesus could have been mentioned by Origen simply because it happened to have had a copy of the document in question, it is likely that it figures in Origen's statement because of its prominence as a leading centre of the church.

D. Population

It has frequently been mentioned that western Asia Minor was the most successful area in the early church's missionary expansion.⁵⁶ The question of the size of the Christian population is a difficult one, and the calculations vary markedly. In appendix 3, I have given a brief summary of the discussion. Suffice it here to say that the number of Christians in western Asia Minor must have numbered, even on the least-generous reading of the evidence, into the several thousands by the beginning of the second century. We are not able to determine from these figures just how visible the Christian movement would have been to the society at large. Scholars differ considerably in their impressions.⁵⁷ But we can

say that whatever the situation was for the church of western Asia Minor in the eyes of the society, in the eyes of the church itself, the assemblies of western Asia Minor at the end of the first century would have been important for their size and for the apostolic traditions associated with them.

VI

The Gentile Character of the Area

A. Population

Calculating the population of ancient cities is a task beset with difficulties. The population of Ephesus, for example, has been placed at a low of 180,000 to a high of 500,000.⁵⁸ This is a wide range and should caution against dogmatic assertions about the size of the cities of interest to this study. Fortunately, even such a range as this is not a serious limitation for the kinds of questions important to most works on the general demographic context of the young church. A sense of the relative size of cities is generally adequate, and this is usually within our reach.

Regarding Ephesus, for example, we can say that, comparatively speaking, of all the cities in the Roman empire, only Rome, Alexandria and Antioch were larger.⁵⁹ Thus, even without an exact population figure, we are able to gain some impression of the

greatness of Ephesus: the status of fourth largest city in the empire is no mean position for a city outnumbered only by the capital of the empire itself and by the former capitals of the Ptolemaic and Seleucid empires.⁶⁰ The impact of that comparison is not significantly lessened by taking a figure of a quarter of a million rather than a figure of a half of a million for the population of the city.

Actually, it is not so much Ephesus that is important but, rather, all of western Asia Minor. Several other cities in the area may have been almost as large as Ephesus.⁶¹ This, however, does not so much lessen the significance of Ephesus as it emphasizes the importance of the entire province of Asia Minor--the most populous and the richest of all the Roman provinces.⁶² And for the purposes of this study, it is important to note that both the population and the wealth of the province would have been proportionately greater in the western area,⁶³ where Ephesus and a number of other cities with Christian churches were situated.

B. The Status of Ephesus

The exact political status of Ephesus is difficult to determine. A number of modern writers refer to it as the capital of the province,⁶⁴ but this does not seem to be accurate. Pergamum, the former capital of the kingdom of Attalus III, had retained its position as capital of the area after being bequeathed to Rome by its last king,⁶⁵ and it seems to have continued to

have that titular role even after it was overshadowed by some of the cities to the south--Ephesus and Smyrna, in particular.⁶⁶

Ephesus did gain the right of cataplous, which required each senatorial governor to land there when he began his year in office.⁶⁷

Ephesus also was the residence of the proconsul of Asia.⁶⁸

Moreover, as the leading seaport, Ephesus had considerable importance apart from these special recognitions, and it is not surprising to find that the road markers for the Roman road system in Asia were marked in terms of their distance from Ephesus.⁶⁹

But for our period, it appears that Ephesus was not, technically, the capital, as the recent work of Colin Hemer makes clear.⁷⁰

But whether capital in name or merely in appearance, Ephesus was recognized as a leading city of the province, if not of the Empire as well. And that is all we need recognize for the purposes of this study.

C. The Religious Character of Western Asia Minor

When we think of the religious character of western Asia Minor, the Temple of Diana at Ephesus and the grandiose Altar of Zeus or the Temple to Asklepios, both at Pergamum, probably come to mind. These are not, however, the most important religious features for a study of Christianity in the area. More important for understanding the religious tensions of the developing church are two factors, neither of them particularly Asian or Greek. One is the growth of the imperial cult; the other is the hostility of a

strong diaspora Judaism.

The imperial cult was becoming a prominent feature of the religion of the cities of western Asia Minor at roughly the same time that Christianity was being introduced. Domitian, emperor from 81-98 C.E., had a temple built in his honour in Ephesus, and Hadrian, in the interest of his own honour, had one built for himself a couple of decades later. To the north, in Pergamum, a temple to Trajan was constructed.⁷¹

Much earlier, temples to the goddess Roma had been built. The imperial government had favoured such temples as a token of the loyalty of subject peoples to Rome, and the people gladly welcomed these temples, often even competing with neighbouring cities for the right to build.⁷² Smyrna, Ephesus's sea-port competitor to the north, had, as early as 195 B.C.E., constructed a temple to the goddess Roma, and, partly because of that, continued to be a centre for the imperial cult, though not an exclusive centre.⁷³

It should not be thought strange that the Greek-speaking peoples of Asia Minor would so willingly accommodate within their own cities the worship of the goddess of the city of Latin Rome. Rome had done much to bring stability to the Mediterranean area, most effectively, perhaps, by routing the pirates who threatened the shipping.⁷⁴ From the middle half of the first century B.C.E., key shipping ports entered an era of prosperity. This was especially so for Ephesus and Smyrna, both lying at the end of important land routes to the east.

The Christian movement, in its refusal to give even token honour to the emperor in these temples, was taking a path that would bring suspicion not only from the imperial government itself but from those conquered peoples who recognized Rome as the source of their prosperity.

VII

The Jewish Character of the Area

A. Population

It is sometimes forgotten that a considerable number of Jews lived in Ephesus and in western Asia Minor. That point is never forgotten for Alexandria or Antioch, or even for Rome.⁷⁵ It must not be forgotten for Ephesus either.

We have already seen that Ephesus was one of the leading cities of the Roman empire. It was a city of considerable importance for the Jews, too. The Talmud speaks of the emigration of a large number of Jews from Babylon about 200 B.C.E. Many of these Jews settled in Ephesus and in other of the Ionian cities.⁷⁶ Philo said that there was not a city in Asia or Syria in which Jews did not live (Leg. 245), and given Juster's examination, where he found evidence for a Jewish element in some seventy-one cities of Asia Minor,⁷⁷ Philo's statement hardly appears suspicious.

It is difficult to determine the size of the Jewish population of the area or of particular cities, but if we are content to speak in terms of relative size or to work with qualified calculations, we

can gain some impression of the visibility of the Jewish element in the society of western Asia Minor. My attempt is merely to show that the Jews made up a significant part of the empire and that, in numerous cities of the empire, the early church would have felt itself growing within a Jewish context perhaps as much as within a gentile context.

The most widely-accepted calculation of the Jewish population of the Roman empire is somewhere between six or seven million.⁷⁸ The figure seems to have at its source the statement of the thirteenth-century Bar Hebraeus, who said that some seven million Jews lived in the Empire during the reign of Claudius.⁷⁹ Victor Tcherikover questioned the figure,⁸⁰ and a number of other scholars have placed the figure lower: Lohse at four and one half million.⁸¹ Harnack found even the lower figure surprisingly high.⁸² All scholars, however, whether accepting a figure of four million or of seven, recognize that many more Jews lived in the diaspora than lived in Palestine. Léon-Dufour, for example, thinks that there were about fifteen times as many Jews outside of Palestine as within Palestine; Lohse would reduce that figure by half.⁸³

Whatever the case, the Jews seem to have made up about five to ten percent of the population of the empire,⁸⁴ an estimate that seems realistic enough given certain statements from pagan writers.⁸⁵ And with the Jews living mainly in the cities,⁸⁶ Jews may have numbered as much as fifteen percent of the population of some cities.⁸⁷

This would have been a significant minority by any calculation.

I am, of course, interested particularly in the situation of Asia Minor and certain of its chief cities. Although it seems that the largest part of the dispersion was to the east, and especially to Syria, and that Egypt itself had a considerable number of Jews,⁸⁸ evidence suggests that the Jewish population of Asia Minor was itself large.

Guesses of the Jewish population of Ephesus, for example, would be merely guesses, but if Ephesus attracted slightly more Jews than other centres (as seems to have been the case),⁸⁹ Jews could have easily made up ten percent of the city's population, and according to Meeks, as much as fifteen percent.⁹⁰ Given figures of one fifth to one half million for the population of Ephesus, the Jewish community could have numbered as high as 75,000, taking Meeks's figure of fifteen percent. That may seem unrealistically high, yet even if we were to take the lowest figure all around (five percent of the population Jewish; the total population, 180,000), the Jews in Ephesus would have numbered about 9,000--hardly an insignificant number.

The figures we have offered hardly help us considerably. We probably should discard the higher figure: it uses the calculation of a half million people for Ephesus, and at best this figure would have to include in it the rural population as well, which according to Duncan-Jones would have been at least fifty-percent of the entire

population.⁹¹ But the lower figure is equally suspect. Jews doubtlessly made up more than five percent of the population of a city like Ephesus. For one thing, as has already been mentioned, the Jews of the diaspora were generally urban. For another, the cities of western Asia Minor seem to have been particularly attractive to the Jews,⁹² and this would have led to an even higher percentage of Jews in such cities. It would not be arbitrary, then, to propose a figure of 20,000 or more Jews in a city like Ephesus.

Laodicea offers a different kind of evidence for the size of the Jewish population of the area. Flaccus, the proconsul of Asia, had, in 62-61 B.C.E., seized the temple tax.⁹³ According to Reinach, the amount seized suggests that Laodicea must have had about 7,500 adult Jewish males.⁹⁴ Others have argued from the total amount of the temple tax seized by Flaccus that there would have been some 50,000 adult males in the province of Asia.⁹⁵ According to Tcherikover, the average family had five members,⁹⁶ and from this, we might cautiously estimate the Jewish population of Asia Minor to have been somewhat less than one-quarter of a million in the middle of the first century B.C.E.⁹⁷

But this figure would likely have increased considerably by the latter part of the first century, C.E., some 150 years later. After the fall of Jerusalem, Asia Minor seems to have become a favourite area for immigration from Palestine.⁹⁸ Those cities with large Jewish population, and with special rights for Jews, are

likely to have seen a considerable increase in the number of Jews in their city.

B. The Status of Jews in the Greek Cities

Much ink has been spilled in the attempt to determine the precise status of Jews in the Greek cities of the Roman empire.⁹⁹ The Greek cities, in which significant numbers of Jews had made their homes, had been the leading centres throughout the Mediterranean world prior to the rise of the Roman empire. With the success of the campaigns of Alexander the Great, Greeks had moved into the conquered areas and established impressive--and distinctly Greek--cities. Alexandria and Antioch, capitals of the Ptolemaic and Seleucid empires respectively, are two classic examples. Of a different history were the Greek cities on the west coast of present-day Turkey. These had been founded by Greek colonists a millennium earlier.

When the Greek kingdoms fell to the Romans, the Romans had to decide upon an expedient method of government. For the most part, the Greek cities were allowed to carry on with considerable autonomy in local affairs.¹⁰⁰ Of importance in the Greek mind was the right of citizenship in the polis--a right established by heredity, not merely by birth within the confines of a particular city.¹⁰¹ Only citizens were allowed to participate in the political affairs of the city, and for cities with their power stripped down to this sphere, citizenship was a right closely guarded.¹⁰²

A conflict developed when the Jews began to claim equal rights with the non-Jewish citizens of these cities. Their claim was not without some foundation. The Romans had looked on the Jews with favour at least from the time of Julius Caesar because of the aid they had given him against the Greeks. This made the Jews seem more like allies of the Romans than people conquered, and the Jews were given special rights because of this. It is the exact nature of these rights that is a matter of considerable dispute. In particular, the issue is whether these rights included citizenship in the Greek polis.

The matter is complex. I have chosen not to deal with the issue in any great detail, except to say that much of the discussion has possibly been misdirected. The question of the precise rights of the Jews may have been ambiguous even for the courts of the first century, and our search for a clearer resolution to this ambiguity may do injustice to the conflict between two sets of rights that had, built-in, areas of gray overlap. A more useful discussion might be limited to a recognition of the considerable rights of the Jews in the empire--and even within the somewhat autonomous Greek cities. The recognition that these rights could, obviously, be pushed into the claim of right of citizenship would, in itself, go far to provide an informative portrait of the extensive privileges of the Jews in the Roman diaspora. Whether the Jews, technically speaking, had citizenship in the Greek polis, is a question that, even if answered in the negative, does not reduce the Jews of the

diaspora to a disfranchised, alien people. The evidence is too extensive for the prominence of the Jews in the empire, and the evidence is particularly good for western Asia Minor, where the Sardis synagogue stands as the most striking example of the privileged status of the Jews.¹⁰³

C. Religious Syncretism or Religious Purity?

It has been argued that the Judaism of the Roman diaspora was less pure than that of Palestine and Babylon.¹⁰⁴ It would not be surprising to find evidence of syncretism among some Jews, given the considerable number of Jews in the area, but a few choice seats reserved for Jews in the theatre at Miletus cannot censor the whole of Judaism in the area.¹⁰⁵ The more serious evidence of extensive syncretism has been the subject of extensive investigation by A. T. Kraabel, who has argued with success for a purer form of Judaism in western Asia Minor than had come to be accepted in recent scholarship.¹⁰⁶

VIII

The Christian Character of the Area

The Christian character of western Asia Minor is, of course, the primary issue of this thesis and is dealt with in detail in the following chapters. Two features of the church in western Asia Minor should, however, be noted before we begin.

A. The Influence from Judaism

New Testament scholars continue to argue the degree to which Judaism affected the developing church.¹⁰⁷ Most of the early Christian literature from western Asia Minor shows that the church did not escape Judaism simply by moving away from Jerusalem. In our Christian materials, we find repeated acceptance of some Jewish ideas; repeated rejection of others.¹⁰⁸

The influence of Judaism should not surprise us. We have already seen that Judaism was a significant force in the society of western Asia Minor, and it is difficult to see how the early Christian community, growing out of Judaism and with considerable baggage from Judaism, could have successfully isolated itself from the Jewish element in western Asia Minor. Later, when the church had grown markedly stronger, Judaism proved attractive enough to attract Christians.¹⁰⁹ The early Christian materials from western Asia Minor suggest the situation was similar in the earliest days.¹¹⁰

B. The Social Structure for Corporate Worship

We have seen that given even minimal successes of the Christian mission in western Asia Minor, the area would have had several thousands of Christians by the turn of the first century. This is significant, for it provides some grounds upon which to reconstruct the organization of the church at the city level--a point until recently not given attention. In appendix 4, I discuss

in detail the structure for the regular, corporate worship of the Christian community in its first several decades, and perhaps even to the middle of the third century. That structure is the house-church.

As a result of extensive work in the last ten years, we can say with some certainty that the early churches were generally only small assemblies of about thirty persons who met regularly for their corporate worship in the homes of one of the members. We know of no regular, larger meetings. This forces us to conclude that, by the turn of the first century in a city like Ephesus, there could have been (and, perhaps, must have been) dozens or even scores of these house-churches. That conclusion provides a rather concrete framework upon which to consider a range of questions dealing with everything from diverse theological communities to the nature of schism. Repeatedly, I shall, in the body of this work, call attention to the phenomenon of the house-church to clarify some of the issues related to diversity within the primitive community.

IX

Summary

It is always difficult to address our questions to past cultures known to us only through scattered remains. That difficulty is reduced when the remains are literary; it is strikingly reduced when that literature is as interested in our question as we are. For the questions of orthodoxy and heresy, the

material from western Asia Minor goes a considerable way to meeting our needs. We have relatively extensive material from the area. Most of the materials take our question seriously. And through the good fortune that the centre we have chosen to study was of importance to pagan, Jew and Christian of the first and second century, various data relevant to our question but not addressed by our primary literature become available to us. It is to this area we turn now to discuss the question of diversity in the primitive Christian community.

CHAPTER THREE

BAUER'S RECONSTRUCTION

I

Bauer and Western Asia Minor

The work of Walter Bauer remains the classic exposition of those tendencies in the Christian tradition that are generally known as "heresy."¹ That work is the focus of this chapter. In examining Bauer's work, I have chosen to concentrate on his discussion of the western Asia Minor area. I have already defended my choice of that area. Although I have had to qualify many of my assertions, owing mainly to the meagre nature of our sources (more particularly a problem for Jerusalem and Antioch than for Ephesus), I expect general agreement on the following point: of the chief centres of early Christianity, Ephesus is as important as any, and is of sufficient importance for the questions of the orthodoxy/heresy debate to be addressed to it with profit.

But I must explain why, specifically with regard to Bauer's work, my choice of Ephesus and western Asia Minor remains sound. There are several reasons. First, the two areas Bauer discussed in the greatest detail (Egypt and Edessa)² are not, even on a fairly generous reading of the evidence, primary centres of the early church, and even if they were, early literature from these

areas is too scarce to provide anything more than muted testimony to the character of earliest Christianity there.³ Second, Bauer said almost nothing of Jerusalem,⁴ and his discussion of Antioch is disjointed and, for the earliest period, brief (as perhaps any discussion should be with the limited relevant material available for this period).⁵ Third, Bauer's discussion of Rome as the innovator and chief force behind orthodoxy is probably the least credible aspect of his thesis, for it gives inadequate consideration to a number of factors. This was rightly an early criticism of Bauer's work.⁶

Bauer's work on western Asia Minor is another matter. For one thing, Bauer has written two chapters on the church of Asia Minor,⁷ dealing there with much of the literature associated with this area. Second, of all the areas discussed by Bauer, his discussion of western Asia Minor reaches the furthest back into the history of the early church.⁸ Third, Bauer did recognize (if only in a limited way) a move towards orthodoxy in this area, and he has offered some novel ideas on the factors he believed primary in the development of second-century orthodoxy.⁹ Given these positive features of Bauer's discussion of western Asia Minor, and given the importance of western Asia Minor to our question as a whole, an examination of Bauer's thesis which is limited to a discussion of western Asia Minor is not necessarily too restricted.

II

The Crucial Junctures of Bauer's Reconstruction

A. Introduction

The most significant contribution to the view made popular by Bauer has been offered by Helmut Koester.¹⁰ The main difference between Koester's reconstruction and that of Bauer is that Koester works mainly with the New Testament materials. Having given these materials considerably more attention than Bauer had, Koester concludes that the second half of the first century was marked by battles between various groups of Christian missionaries in western Asia Minor.¹¹ It was on this point that Bauer was often criticized: he had not recognized the serious conflicts within the first-century church.¹² In spite of these differences, Koester's reconstruction does follow Bauer's at crucial junctures. It is to those junctures that I would like presently to call attention.

B. The Reconstruction

Bauer broke the history of early Christianity in western Asia Minor into several stages, though those stages were not always clearly laid out by him. The first stage was the Pauline: this would have begun with Paul's missionary activity in Ephesus in the early 50s.¹³ Bauer did not deal with a movement around Apollos

in his reconstruction of the Christianity in western Asia Minor, though he did indicate that Apollos might reflect a non-Pauline movement in Corinth (105/ET:101), as many have argued.¹⁴

Koester, however, argues that Apollos and Paul are not opposed to each other,¹⁵ and this position appears the more credible given that evidence is too ambiguous to support a conflict between Paul and Apollos, and probably contradicts it outright.¹⁶

The next stage Bauer spoke of in detail was the change brought about by the immigration of a number of prominent Palestinian Christian leaders to Asia Minor about the time of the fall of Jerusalem. This new Jewish element was welcomed, according to Bauer, by an ecclesiastically-oriented Pauline group that was engaged in a struggle with a gnosticizing Pauline element (91/ET:87).¹⁷ The union of the Palestinian immigrants with the anti-gnostic Pauline element resulted in a Christianity that adopted certain Jewish traits (apocalyptic elements, synagogal structures and respect for the Sabbath and for the Passover) but dropped the more problematic requirement of circumcision and of observance of the ceremonial law for gentile Christians (91-2/ET:87-8).¹⁸

Koester agrees that an apocalyptic emphasis appeared in Asia Minor after the fall of Jerusalem, but he accounts for that by possible influence from Qumran,¹⁹ whereas Bauer, writing before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, spoke more generally of a Jewish influence (of which apocalyptic was but one element) and saw the source of this influence in the immigration of prominent Palestinian

Christians to Asia Minor (91-2/ET:87-8). The alliance of the new group from Palestine with the anti-gnostic Paulinists marks, according to Bauer, the significant turning point for Christianity in this area, for from this point on "the line of demarcation...no longer runs between Jewish and gentile Christianity, but rather, between orthodoxy and heresy" (91/ET:87).

Bauer argued then for a stage in which the minority "orthodox" element attempted to gain control of the church by altering the power structure so that, rather than allowing power to rest in the hands of the common assembly--in which the orthodox were in the minority--they would concentrate the power in the hands of one man, a monarchical bishop, who they hoped would represent the orthodox viewpoint (66/ET:62). Although the orthodox and heretical camps shared common services of worship for some time, by the time of Ignatius, some of the "heretics" had organized meetings outside the rubric of the church now controlled by the ecclesiastically oriented group.²⁰ These few unauthorized assemblies led to a sharper division between the "orthodox" and the "heretic" until finally the break between the two became complete and permanent. It was Ignatius, according to Bauer, who, by promoting a kind of unity that would seriously challenge the right of certain beliefs to a place within the church, forced the issue to a head.²¹

C. Critique of Bauer's Reconstruction

Krodel and Kraft, the editors of the English edition of Bauer's work, ask the critic of Bauer to refrain from certain kinds of criticism. They appear frustrated, in particular, by critics who dismiss certain suggestions of Bauer as "conjectural," since Bauer himself was conscious of the hypothetical nature of parts of his reconstructions.²² In my criticism of Bauer, I intend to observe the following limits. I will focus on only those aspects of Bauer's reconstruction that are clearly key issues for the question of the character of primitive Christianity. I will pass over other statements, no matter how tendentious or exaggerated, without comment. I will directly criticize Bauer only where he failed to take account of material available to him or where he grossly exaggerated the weight of the evidence claimed in his favour. My focus, then, will be limited to the crucial junctures in Bauer's reconstruction, and my examination of these will be as generous as possible.

Bauer's detective work--never dull, sometimes ingenious, occasionally brilliant--suffers from defects more serious than the sporadic overstatements and tendentious claims that even his disciples have had to acknowledge. Overstatements and unsupported claims are not the problem; if anything, in Bauer's work, they are the spice that provokes attention to often unnoticed possibilities. Far more fundamental and less easily corrigible, the defects of

Bauer's argument are structural. Specifically, his reconstruction of early church history in western Asia Minor is collapsible at its three structurally critical points: (1) the hypothetical alliance of "ecclesiastically oriented" Paulinists with Palestinian immigrants against gnosticizing Paulinists; (2) the alleged strength of heresy in the area; and (3) the proposed cause of the rise of the monarchical episcopate.

III

The Anti-Gnostic Alliance

As we have seen, Bauer argued that the emphasis on a distinction between Jewish Christians and gentile Christians gave way in western Asia Minor to an emphasis on the distinction between "orthodox" Christians and "heretical" Christians. This, he said, occurred after the Palestinian immigrants arrived in the area and aligned themselves with the anti-gnostic, ecclesiastically oriented Paulinists. Bauer spoke of this shift as though it were a most natural occurrence; he seemed not to recognize the serious problems that this shift might bring against his primary theory.

A basic question is why this shift occurred: what is it about the trend towards gnosticism that causes Pauline-founded churches to find more in common with Palestinian-Jewish Christians than with fellow gentile Paulinists of a gnostic bent? Bauer did not give even passing attention to the issue. But surely the question is a probing one in the attempt to discover an early consciousness of

"orthodoxy" in the church, for the shift would seem to indicate that the self-understanding of the "ecclesiastically oriented" Pauline group is such that it excludes the possibility of gnosticism but is open to a Jewish element new to it. Had Bauer dismissed the shift as a political one or one involving a clash of personalities, his failure to see in this shift implications of an early sense of orthodoxy could be excused. But Bauer believed theological issues to be at stake (i.e., gnosticism).²³ This implies that the issue is truth. The question arises, in short, whether orthodoxy has here become a thematic issue. Bauer turned a blind eye to this tantalizing implication. He did not entertain the new question that has arisen. If he was aware of the issue, he dodged it.

Bauer's thesis as a whole would have been more credible had he not argued for this early, radical alliance--and, in fact, he need not have argued for it. He could have easily argued that serious problems with heresy rose considerably later than in the two decades between 70 and 90 C.E. On his own reckoning with the evidence, the heretics are, for the most part, still in the church when Ignatius passed through.²⁴ And the Pastorals, with their clearly expressed polemic against heresy, are dated by Bauer somewhat later than the Ignatian material (88/ET:84). The Apocalypse does, admittedly, suggest that the church was having a problem with heretics, but given the disdain that Bauer had for the Apocalypticist (81-2; 88/ET:77-8; 84), Bauer could have dismissed the Apocalypse as evidence of nothing more than the grumbling of a malcontent (81-

2/ET:77-8). Thus Bauer could have argued that the problem with heresy surfaced much later than the 70s of the first century, and the radical alignment, so suggestive of a self-understanding reflecting a consciousness of orthodoxy, could have easily been placed later.

Yet, it is an early alignment that Bauer proposed. What led Bauer to this reconstruction is unclear. He offered no clear evidence from the literary materials for the alliance;²⁵ his main argument relates to the immigration of Palestinian Christians to the area around the time of the fall of Jerusalem. Yet, surely he could have admitted such an immigration without having been forced to admit as well the radical alignment he proposed.

Bauer may have found the idea of an early alliance attractive after having first decided to use the Apocalypse as evidence for a massive heretical movement in western Asia Minor at the end of the first century. His argument at this point must be followed closely, for he used the evidence in a curious way. The evidence for a significant heretical movement at the time of the Apocalypse is not, as we might have expected, the reference to the Nicolaitans or to Balaam and Jezebel in three of the seven letters of the Apocalypse (Rev 2:6, 14, 15, 20). For Bauer, the evidence for the presence of heresy was less explicit but considerably more striking. The explicit references to Nicolaitans, Balaam and Jezebel were thought to reflect only the tip of the iceberg. Two features pointed to a much more significant heretical movement. For one thing, certain

churches are known to have existed at this time in the area, but the Apocalyptist does not include them. Bauer mentioned the churches at Colossae and Hierapolis. He argued that the omission of these churches could best be explained by a heretical majority so powerful there that the Apocalyptist could not hope for a hearing in these assemblies (82/ET:78). Bauer's second reason for arguing for a strong heretical movement was that even in several of the seven churches addressed by the Apocalyptist, heresy was a serious problem. The Apocalyptist, according to Bauer, could not find even seven churches free of heresy. The credible sphere of influence for the Apocalyptist is thus limited to something less than seven churches for the entire province of Asia (82/ET:78).

Once Bauer had begun to think in terms of spheres of influence as early as the writing of the Apocalypse, he would have been forced to think of two fairly distinct movements existing sometime prior to the mid 90s. By the mid 90s, one group already controls a number of churches, and the Apocalyptist is aware that these churches are beyond his sphere of influence. This would indicate a clear "them/us" distinction--a distinction that would have required some time to have become so clearly defined. Sometime in the 80s or 70s would be required for the roots of this distinction.

The problem for Bauer was that nothing in the literature prior to the time of the Apocalyptist gave any indication of credible heretical movements.²⁶ Bauer made an effort to resolve this lack of a history for the heretical movement by pointing to the

immigration of Palestinian Jewish Christians to western Asia Minor around 70 C.E. By proposing the kind of alliance he did, Bauer had at least the beginnings of two distinct and competing elements within the church.

Unfortunately, without paying even lip service to the problems raised against his thesis by such an alignment, Bauer simply stated that such an alignment did occur. A number of questions should have been addressed. Were the "ecclesiastically oriented" Paulinists always ecclesiastically oriented? Which of the Paulinists, the gnostics or the ecclesiastics, better represented Paul's original message? Could the ecclesiastical group have gone in the direction of gnosticism had other personalities been involved? (This question is important because it recognizes that a distinction must be made between forces that might be more theologically significant than other forces.) But Bauer considered none of these questions.

The most disturbing observation to be made here, however, is not that Bauer failed to prove an early gnosticism, or that he failed to prove the radical alignment he proposed. The period being considered is among the most obscure of the early church,²⁷ and some speculation can be allowed and some hypotheses lacking clear support considered. What is disturbing is that Bauer could disregard completely the potential of such a radical shift to indicate an early, and perhaps discriminating, sense of "orthodoxy" for a significant segment of the church. One wonders what, precisely, would have served to convince Bauer of an early

consciousness of orthodoxy by some element within the church. Bauer seems to have placed unreasonable demands on what he would admit as evidence of a consciousness of orthodoxy.

IV

The Strength of Heresy in Western Asia Minor

A. The Last Decade of the First Century

Bauer contended that in many churches in western Asia Minor, the heretics were in the majority. As we have already seen, Bauer argued that by the time of the writing of the Apocalypse, heresy was so widespread that the Apocalyptist, unable to find an adequate number of orthodox churches to fill out his scheme (in which the number "seven" was prominent), had to include churches in which the majority was committed to heretical tendencies (82/ET:78).

It is surprising to find Bauer calculating the strength of heresy in terms of those not within the sphere of the Apocalyptist's influence. For one thing, Bauer thought that the Apocalyptist was peculiar: so peculiar, in fact, that he could not have been a leader of the western Asia Minor churches (81-2/ET:77-8). Further, Bauer said that, in this period, orthodoxy came in several quite different forms, and he recognized that the Apocalyptist would not have spoken for all of them (81/ET:77). But given these conditions, one is certainly not compelled to conclude that the Apocalyptist is limited in the number of churches he can address because he is orthodox and

most of the churches are not. It is more likely, given Bauer's portrait of the seer, the Apocalyptist is limited by his peculiar message, which has no appeal to any significant segment of the church, whether orthodox or heretical. Yet Bauer attempted to determine the number of heretics in the area by counting all those who would not have come under the influence of the Apocalyptist. Even by Bauer's own reckoning, a considerable number of the orthodox must have been part of this group.

What of this supposedly large group of heretics in the churches of western Asia Minor addressed by the Apocalyptist? Most commentators conclude that only one group is being opposed by the seer: a group called the Nicolaitans, apparently active in Smyrna and Thyatira, and known in Ephesus.²⁸ Whoever the Nicolaitans are, they are numerous enough to be identified as a distinct group, though if they were followers of a well-known person, it may have been the stature of the leader, not the size of the group, that drew the attention of the seer.

The only reliable information we have about the Nicolaitans is from the Apocalypse.²⁹ Bauer's theory requires that we know more. The heretics of the Apocalypse must have their roots in the earlier gnosticizing Pauline movement. Such a connection is required to explain how the heresy opposed by the Apocalyptist could be as widespread by the mid-90s as Bauer had argued. If the heretics were of recent origin, the strength of this movement proposed by Bauer would be difficult to explain. If, however, the

heretics stand in line with a successful gnosticizing Pauline movement from the 60s or 70s, a strong movement by the mid-90s would not be particularly problematic.

But an early move towards gnosticism raises one problem for Bauer's thesis. Although an early gnosticizing movement, if successful, could explain the widespread influence of the Nicolaitans (assuming that one is related to the other), Bauer cannot explain why the rejection of this movement does not occur until the 90s if, as he himself claimed, an alliance was formed against this movement in the early 70s.³⁰

There is another problem. It is not enough to say that Paul's churches tended towards gnosticism after Paul's death. We must allow for the probability of continued Pauline influence in the form of the younger co-workers of Paul, who, even after Paul's death, would have continued to feel a sense of responsibility to the churches over which they had laboured with Paul.³¹ Unless we make Paul a leader in the movement towards gnosticism,³² we perhaps should not assume a widespread move towards gnosticism in the Pauline churches at an early date. The leadership in those churches must have stood close to Paul's own thinking, and should not be thought to have moved in mass to some other viewpoint unless that move can be explained.

Admittedly, some argue for a considerable gnosticizing movement in the first century.³³ The issue is complex enough. We do have several documents from the late first century that make

certain beliefs the object of their attack, and all seem to have essentially the same group in mind.³⁴ We have, as well, the warning in Acts 20:19-31 that after Paul's death, heresy would arise in the church at Ephesus. And there is the statement in 2 Timothy 1:15 that all of Asia had forsaken Paul. Both the passage in Acts and that in 2 Timothy are taken by most scholars to indicate either extensive heresy or widespread desertion of Paul in the late first century--the time frequently proposed for the composition of these documents.³⁵ If one adds to this the trouble with the Nicolaitans in the mid 90s, Ignatius's trouble with schismatics fifteen years or so later and the stories about a Cerinthus in Ephesus, it appears to many scholars that one can soundly infer that a widespread heretical movement was in place by the turn of the century. But such an inference is, in fact, questionable.

The problem is that the references to heresy in first-century literature are offset by the overall picture of the church of this period painted by the documents. Bauer had to disregard completely the most natural reading of the material; the seer is charged with exaggerating his authority (82/ET:78), and Ignatius is made into a man whose mind is gripped by an unhealthy passion and who fails to reflect the real situation (65/ET:61). The charge that these men exaggerate the situation wears thin with repeated use and generally seems to stem from a lack of sympathy for the concerns close to the seer and to Ignatius.³⁶

Consider the seer. Bauer's portrait of a man without power is

hardly what is reflected in the Apocalypse. The Apocalyptist writes as someone who expects to be taken seriously. Certainly, he does call repeatedly for repentance, but that call could come from a respected church leader just as easily as from a malcontent. The significant point here is that, though he does criticize (sometimes very sharply), he writes as though the majority were on his side, and could respond in an effective way to silence the heretical minority. Heretics are present in certain churches, not because they are in the majority, but because the majority has failed to act in a responsible way in light of the presence of heresy.³⁷ Such talk is hardly what we would expect if the orthodox were in a minority and certainly not what we would expect some twenty years after the lines had been drawn and the struggle engaged against the gnostics (as Bauer saw the situation).

B. The First Decade of the Second Century

Bauer, after arguing for widespread advance of heresy in western Asia Minor at the time of the writing of the Apocalypse, then noted that four of the churches addressed by the Apocalyptist were not addressed by Ignatius. Noting that those four were churches especially troubled by heresy when the Apocalyptist had written to them some twenty years earlier, Bauer concluded that the trend towards heresy that was evidenced in the Apocalyptist's polemic had reached a stage by the time of Ignatius where it was no longer possible for anyone as orthodox as Ignatius to hope to

influence these communities (83/ET:79). Koester appreciates Bauer's idea of an increase of heresy from the Apocalyptist to Ignatius.³⁸ But is the rapid growth of heresy in several prominent west Asia Minor churches required by the evidence?

C. Bauer's Faulty Method

Bauer depended much too heavily on his assumption that churches are omitted by the Apocalyptist and by Ignatius mainly because of the rampant heresy within those churches. The first third of Bauer's chapter four, "Asia Minor Prior to Ignatius," deals with what churches were, and what churches were not, addressed by particular ecclesiastical leaders. No doubt, the presence of heretical majorities in certain churches might have made them less likely addressees for orthodox leaders, but that explanation should not be accepted until we have some other evidence of significant heretical presence in a particular church or until all other reasonable explanations are exhausted.

Bauer consistently avoided other explanations for the omission of particular churches by orthodox writers. If a church was not addressed, that, in itself, in Bauer's view, was sufficient to prove significant heretical presence in that church. Working from this rather limited perspective, Bauer was even prepared to outline the spread of heresy based solely on what churches addressed by the Apocalyptist were not, some twenty years later, addressed by Ignatius. If the Apocalyptist addressed a particular church, that

showed a core of orthodox believers; if Ignatius failed to address that church, that showed that even this core was gone: heretics controlled the church; there was no longer any use for an orthodox leader to attempt to influence them.

Let us consider other possible explanations for the address to particular churches--explanations at least as reasonable as that suggested by Bauer. In the case of the Apocalypse, seven churches are addressed. We know of other churches in the area at the time.³⁹ Why are those seven churches addressed? Why are the others not? Bauer's explanation that those not addressed were already under the control of heretics, and that this was true even for some of the seven addressed, has little to commend it when compared to the kind of explanation put forward by William Ramsay--an explanation Bauer dismissed, without explanation, as irrelevant (82/ET:78).⁴⁰

The seven cities of Asia addressed in Revelation are not minor cities.⁴¹ Two things point to their prominence: one is that they formed the seven chief postal stations of Asia Minor;⁴² the second is that six of the seven are members of the seven-membered religious council of the province.⁴³ Thus, from even a pagan perspective, the seven cities addressed by the writer of the Apocalypse were chief cities of Asia Minor. We might add to this the witness of Josephus who, when listing the cities that had received specific charges concerning the rights of the Jews, named four of the cities addressed by the Apocalypticist.⁴⁴

That does not mean that the churches in the seven cities were

the seven chief churches of Asia Minor. A relatively unimportant city could have experienced phenomenal Christian successes. We have, however, no evidence that other churches were more important than the ones addressed by the Apocalyptist.⁴⁵ It seems, then, that the author may well have addressed the churches he did because these were, in fact, the important Christian centres of the province and could represent other churches in less important cities. By addressing the churches he did, the Apocalyptist was able to spread his message in such a way that no church, regardless of where it was located in the general area of his address, would have been more than a day's journey from one of the churches addressed.⁴⁶

While it would be speculation to say that the churches addressed were considered the chief of their particular area, nevertheless, what we know of any other church in the area does not seriously challenge that idea. Bauer gave no attention to this.

Bauer did not make any better case for widespread heresy in the time of Ignatius. The main problem of his argument is that he failed to recognize the occasional nature of the Ignatian letters. Bauer was puzzled why several churches in the area were not addressed by Ignatius. His solution was that Ignatius avoided churches he could not hope to influence--churches in which heretics were in control. Then he noted that the churches avoided by Ignatius were the very churches that, when the Apocalypse was written, were most troubled by heresy. Bauer thought that this indicated the continued growth of heresy in the churches of

Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis and Laodicea (82-3/ET:78-9). But, as with frequent arguments in Bauer's work, the case is weakened by the muteness of the evidence. True, Ignatius did not write to four of the churches addressed by the Apocalypticist. But that tells us little about the situation in these churches. It may be that heresy was rampant there, but the mere absence of letters from Ignatius to these churches cannot be put forward as a sufficient basis from which to determine that.⁴⁷

A fairly compelling explanation for Ignatius's selection of churches comes out of an examination of Ignatius's historical situation, which Lightfoot was careful to note.⁴⁸ Three of the letters (to Ephesus, Tralles and Magnesia) were written to churches which had sent delegates to visit Ignatius in Smyrna. That every orthodox church should be expected to have done this does not follow.⁴⁹ The three churches must have heard in advance that Ignatius was on his way to Rome via Smyrna. The route through Smyrna would probably have been decided in Laodicea, and a messenger could have been sent down the Maeander Valley to announce this to the churches at Tralles, Magnesia and Ephesus.⁵⁰ A group could then have made the trip north to Smyrna, arriving there about the same time as Ignatius would have. Ephesus and Smyrna were competing sea-ports for the trade that used the road system connecting the eastern and western parts of the Roman Empire. Undoubtedly, inhabitants of the area would have been familiar with the customary delays in getting passage at the ports, and may have hoped to catch

Ignatius in such a delay.⁵¹ At any rate, delegates from three churches did manage to meet with Ignatius, in spite of Ignatius's itinerary being at the whim of his armed escort, who, on Ignatius's own testimony, were anything but friendly towards him.⁵² That Ignatius chose to write to these three churches, which had sent delegates (and aid), tells us nothing of the presence of heretics in churches which did not send delegates--nor, for that matter, the absence of heresy in those churches that did!

Ignatius's letters to Polycarp and to the church at Smyrna over which Polycarp is bishop are most reasonably explained from Ignatius's stay with them while waiting for passage to Rome.⁵³ And the letter to the church in Rome is explained simply from Ignatius's need to urge that church not to prevent his execution.⁵⁴ The letter to the church at Philadelphia is also explained quite naturally. Ignatius seems to have written the letter after the arrival in Troas of Philo of Cilicia and Rheus Agathopous of Syria. Both had visited the church at Philadelphia and had brought word to Ignatius of some incidents there. Ignatius writes in response to this new knowledge of the situation in that church.⁵⁵

Bauer's method for determining the strength of heresy is suspect for another reason. When he spoke in terms of "spheres of influence" of the Apocalypticist and of Ignatius, he defined those spheres in terms of cities. The church in Colossae was closed to the Apocalypse; the church in Laodicea, though open to the Apocalypticist, was closed some years later to Ignatius (82-3/

ET:78-9). But Bauer failed here to give attention to the basic unit of corporate worship--the house church. Any city that experienced a successful Christian mission would have had several, if not scores, of these small communities.⁵⁶ Surely some of these units in every city would have been open to the Apocalyptist and to Ignatius.

Admittedly, the phenomenon of the house church had not been given its due until recently, and Bauer cannot be particularly faulted for not having considered it. And even recognizing the importance of the house church, Bauer may still have wanted to think of a central city organization exercising control over each and every smaller worshipping unit in every city, but such a view could create some difficulties for those who today accept the thrust of Bauer's thesis.⁵⁷ The tendency now is to think that there was no such central authority: each theological group exercised its authority over its own little collection of house churches. Whether Bauer has the better understanding of the organization of the church at the city level will be the focus of discussion later.⁵⁸

It would seem, though, that at least some of these considerations for the selection of particular churches by the seer and by Ignatius ought to have been given more weight by Bauer, especially in light of the key role the selection of churches by Ignatius and the Apocalyptist played in Bauer's conclusions about the strength and growth of heresy.

V

The Development of the Monarchical Episcopate

A. Bauer's Theory

Bauer thought that the rise of the monarchical office in western Asia Minor suggested widespread heresy in the area. Bauer is especially well known for the theory that, in a group with a number of diverse elements, it will be a minority group that pressures for a restructuring of authority so that one man, rather than the majority, makes the final, binding decisions. As it was the ecclesiastically oriented group that pressed for the monarchical office, it must have been, according to Bauer, the ecclesiastically oriented group that was in the minority (66-7/ET:62-3).

The hypothesis is not without its logic. It is undeniable that a minority is less likely to be heard where the voice of the majority determines the final decisions than where the final decisions are made by one man, who is himself directed by, or has sympathy to, the views of the minority. Further, it is not unreasonable to expect that a minority element might press for the concentration of power in one office if they believed they could control that office.

Many scholars follow Bauer here. They assume that before the effort made by Ignatius, the office of the monarchical bishop in Asia Minor and in Antioch was recognized by only a small element

within the church. The larger element, which the bishop hoped to bring under his control, had no sense of an obligation of loyalty to either the bishop or to his office. Some have even argued that the office did not exist until the effort by Ignatius on his way to martyrdom,⁵⁹ but that conclusion seems incomprehensible, given Ignatius's frequent use of the concept in a way that clearly assumes some understanding and acceptance of the concept (if not also of the office) by the recipients of his letters.⁶⁰

But, in spite of the logic of Bauer's hypothesis, the hypothesis is improbable. An examination of the historical situation indicates something quite different from Bauer's explanation: the monarchical office did not arise out of a group in search of some effective power structure that it did not possess; rather, it rose out of a group fully aware of its own position of strength and rightful leadership. In the following examination, I will attempt to counter the arguments with which Bauer hoped to advance his thesis.

B. The Problem of the Evidence

The problem we face when dealing with the monarchical office in Asia Minor is that Ignatius's letters seem to be the earliest evidence for an office of a bishop clearly set off from a subordinate presbytery. It must be from these letters, then, that we attempt to determine the date for the introduction of this office. Our problem is complicated by Ignatius's obvious bias: he

is clearly an advocate of the monarchical office, and he makes no attempt to hide this.⁶¹ Some have suspected that this caused Ignatius to misrepresent the situation before him: he is so driven by the need for the office that he reflects more often an ideal situation than the actual one.⁶²

Those who argue that Ignatius exaggerates the significance of the office share this much with my reading of the material: we both agree that Ignatius presents a monarchical office not unlike the strong monarchical office well established throughout the Great Church a few decades later. Our disagreement lies in the extent to which we find that Ignatius portrays the actual situation. In the following discussion, I attempt to show not only that the letters of Ignatius reflect a strong monarchical office (for which Ignatius's own wishful thinking might have been the cause) but that such a strong monarchical office is what Ignatius found in Asia Minor. In this, I will part ways with many scholars of the Ignatian material.

C. The Situation Reflected in the Ignatian Materials: Antioch or Western Asia Minor?

Scholars who have discussed the Ignatian materials, and who have accepted the basic authenticity of the seven-letter corpus,⁶³ are divided in their conclusions regarding the primary context reflected by the material. Some argue that the letters reflect the situation of the church in Antioch, the city where Ignatius was bishop and where his theological position was shaped.⁶⁴ The

polemic so central to the letters is said to be one with deep roots in the Syrian ecclesiastical situation--a situation perhaps not yet as fully developed in western Asia Minor.

The other view is that the polemic of the letters reflects a focused attack on a distinct and fairly well organized movement in western Asia Minor--a movement opposed to the ecclesiastical element and especially to the bishop or his office.⁶⁵ This was, with some qualifications, Bauer's view, and a host of respected scholars consent.⁶⁶ The latter view perhaps has the advantage of taking seriously the intense concern expressed in each of Ignatius's six letters to churches or church leaders in western Asia Minor--letters which frequently reflect the concrete situation of one of the churches.⁶⁷

Both views of the basic context of the letters are credible and neither has been able to win a consensus. Fortunately, for the primary questions addressed by my work, a resolution of that issue is not important. Thus, in the following discussion, I will not attempt to prove that one view of the context of the letters is the better; I will, rather, attempt to show that, given either view, serious implications for the question of the character of primitive Christianity come to the fore, especially as the general question of the character of primitive Christianity causes us to focus on the phenomenon of the introduction and the development of the monarchical office.

Since I am in dialogue with two groups here (one understanding

the Ignatian letters to reflect the situation in Antioch; the other, the situation in western Asia Minor), it is necessary to find some common ground. Those who conclude that the Ignatian letters reflect a developed opposition to the bishop or to the ecclesiastical body in the churches of western Asia Minor could admit that a similar opposition may have occurred in Antioch, as well, and that Ignatius's own opinions may have been shaped before his acquaintance with the churches of western Asia Minor. That is not to say that he misunderstood the situation in western Asia Minor; it is simply to recognize that the problem was widespread and that the warnings and exhortations from Ignatius come not hurriedly from a one-sided report of the bishop's faction but are carefully formulated, for which only a longer period of observation, reflection and development of argument could account.

Those who think that the details of Ignatius's letters reflect more the situation in Antioch--from where Ignatius some few weeks earlier had departed, burdened with tremendous concern for that church⁶⁸--could admit that Ignatius saw the problem as one then so threatening the churches of western Asia Minor that his letters to these churches were given almost fully to that problem. Further, it does seem that wandering preachers had already appeared in the area, and that in some of the churches, independent meetings had already been organized in such a way that the bishop did not function there with the same authority that he exercised in the primary meetings.⁶⁹

Just how extensive the opposition to the ecclesiastical structure was in the western Asia Minor churches is difficult to determine and depends ultimately on the basic context one assumes for the letters. For example, Peter Meinhold argues for separate communities, or at least distinctive groups, in each of the five cities addressed by Ignatius. But Meinhold believes that the letters reflect the situation in western Asia Minor.⁷⁰ If, however, Ignatius is merely warning of a possible situation (in light of his experiences in Antioch), then perhaps we must qualify his conclusion about the extent of the opposition to the ecclesiastical structures in western Asia Minor.

Ignatius does say to the Trallians that he warns them of heresy not because there is heresy already among them, but so they can be aware of the snares of the devil and thus avoid them (ITral. 7.1; 8.1). To the Ephesians, Ignatius reports that he has heard that heresy does not dwell among them (IEph. 6.2; 8.1), and that they have successfully avoided the wandering heretics who had attempted to sow evil doctrine there (IEph. 9.1). Likewise to the Smyrnaeans, Ignatius describes his warnings as warnings in advance to a church not yet affected by the problem (ISmyr. 4.1).

The difficulty with these reports is that Ignatius may be overly generous in his description of the stability and good order of these churches. We hear the same kind of compliments to the churches in Philadelphia and Magnesia, yet it is almost beyond doubt that separate assemblies of some sort had been formed or that some

kind of specific opposition to the bishop had been expressed in these two churches.

To the Philadelphians, Ignatius warns of "specious wolves" but adds, "they will find no place if you are in unity" (IPhil. 2.2). Yet Ignatius admits the existence of a separate assembly of some sort; in fact, it was probably the chief issue of discussion during Ignatius's short stay in that city (IPhil. 7-8). Even so, he is able to say that he has not found division among them, though he must add that significant qualification--which in essence admits division--"I have found...filtering" (IPhil. 3.1). So, too, in the letter to the Magnesians. After extensive warnings, Ignatius concludes: "Now I say this, beloved, not because I know that there are any of you that are thus, but because I wish to warn you...not to fall into the snares of vain doctrine" (IMag. 11.1). But, clearly, Ignatius's concern over those who are Christians merely in name, who show respect to the bishop in their words but not in their actions,⁷¹ does not hark back to some earlier, unknown situation in Antioch but relates specifically to the concrete situation of the young Damas, bishop of Magnesia, who has encountered opposition (IMag. 3-4).

If Ignatius is more generous than he need be (he may himself admit that in Tral. 3.3), then the churches of western Asia Minor may already be extensively fractured, and given the specific details of some of the problems (separate baptisms and agapes)⁷² and the varied charges and warnings from letter to letter, perhaps Ignatius

is reporting a fairly clear picture of the actual fractured state of the churches in western Asia Minor, in spite of his qualified denial of this.

The lack of a clear resolution to this problem is rendered less significant by the fact that my main questions are most clearly met by an examination of the letters to the Philadelphians and Magnesians, and it is in these churches that the argument for the existence of separate assemblies is most convincing.⁷³ The letter to the Smyrnaeans and the one to its bishop are of some importance, too. A separate assembly of some sort may have been formed there, for an extensive range of ecclesiastical activity conducted separate from the main body is described.

D. The Orthodox: A Weak Minority?

One of the problems with the assumption that the orthodox pressed for a restructuring of the power base in order to gain control in the church is that one must posit a weak orthodox minority to begin with. But this view does not do justice to the strength that the orthodox seem to have, for they apparently are able to push through a decision radically altering the structure of power in their favour, so that the chief authority comes to rest in the hands of one of their own members. This does not seem to be the kind of action that a brow-beaten, usually overruled minority could effect. Yet, for Bauer's thesis to make sense, the call for a restructuring of the power base could come only from a minority

without power or influence (66/ET:62).⁷⁴ In other words, Bauer's hypothesis does not simply demand that the orthodox element be in the minority, it demands, as well, that that minority be weak. The kind of minority that can so radically alter the structure of power does not qualify.

Bauer recognized that the weak orthodox minority he proposed was difficult to reconcile with the strength suggested by their radical altering of the structure of power. He put forward two factors that he thought might explain this. One was that the heretical groups were disunited (67/ET:63); the other was that the man put forward for this chief position by the orthodox had a special "aura," which apparently eased whatever opposition normally would have been expressed to this new power structure (66/ET:62). Neither explanation is credible.

E. The Disunited Heretics

Consider the disunity of the heretics. If the orthodox were able to bring about a restructuring of authority as radical as the restructuring of the power base--and a restructuring clearly in their favour--it is puzzling why they felt the need for such a restructuring of authority at all. Surely, for other issues, too, most of which would have been far less radical than that of the office of a monarchical bishop, the orthodox must have been able to push through their wishes against the disunited heretics. We could speculate about which group might align with which group (if we

could be certain there were a variety of heretical groups, rather than just one or two, as is usually thought),⁷⁵ but the fact remains that the orthodox were able to push through a most radical restructuring of power in their own favour.

Bauer's thesis suffers, too, from lack of evidence for numerous, disunited heretical groups. It is not enough that the heretics outnumber the orthodox, the heretics must themselves be divided into several factions--factions so at odds with each other that they cannot unite against a common, orthodox enemy. If there is one large heretical element, or several smaller, but united, heretical elements, the shift of power to the orthodox simply cannot be explained. Yet, when we look for evidence of numerous, disunited heretical elements, we simply cannot find such groups, nor does it seem that Bauer expected to find them either. He had a non-gnostic Pauline element align itself against the gnosticizing Paulinists; other groups are not mentioned, nor is the gnostic group said to be divided until Bauer is forced to say this in order to explain the power of the orthodox minority over the larger gnostic group reflected in the establishing of the office of monarchical bishop.⁷⁶

At one point in his work, Bauer argued that it is impossible to imagine an alliance of Marcionites, Jewish-Christians and Montanists against the orthodox group.⁷⁷ That argument is credible enough, but in the context of Bauer's explanation of the causes for the rise of the monarchical office, the argument is simply not relevant. Those particular heretical groups are later

than the rise of the monarchical office, and their disunity cannot be what Bauer had in mind when he spoke of the disunity of the heretics at the time of Ignatius (the time for the introduction of the monarchical office). For the Ignatian materials, scholars are at odds whether the heretics form one or two groups, but even if the better case might be for two groups (one gnostic and one Jewish, of some sort), the orthodox would have as much claim as any to being the largest, and perhaps even the majority.

F. The Special "Aura" of the Candidate of the Orthodox

Bauer's second explanation for the success of the orthodox minority in altering the power structure is equally problematic. Bauer claimed that the man put forward by the orthodox had a special "aura" that made him a credible candidate for office even in the eyes of the heretical elements (66/ET:62). But that picture of the candidate of the orthodox is sharply at odds with the picture reflected in the Ignatian materials, which is the earliest evidence for the monarchical episcopate. According to Ignatius, the bishops of western Asia Minor do not hold their office because of a special aura; they hold their office in spite of lacking any such "aura." The bishop at Magnesia is too young, and thus discredited,⁷⁸ and in several cities, the bishops are discredited because of their "silence." Whether this silence relates to their lack of charismatic phenomena--contrasted to the charismatic activity of the heretics--or to something more obscure, it serves sufficiently as

evidence that bishop after bishop in the west Asia Minor churches lacked any special aura.⁷⁹ This throws suspicion on Bauer's explanation for the rise of the monarchical office. The special "aura" of the candidate of the orthodox was what Bauer offered in order to lend credibility to his less than convincing contention that the minority orthodox group was able to get their candidate placed in the bishop's office. But the contention that the candidate of the orthodox had some special aura is less than convincing itself and, in fact, contradicts the detailed picture of the bishops reflected in the Ignatian materials.

Other questions come to mind too. Did the heretical groups have no one who could compete with the orthodox candidate? And if not, why not? If there was some special aura, what was this, and would such a quality not have provided weight in the church for the position of the orthodox even prior to the establishing of the monarchical office? And if we grant that the orthodox were the ones pressing for the monarchical office, must we not also grant that the orthodox knew they could offer a candidate who could not be seriously challenged for the office (in spite of their candidate not seeming to have had any special aura), and knew as well that they could carry the vote? Bauer failed to give these issues serious consideration.

Yet, all of this undermines Bauer's hypothesis. For some reason, Ignatius seems to assume that the bishop will always be on the orthodox side.⁸⁰ F. F. Bruce says that "the idea that the

bishop might himself sponsor heresy does not seem to have occurred to Ignatius."⁸¹ True. But the astounding thing is why this did not occur to Ignatius. It would not be sensible to encourage almost unquestionable obedience to an office if that office could be controlled by a heretic just as easily as by an orthodox leader. It might be argued that Ignatius did not really understand the situation, but that argument weakens with each appeal to it. Whatever the case, from Ignatius's perspective, at least, orthodoxy appears to be the significant force, and he apparently sees no reason to think that it will soon be otherwise. Only in light of this does his call for submission to the bishop make sense.

G. The Call for Obedience to the Presbytery

Bauer noted Ignatius's repeated appeal for obedience to the bishop. Bauer believed that the intense effort by Ignatius to encourage obedience to the monarchical office could only be explained if the office had not yet been firmly established in western Asia Minor (65-6/ET:61-2), and many scholars follow Bauer in this reasoning.⁸² The argument has its logic: if the office is established and generally accepted, why should obedience to this office be the recurring theme of the Ignatian material?⁸³

Yet, in spite of its logic, the argument is weak. Bauer's repeated emphasis on Ignatius's support for the office of the bishop

stands in sharp contrast to Bauer's failure to mention Ignatius's equally frequent support for the presbytery. It is not an orthodox bishop at the head of a fractured presbytery to which Ignatius demands the obedience of the church; it is to the whole presbytery that such support is demanded. The unity between the bishop and the presbytery is so healthy that repeatedly it receives Ignatius's approval.⁸⁴ This simply cannot be accounted for under the terms of Bauer's thesis.

The call for obedience in the letter to the Ephesians is a call for obedience to both bishop and presbytery (2.2). In the letter to the Magnesians, the call is the same (2.1; 6.1,2; 7.1; 13); indeed, it is a commonplace of Ignatius's letters (ITrai 2.1-2; 7.2; 13.2; IPhil Intro.; 7.1; ISmyr 8.1; IPoly 7.1).

To these passages could be added a number of other passages which, though not speaking specifically of obedience, link bishop and presbytery positively. When Ignatius wishes to define the church, for example, he does so, not in terms of the bishop alone but in terms of bishop, presbytery and deacons (ITrai 3.1). Of the presbytery in Philadelphia, they are, as is the bishop, "appointed according to the mind of Jesus Christ and...established...in security...by [the] Holy Spirit" (IPhil. Intro). In IPhil IV, Ignatius argues not for a presbytery united with the bishop, but from a presbytery united with the bishop, in order to discredit separate assemblies.

This stands as solid evidence that, for Ignatius, the

presbytery was basically free of error and clearly in harmony with the bishop, neither of which would be expected under Bauer's hypothesis. Such repeated calls for obedience both to the bishop and to the presbytery are, in fact, unintelligible on Bauer's framework. For Bauer, the monarchical office was a development forced by the orthodox minority in order to place the reins of power in their own hands. Prior to the establishment of the monarchical office, power would have been in the hands of the presbytery. This presbytery would have been controlled by the heretics, for they would have had a greater number of representatives. The orthodox, as a minority, would not have been so well represented. But the call by Ignatius for obedience to the presbytery as well as to the bishop makes little sense if the presbytery is divided between heretical and orthodox representatives, and it makes even less sense if the heretics have the majority of presbyters--the very situation that Bauer seemed to visualize, though he did not state this explicitly.⁸⁵ Whatever conflict and division Ignatius sees in the churches, it is a conflict and division not reflected in the presbytery. The presbytery is clearly united. In fact, Ignatius uses the concord of the presbytery with the bishop to encourage similar concord on the part of each member with the bishop and presbytery.⁸⁶ This stands in stark contrast to Bauer's reconstruction.

Further evidence that the presbytery did not include leaders of the heretical movement is that the heretical element seems to

have started to conduct independent assemblies, which Ignatius labels as "outside of the sanctuary."⁸⁷ Admittedly, independent meetings indicate a challenge of some sort to the authority of the bishop. Ignatius himself makes such a charge.⁸⁸ But too much attention has been given to the "fact" of independent meetings, too little to the significance. That opposition to the bishop is expressed in the form of independent assemblies suggests that the faction was unable to find effective means of opposition to the bishop within the structures of the church. Yet, had a number of presbyters been from the heretical camp, one would expect that opposition to the bishop would have been channelled through these presbyterial representatives. But we hear nothing of opposition at this level.⁸⁹ It would seem, then, that the heretical faction was not only unable to get their own man elected to the office of bishop, they were unable to get effective--if, in fact, they were able to get any--representation within the presbytery.

It must be remembered that Bauer's thesis requires that the presbytery be weighted in favour of the heretics. His contention was that the old structure of power was controlled by the heretics, and the orthodox, in order to gain power, pressed for the monarchical office. Ignatius was supposed to be the driving force behind this move. The old power structure was, of course, simply the presbytery, without a monarchical office. Yet, according to all the evidence of the Ignatian letters, the presbytery is not a problem at all. Presbyters are, as the whole church ought to be,

properly united with the bishop, and Ignatius as unhesitatingly calls for loyalty to the presbytery as he calls for loyalty to the bishop. The tension between the presbytery and the bishop that must have existed, by any accounting of Bauer's thesis, simply is not there, even at the time when this tension ought to have been the sharpest--at the time of the introduction of the office; we find no evidence of heretical elements within the presbytery. Whither, we might ask Bauer, has this large heretical presbyterial element suddenly disappeared?

What we see reflected in the Ignatian letters is a heretical faction with no claim on the sanctuary, bishop, elders or deacons. The picture is one of an existing system of orthodox leaders being challenged on the perimeter by heretics. The heretics cannot have been at the centre, for on that supposition Ignatius's appeal for obedience to the presbytery would not make sense.

Bauer knew he had to find tension between the bishop and the presbytery. His argument at this point is particularly disappointing. He did not deal with any of the many statements that posit a positive relationship between bishop and presbytery; worse still, he overestimated the significance of the rare statements that might be construed to reflect some tension within the presbytery towards the bishop.

First, Bauer pointed to the introduction of the letter of Polycarp to the church at Philippi. There Polycarp identifies the senders of the letter as himself and "the presbyters with him."

Bauer argued that what Polycarp meant was that the presbytery was divided and only those presbyters on Polycarp's side actually issued the letter. Bauer went so far as to say that there was an anti-bishop in Smyrna, leading the opposition against Ignatius (73-4/ET:69-70).

Bauer had, some years previously in his commentary on the Apostolic Fathers, translated the phrase "and the presbyters with him" in such a way that the whole presbytery was on Polycarp's side.⁹⁰ In his study on orthodoxy and heresy, he confessed that this translation was a mistake (74/ET:70). But was Bauer's revised translation a better one? Grammatically, the phrase could refer either to a presbytery fully behind Polycarp (as Bauer had translated it at first) or to a divided presbytery. Only by an examination of other passages can one determine which of the two is the better translation in this passage.

Bauer's revised translation implies that no credible monarchical office existed in Smyrna: the presbytery was divided and a significant number of presbyters did not support Polycarp. The problem with this picture of the presbytery at Smyrna is that it cannot make sense of the rather generous comments that Ignatius, only days earlier,⁹¹ had made about that very presbytery. We find those comments in the letter to the Smyrnaeans and the letter to Polycarp. There Ignatius had called the church to follow:

the bishop, as Jesus Christ follows the Father,
and the presbytery as if it were the Apostles.
And reverence the deacons as the command of God
(ISmyr 8.1).

And in closing that letter, he wrote: "I salute the godly bishop and the revered presbytery..." (12.2). Speaking to the church in the letter addressed specifically to Polycarp, Ignatius stated that he is "devoted to those who are subject to the bishop, presbytery and deacons" (IPoly 6.1).

Clearly, Ignatius views the presbytery at Smyrna positively, so much so that he calls for obedience to it. If the presbytery is divided, such an unqualified call for obedience is hardly intelligible. That call by Ignatius for obedience to the presbytery as a whole indicates that Ignatius believed that the presbytery was not split into two camps but rather was united fully behind Polycarp.

Any reconstruction that must deny Ignatius's accuracy here requires an excessive distrust of Ignatius's ability to understand open factions within the church. Ignatius offers us some assurance that he is not so loose-witted: he does recognize opposition within the church, in spite of that opposition being disguised,⁹² yet he believes that the presbytery is not involved in the faction, and in his attempt to stabilize the situation in favour of Polycarp, he calls for submission to the presbytery. Considering Ignatius's first-hand dealing with the situation in Smyrna, his approval of the presbytery must be seen as evidence for a presbytery fully behind him. This clearly subverts Bauer's reconstruction.

Only one other passage in the Ignatian material might be taken

to indicate a tension between bishop and presbytery, and though Bauer did not discuss it, it does deserve some discussion here, if only to dismiss it. In ITral 12.2, Ignatius says that "it is right that each of you, especially the presbytery, should refresh the bishop." He goes on (12.3) to entreat them to listen to him lest he become a witness against them. Is this a warning directed especially to the presbytery? It seems unlikely. Throughout the letter, Ignatius has given every indication that the presbytery stands firmly behind the bishop. In 2.2, the church is called to obedience to bishop and presbytery (subjection to the presbytery as to the Apostles), and a paragraph later, the church is defined in terms of bishop, presbytery and deacons (3.1). And in 7.2, again the bishop and presbytery are linked in a way that does not suggest tension. Given these positive comments, it seems unfair to the thrust of the letter as a whole to contend that the reference in 12.2 indicates significant opposition to the bishop within the presbytery.

One might argue that the heretical presbyters had already separated themselves from the body controlled by the bishop. Admittedly, some kind of separation within the community had indeed occurred,⁹³ and there could have been a presbyter or two who had joined or even led it. But the break with the bishop by presbyters must have been rare: Ignatius's attitude towards presbyters is positive; his belief in their loyalty to the bishop firm. An appeal to Ignatius's ignorance of the situation to explain this deserves

little attention.

If presbyters did desert the bishop, they apparently had given up any hope of holding power under the monarchical office. That suggests a well-established monarchical office, not one just being introduced by Ignatius. Further, if a number of presbyters have deserted, they apparently are already discredited, perhaps by their very leaving. Ignatius can appeal for loyalty to the presbytery. That suggests that if there are both heretical and orthodox presbyters, Ignatius believes his call for loyalty to the presbytery will be understood by the church as loyalty to those presbyters who are themselves loyal to the bishop.

Unless, then, Ignatius is markedly ignorant of the situation in the churches he is writing to--a view with little to commend it--only two options remain. The presbytery is united behind the bishop, or the presbytery is divided, and those against the bishop are already discredited. The first seems to take better account of the evidence, though either will undermine Bauer's reconstruction.

In light of these observations, and in light of Bauer's own recognition of the weakness of his argument at this point, we cannot but conclude that the position of the orthodox was notably more favourable than Bauer has acknowledged.

H. Signs of Token Recognition
of Ignatius and the Bishops
by the Schismatics

Bauer spoke of the "inherent contradiction of a monarchical bishop with only partial recognition" (67-8/ET:71-2). What he was referring to were the frequent references within the Ignatian letters themselves to opposition to the authority of the bishop.⁹⁴ Some critics have objected that no bishop at any time in the history of the Christian church has had the pleasure of ruling without opposition,⁹⁵ and Bauer's failure to accept as monarchical any office to which opposition is expressed is an obvious weakness in his hypothesis. That, however, should not be made the significant point for debate. What is crucial is an understanding of the character of this opposition, quite apart from the question of whether opposition can be envisioned within a genuinely monarchical sphere.

That opposition of some sort does exist is the most natural reading of the Ignatian letters. Ignatius not only knows of opposition, he seems to know some of the opponents by name, and he has a large and unflattering stock of polemic terms with which to describe them.⁹⁶ That element of Ignatius's polemic is universally recognized. .

It is usually assumed that this schismatic movement in western Asia Minor at the time of Ignatius was open and sharp; an opposition that was altogether obvious. I wish to argue here for an opposition

that is not so open--an opposition considerably more qualified than what is usually assumed. I will attempt to establish two points: (1) the schismatics continue to recognize the bishop, though perhaps only in some token way; and (2) the separate assemblies may have been viewed as valid options under a monarchical framework (at least, Ignatius seems to have considered the separate assemblies a more serious matter than the churches had before his arrival). If either point can be established, Bauer's theory that there is open and wide-spread opposition to the monarchical office will need to be modified.

One feature of Ignatius's polemic not given its due is that, in spite of Ignatius's obvious hostility towards the opponents, Ignatius is forced, on occasion, to admit that some of the opponents rendered token recognition to both the bishops and himself. Passing notice has been paid to this on the rare occasion. Virginia Corwin, in her Yale dissertation on Ignatius, suggested that the opponents in Magnesia had not yet separated from the bishop's church, for they seem, nominally at least, to acknowledge the bishop. Corwin holds that the bishop represented the centrist (and majority) position.⁹⁷ William R. Schoedel, with less sympathy for Ignatius's side, notes the respect that the Docetists seem to have for Ignatius. Schoedel observes a peculiar feature of the relationship. Ignatius has been starkly critical of the Docetists at several points in the letter to the Smyrnaeans. Schoedel writes:

...it would be natural to conclude that the

Docetists must have viewed Ignatius from afar with disapproval. And yet that was not so. For Ignatius lets slip a remark that changes the picture entirely. He asks, "What does a man benefit me if he praises me but blasphemes my Lord, not confessing that he is a bearer of flesh"? (Smyrn. 5.2) The implication is that the Docetists admired him but he is unwilling to accept their admiration. Clearly it is Ignatius who polarizes the situation. [98]

I agree with one point of Schoedel's observation. Given Ignatius's hostility towards the schismatics, it is surprising that he nevertheless admits that the opponents rendered at least token recognition to himself or to the bishops. The admission is certainly a forced one. It is the last thing that Ignatius wants to admit, and the fact that he does mention it speaks for its truth, especially since Ignatius seems uncomfortable in admitting it, and once having admitted it, seeks quickly to discount it by claiming that the recognition is in some way defective.⁹⁹ This recognition (token or genuine) is puzzling, especially on Bauer's accounting of the evidence: the opposition is supposed to have been ranged against the monarchical office, and Ignatius is supposed to have been the chief promoter of that office against the schismatics (65-6/ET:61-2).

A detailed discussion of the schismatics' relationship with the bishops and with Ignatius follows. If it can be established that the opponents rendered some kind of recognition to the bishops and to Ignatius, such recognition will not find compelling explanation within the framework of Bauer's hypothesis.

What are we to make of such respect? The crucial question is not whether the recognition was genuine or merely token; it is why there should have been any recognition at all.

1. Magnesia (Main passage: IMag 3-4)

There is, at the time of Ignatius, a separate assembly in Magnesia (IMag 4.1; 7.1-2).¹⁰⁰ But when Ignatius speaks of this faction, he uses words that are unexpected. He speaks of the group as having tried to lead their bishop astray (planaō), and he warns in this context that those who are trying to deceive the bishop are not dealing with men but with the invisible one--the God who sees even hidden things (kryphia). Further, Ignatius calls for obedience without hypocrisy, and the context seems to demand that he has in mind the hypocritical obedience rendered by some, especially since in the proceeding paragraph he speaks of those who apparently give token recognition to the bishop but yet "do everything without him" (IMag 4).

The Greek behind this phrase is not difficult to translate, but it is difficult to determine the precise intention of Ignatius. Ignatius says that some "name" (kaleō) the bishop but do everything without him. Lightfoot translated the verb "respect";¹⁰¹ Lake translated it "recognize."¹⁰² Perhaps neither word is entirely suitable, being less ambiguous than Ignatius's own comment. Yet, in spite of the ambiguity of the phrase, "they name the bishop," it is clearly intended as some kind of contrast to what follows: "they do everything without him." This would seem to require that Ignatius

intended kaleō to indicate some kind of recognition of the bishop on the part of the schismatics (though perhaps only a token recognition). This reading of the phrase is particularly attractive, given the context in which Ignatius has spoken of deception and hidden things and has implied a hypocritical obedience from the schismatics. The thrust of the passage would seem, then, to strike at an opposition that was more hidden than blatant.

One might argue that blatant opposition seems to be implied by Ignatius's charge that the schismatics "do everything without the bishop." But it does well to note here that of the two phrases (they name the bishop; they do everything without him), the first is more likely a non-polemical description of the schismatics; the second more likely something that flows from Ignatius's polemic and, of the two, is the less likely to describe the schismatics fairly. That both statements are equally descriptive of the schismatics is unlikely: the contrast between the two is too stark.

If Ignatius's comments here have any application at all to the situation in Magnesia (and they seem to, since they are based on the concrete situation of young Bishop Damas), blatant opposition to the bishop is highly unlikely. All of Ignatius's comments seem to indicate that the opponents in Magnesia have been rendering at least token recognition to the bishop. It is difficult to see how the word "deceive," for example, is appropriate to describe a situation in which opposition is blatant; it is difficult to see how "secret things" and "hypocrisy" and "naming the bishop" fit the scene of a

divided church, where lines are clearly drawn and the authority of the bishop openly challenged.

The problem that faces us respecting the situation in Magnesia, then, is how to make sense of those phrases that seem out of place (if not unintelligible) in the context of flagrant opposition to the bishop--a situation demanded by Bauer's reconstruction. If we find that the evidence points more convincingly to hidden opposition (perhaps with token recognition of the bishop) than to flagrant opposition, the implications will be far-reaching. For one thing, it makes non-sensical the view put forward by Bauer that the schismatics started their own assembly because of the introduction of the monarchical episcopate, for had that been the reason for their separation, the deference they show to the very office that caused them to separate would be unintelligible.

Not only is it unlikely that the separate assembly was not formed because of the introduction of the monarchical office, it is unlikely that the rise of the monarchical office and the formation of the separate assembly occurred at the same time. If that were the case, we would be confronted with the introduction of a radically new structure of authority in the church at the very time of the break of one element from the main body, and it would be almost impossible to believe that one was not related to the other--and related negatively at that. Yet, the token recognition of the bishop by the schismatics when Ignatius passes through would seem to

demand that, at some time in the past, a relatively positive relationship existed between the two groups now meeting, at least for some functions, separately.

Given, then, even token recognition of the bishop by the schismatics at the time of Ignatius, we must conclude that a positive relationship existed between this group and the bishop prior to the formation of the separate assembly. Yet, it is not easy to make sense of such recognition (which, even if not genuine, nevertheless reflects a prior positive relationship) if, at the core of the break, there was supposed to have been opposition to a newly promoted office of monarchical bishop.

If we cannot date the introduction of the monarchical episcopate at the time of the break in the community, we have only two options left. Either the office was established before the break, and well established at that, or the office was introduced after the break, perhaps, but not necessarily, in reaction to the break. Let us consider the latter possibility first.

If the monarchical office was introduced after the schism in Magnesia, the recognition the schismatics are prepared to render the bishop would seem to indicate an attempt on the part of the schismatics to establish closer links with the main assembly--they are prepared to go so far as to show respect to a man or an office which had been without authority over them in the past. The problem with this analysis is that the schismatics are charged with the opposite tendency: according to Ignatius, they are guilty of

opposition to the bishop and guilty of shearing their links with the bishop's church.¹⁰³ Ignatius is a generous enough man to have given a more friendly welcome to a group desiring closer links with the bishop's church.¹⁰⁴

To my knowledge, no one promotes the theory that the factions were moving towards a more positive relationship with the main church. All the evidence points to a group tending away from the authority of the bishop and minimizing its participation in the corporate activities of the bishop's assembly. Yet we are considering no straw man when we consider the possibility that the dissident faction is seeking a more positive relationship with the main church; but that would have been the situation if the introduction of the monarchical office occurred after the initial separation.

We are left, then, with the likelihood that the monarchical office was introduced before the separation of the faction, and sufficiently before the separation for the monarchical office as not to have been a ground for the break. Exactly how long prior to the break a bishop held a monarchical position in Magnesia is difficult to determine, but we have some clues. We do know that the bishop there was young (IMag 3.1). That he himself introduced the office is unlikely since that would place the split in the church about the time of the introduction of the office. Yet, as I have already argued, it is not possible to explain the recognition that the schismatics render to the bishop, if they broke off prior to, or

about the time of, the introduction of the monarchical office, or if they broke off because of the introduction of this office.

The office of the monarchical bishop would seem to have been introduced in Magnesia, then, at some time prior to the appointment of young Damas to the bishop's position. The opposition to Damas would be, then, an attempt to take advantage of the youth of the bishop--the very thing Ignatius charges (IMag 3.1).

We must date the introduction of the monarchical office at least as early as the leader in the church before Damas's appointment. The most compelling analysis of this situation is one that posits a strong church leader prior to Damas, who functioned, if not in name, certainly in essence as a monarchical bishop. Whatever opposition to the bishop there might have been prior to Damas's appointment, the opposition did not (and perhaps dared not) form independent assemblies, and it was only with the appointment of a new leader, and particularly a young leader, that the opponents attempted a clearer independence from the main assembly.

Thus, for Magnesia at any rate, the situation reflected in Ignatius's letter confirms not a weak monarchical office, or a recent introduction of that office, or a strong anti-monarchical faction. In each case, the letter indicates the opposite.

2. Philadelphia (Main Passage: IPhil 7)

When we turn to the letter to the Philadelphians (7), we find that here, as in the letter to the Magnesians, when Ignatius speaks of the separate meetings, words like planaō and krypta¹⁰⁵ come

to his mind. In this case, the matter of deception concerns Ignatius himself rather than the bishop, as seems to have been the case in Magnesia.

Lightfoot noted the attempt to deceive Ignatius but thought the reference too obscure to allow for resolution.¹⁰⁶ But perhaps the reference is not so oblique. The immediate context of the charge that some had tried to deceive Ignatius concerns Ignatius's knowledge of the separate meetings. The structure of the argument seems to offer some clarification concerning precisely what the attempt at deception involved. The argument runs thus: Ignatius claims that some have tried to deceive him, but the Spirit (which knows all things--even secret things) cannot be deceived, and it was by the Spirit that Ignatius had censored the separate meetings. Knowledge of the separate meetings is the matter in question; the deception and the hidden things, if they at all relate to the situation in Philadelphia, must have something to do with the separate meetings.

Yet such terms are strange ones to describe the faction if the faction stood in blatant opposition to the bishop. Blatant opposition is not intelligibly described as deceptive or hidden, yet these are precisely the terms that come to Ignatius's mind when he speaks of the faction at Philadelphia.

An objection might be raised. Ignatius is referring specifically to his own knowledge of the faction: could it not be that for those within the church at Philadelphia, the matter of the

faction was more blatant than deceptive?

Several considerations make this unlikely. First, even if the schismatics blatantly oppose the bishop, they apparently wish to appear to be loyal to the bishop when Ignatius is present. At least, Ignatius charges certain ones with attempting to deceive him, and it is specifically in regard to the separate meetings that Ignatius lays the charge. The problem here is to reconcile a blatant opposition to the bishop prior to Ignatius's coming with a desire to hide that opposition when Ignatius is present. Certainly it makes implausible the theory that the lines are clearly drawn and that the office of the bishop is precisely what is at issue.

In the context of blatant opposition to the bishop, neither Ignatius's charge that some have tried to deceive him about the separate meetings nor his claim to know of the schism only through the Spirit make sense. If Ignatius did not know about the division (or if he can credibly claim not to have known about the division), the situation is not likely to be one of open and widespread opposition to the office of the bishop. Had that been the case, there would not have even been a question of how Ignatius had come to know about the separate assembly--it would have been assumed that everyone knew. But, clearly there does seem to be some question concerning how Ignatius had come to know about the division. The schismatics, to be sure, were probably not convinced by Ignatius's claim that his knowledge had come from the Spirit, but they appear to have no proof by which to challenge that claim. The whole weight

of Ignatius's argument depends on their not having such proof, and Ignatius's description of the opponents as hoi hypopteusantes (IPhil 7.2) would seem to emphasize further the schismatics' uncertainty about the source of Ignatius's knowledge.

For the situation in Philadelphia, there are two sources by which Ignatius might have come to know about the division in the church (excluding the prompting of the Spirit). Either will quite easily refute Ignatius's claim that his knowledge comes solely from God.

In the first place, the common assembly could not have offered any obvious indicators of a division, for it seems to have been within the common assembly that Ignatius revealed his knowledge of the division (to the surprise of those present, it seems).¹⁰⁷ What is to be noted here is that this common assembly could not have reflected the schism in any obvious way. If it was clear that Ignatius knew of the division before he spoke, his whole argument is rendered unintelligible. There has to be some question of how Ignatius has come to learn of the schism, and this rules out the presence of obvious indicators of the schism in the assembly where Ignatius's address is given.

Perhaps it should not be expected that the common assembly would have reflected the schism. That some Christians in the area were not in attendance or that some who were in attendance participated in separate meetings, also, need not have been obvious to Ignatius. Even so, the point needs to be made: as a source of

Ignatius's knowledge of the faction, the common assembly must be ruled out.

Nor is it likely that Ignatius learned of the schism from the bishop or the bishop's supporters. These are, of course, the most likely men who would have reported the matter to Ignatius--and especially so if the separate meetings were formed in open opposition to the bishop. But Ignatius denies his knowledge came from any man. Of course, the schismatics may have been convinced that the bishop's supporters had informed Ignatius of the faction, yet they apparently cannot refute Ignatius's denial that these men informed him. We must take seriously Ignatius's claim that the bishop's supporters had not informed him of the faction. If they had, Ignatius becomes less than frank in his specific statement that he had learned of the schism from no man.

Furthermore, Ignatius's claim not to have received his knowledge from man appears credible in light of the fact that the schismatics had made an attempt (or could be charged with having made an attempt) to deceive Ignatius regarding the schism. That they would have made an attempt to keep the matter hidden suggests that there is at least the possibility of success in keeping the schism hidden. In other words, the situation had to be such that the schismatics could count on the possibility that Ignatius could be in their midst without their schism being reported to him. Unless that was a possibility, their attempt to hide the schism is a grand exercise in futility. That does not make the attempt

impossible, but it certainly makes it unlikely.

All this makes the situation fairly complicated, especially for a theory that posits open opposition to the bishop in Philadelphia at the time of Ignatius. How could it happen--in a situation of open opposition to the bishop--that the bishop and his supporters make no mention of the schism to the chief supporter of the bishop and critic of schism, Ignatius himself? Or how could Ignatius claim--in a situation of open opposition to the bishop--that his knowledge of the faction came only from the Spirit? Or how could the schismatics hope--in open opposition to the bishop--to deceive Ignatius about the schism?

It will not do to argue that Ignatius is mistaken in thinking that the schismatics attempted to hide their separate meetings from him. Even if that were the case, one serious problem remains. Suppose that the schismatics believed that their separate assembly was a valid option under a monarchical framework, and suppose that the matter was not brought to Ignatius's attention because even the bishop did not see these meetings as blatant challenges to his authority. Under such a reading of the situation, we would not only have no blatant opposition to the bishop, we would not even have hidden opposition. But unless there is opposition of some form to the bishop, then respect for the bishop on the part of the schismatics would have been natural. We might go so far to say that unless the schismatics themselves sensed that they stood in opposition to the bishop, there would be no reason to think that the

schismatics would not have recognized the bishop.

We are left, then, with no evidence for open opposition to the bishop. And this corresponds exactly with the situation we found in Magnesia. Whatever opposition there is to the bishop, it is not blatant; at least token recognition is given to the bishop. And all the implications for the situation in Magnesia follow us to Philadelphia. First, the schism cannot have resulted from the introduction of the monarchical office. If that had been the case, why, then, do the schismatics show deference to the very office that caused them to separate? Second, the monarchical office must have had some authority (if not considerable authority) for some time prior to the separate meetings. If that had not been the case, why, then, do the schismatics bring themselves under a new authority they had not previously recognized and to which they had no real commitment?

3. Smyrna

The two letters to Smyrna are the most detailed regarding both the beliefs and the structure of the opposition to the bishop. The belief is clearly docetic (ISmyr 1; 2; 3; 7); the structure is one of independent meetings involving the Eucharist, agapes and baptisms (ISmyr 7; 8.2) The spectrum of ecclesiastical activity conducted apart from the larger body is so vast that Bauer even argued for a counter-bishop, of sorts, in Smyrna (73/ET:69).¹⁰⁸

But the group so separate from the main body for many elements of the corporate life of a Christian community receives Ignatius not

as an enemy but as a friend (ISmyr V). Further, they appear to be still sufficiently a part of Polycarp's church to have had the opportunity to meet with Ignatius, who appears to have been the guest of some more faithful members of Polycarp's church.¹⁰⁹ If the group is involved in a conscious and open opposition either to Polycarp, the bishop, or to the monarchical office, their acceptance of and their access to the proponent of that office is puzzling.

Polycarp himself may have been partly to blame for the independence of the group in Smyrna. The case is not entirely compelling, but I offer here two points for consideration. First, Ignatius tells Polycarp to allow nothing to be done without his approval (IPoly 4.1). This suggests that Polycarp had not exercised his full authority: he had allowed what he perhaps could have censored. If that assessment of the situation seems to give Polycarp too much authority, it should be observed that Ignatius's charge to Polycarp is out of place in a situation where the lines are clearly drawn, and the battle engaged. A second point: Ignatius speaks of those who apparently appear to be plausible but, in some way, are seen to be overthrowing Polycarp. Again, such a statement is out of place in a situation where the parties are divided into bishop-supporters and bishop-opponents. We have here, as we had in the situation in Philadelphia and Magnesia, a note of deception on the part of the schismatics, and this throws some suspicion on any reconstruction that makes the opposition to the bishop blatant. The situation in all three churches seems to be one more of dialogue

than of open hostility. It is Ignatius who draws the lines more sharply and censors any activity not under the strict control of the bishop, a point Schoedel recognizes.¹¹⁰

Whether Ignatius, in drawing sharper lines, has a better grasp of the situation than the more tolerant bishops is a matter taken up later.¹¹¹

We must conclude, then, that in the situation known to Ignatius first-hand (Philadelphia and Smyrna), the opposition encountered cannot be explained by a hypothesis such as Bauer's. Opposition to Ignatius is not sharp enough; lack of respect for the bishop is not open enough. Add to this the picture from Magnesia and it will be almost impossible to conclude that the monarchical office is just being introduced or that its introduction is the reason for the schism.

I. The Conditions for Identifying a Separate Assembly as "outside the Sanctuary"

Ignatius is able to speak of Christians who are "outside the sanctuary," or who are involved in ecclesiastical activity in some way separated from the primary sphere of the bishop's influence.¹¹² In other words, in some cities separate assemblies had been formed for at least certain of the elements of corporate worship.

But to be able to speak of the separation of an assembly, there must be some body from which separation is possible. If, as is almost certain, there was no large assembly to which all

Christians of a city came together but only scores of scattered house church units,¹¹³ then the mere meeting together as a small unit cannot have indicated a separatist tendency. Something else must have provided a sense of a common body, and it must have been in terms of that to which the charge of separation was related and made sense. According to Ignatius, loyalty to the bishop provides the sense of membership in a common (and, more than likely, invisible) body; a break in the loyalty to the bishop is, then, what marks a group as separatist.

In the context of the house church as the primary unit for regular, collective worship, separation is identified, not by a visible collection of persons within some new four walls but by a challenge to some kind of structure that defines group unity, and the only structure we know that could qualify is one that is defined in terms of some central authority. Without some central authority serving to define the primary body of which all local believers meeting in small, separate units were considered members, it will be impossible to speak meaningfully of a particular group being "outside the sanctuary" or as separated from the bishop's church. Clearly, Ignatius thinks he can speak meaningfully of separation of some elements. And when he ties that separation to a challenge to the authority of the bishop, that is precisely what we would expect in a body where a number of separate units have some sense that they stand within the same body.

A presbyterial council might, perhaps, have served to generate

some sense of unity in the context of concrete, separate units; but under such a structure, there would have been no reason for certain groups to separate, if, as Bauer had argued, the groups that separated had the majority of presbyters.¹¹⁴ The more credible reconstruction is one that places a bishop as head of the unit that gives a sense of membership in a common body to groups that regularly meet separately.

VI

Summary

Bauer's reconstruction of the history of the early church in western Asia Minor is faulty, then, at three critical junctures. It does not adequately explain the alliance between Palestinian immigrants and anti-gnostic Paulinists, nor does it recognize the early consciousness of orthodoxy that might be indicated by such a shift. It has not demonstrated that heresy was as widespread and strong as Bauer has contended. And, finally, the reconstruction fails to explain how a brow-beaten orthodox minority could have so radically altered the structure of power in their favour. In light of these weaknesses, Bauer's reconstruction of primitive Christianity in western Asia Minor must, to a large measure, be set aside.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE NATURE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF EARLY DIVERSITY

I

Evidence for Theological Diversity

Three questions provide the focus for the discussion in this chapter. First, was there theological diversity in the primitive church? Second, if there was theological diversity, did this diversity express itself in separate communities? And third, if there were separate communities, were these communities isolated from other Christian communities in the area?

A. The Failure of Bauer's Reconstruction

It is generally assumed that we can find evidence for widely diverse traditions in the earliest church, and the ample literature from western Asia Minor is often invoked in order to specify concretely what that diversity entailed. The two chapters of Bauer's work that we discussed in the previous chapter are a classic example of such studies.

But Bauer's handling of the evidence engenders little confidence in his reconstruction. A detailed investigation of the evidence has led me to challenge Bauer's conclusion of a widespread heretical movement in western Asia Minor in the first years of the

second century. The material examined in the previous chapter offers clues to nothing more than a small heretical movement still associated, in some way, with the bishop's church.

Such findings run counter to current hypotheses on heretical movements of the late first and early second centuries. But the scope of my work has been limited. I have primarily dealt with the Ignatian material, and to a lesser degree, with the Apocalypse. Could it be that the heresies opposed in these documents are small, "in-house" schisms, contemporary with, but dwarfed by, massive heretical movements with full independence from the churches addressed by Ignatius and the Apocalyptist? Is there not good evidence for significant movements with radically diverse interpretations of the Christian message apart from Nicolaitans and the docetists confronted by Ignatius?

In this chapter, I confront these questions, widening my investigation in order to determine the scope and significance of the diverse theological interpretations that, without much dispute, can be predicated of the primitive church in western Asia Minor.

B. Evidence from the New Testament Materials

New Testament scholarship is now largely convinced that Christian diversity was both early and radical, and it was especially Bauer's work that led to that conclusion. A number of differences within the New Testament materials are pointed out. There are the differences between the Hellenists and the Hebrews; the

differences between Jerusalem and Galilee; the differences between John and Luke; the differences between Peter and Paul, or between Paul and James; and the various other differences which the early church itself identified or modern scholars have attempted to establish. On any accounting of this material, we do not have the kind of uniformity in the first century that seems to have been assumed by the Fathers or by the Eusebian scheme.¹

Recent theologies of the New Testament reflect the widespread assumption within New Testament scholarship of diversity in the early Christian traditions. What is called a "Theology of the New Testament" is often merely a collection of various theologies: that of early Jewish Christianity, that of hellenistic Christianity, that of Paul, that of John, and so forth, without any real attempt to bring these theologies together into a theology of the New Testament. For example, Werner Georg Kümmel, in his 333 page work, The Theology of the New Testament, devotes the final twelve pages to "The Heart of the New Testament." The major part of the book is devoted to individual theologies.² I refer to Kümmel's work only to illustrate the problem. His book is merely one of a number of similar examples of the assumption of early diversity at work. Consider Helmut Koester's conclusion. He says that the New Testament includes "various divergent convictions not easily reconciled."³ And Ernst Käsemann is prepared not only to identify radically diverse interpretations within the New Testament but also to state which of the many contain the power of the Gospel.⁴

From such comments, one might be led to conclude that what we know as second- and third-century orthodoxy is a molding together (perhaps artificially, and certainly under the pressures of a different age) of primitive forms of the Christian message--forms originally competitive or incompatible, and the members of which perhaps even refused fellowship to, and denied the truth-claims of, members of diverse positions now united in the catholic movement. It is that conclusion I wish to challenge in this chapter.

C. Evidence for Diversity in Western Asia Minor

Earlier, in my attempt to establish the importance of western Asia Minor for a study of orthodoxy and heresy, I called attention to the extensive canonical material that either had heresy as its main concern or took the issue of heresy seriously. It is difficult to establish particular issues in this area for the Pauline period, though that is not to say there were none. Undoubtedly, the whole Jewish problem followed Paul to the significantly Jewish Ephesus. For a slightly later period, the evidence is clearer. The Pastorals reflect a concern that the church be protected from wrong teaching; the Johannine epistles reflect intense conflict in the Christian community, and the division is serious; the Apocalyptist is anxious to silence the teaching of the Nicolaitans, and perhaps other teachers too; and Ignatius encounters at least one group that "is not the planting of the Father," perhaps forerunners of the gnosticism that so seriously challenged the church a few decades

later.⁵

Then, too, there is the possibility that the Apocalyptist, for example, had no special loyalty to the Pauline expression of the Christian message, and a more widespread move from Paul in western Asia Minor is an assumption of much of modern scholarship.⁶ And some scholars have argued for a significant division between the trend towards early catholicism expressed by the Pastorals, Luke/Acts, Colossians and Ephesians and the opposition to that trend expressed in the Johannine materials.⁷

No other area provides evidence for more striking and extensive diversity than does western Asia Minor.

II

Dealing with Primitive Diversity

A. Wrong Questions

I quote here two questions from Dunn's Unity and Diversity in the New Testament⁸ to focus on the kind of question being asked. The basic question is posed in the title of Dunn's introductory chapter: "Is 'Orthodoxy' a Meaningful Concept in the New Testament Period?" This question arises from another question, which many suspect demands a negative answer. That question is: "Was there ever a single orthodoxy within primitive Christianity, within the New Testament?"⁹

I use Dunn's questions at this point because they reflect the way many scholars have tended to pose the questions. I do not,

however, find these questions as probing as the primary question should be. All too often these questions are answered in the negative simply because convincing evidence for theological diversity in the New Testament period has been found. But the existence of early theological diversity should not so quickly cause us to discard a theory of a primitive orthodoxy, especially when we consider that the discovery of diversity has often been the direct result of an historical-critical exegesis that has as its intention the identification of the particularity of each writer. Although this approach has provided us with rich insights into the unique genius of various authors and has called our attention to rich variety of perspectives from which the message about Jesus came to be understood, it has failed to address a series of fundamental questions about the nature and significance of early Christian diversity. I list a few of these questions. What is it about diversity that makes a theory of an early sense of orthodoxy untenable? Is there not perhaps room for marked diversity within the field of orthodoxy? Is there not a need to draw some line between diversity that is problematic for the theory of a primitive orthodoxy and diversity that is healthy? These are primary questions.

B. Disappointing Solutions

Both in the identification of diversity and in the attempts to reconcile diverse elements, much has been tried but little achieved.

Ignatius becomes a Paulinist for some, a Johannist for others, and for others even a gnostic.¹⁰ The churches in western Asia Minor at the turn of the first century have been called Pauline, Johannine, and gnostic, with the Jewish element adding to the puzzle.¹¹ The heretics fare little better. Sometimes they are considered as one group alone; sometimes as two groups--markedly opposed; and sometimes as three groups.¹² The connection between the problems in Ephesus (from the John-baptised disciples mentioned in Acts, to the circumcised myth-spinners of the Pastorals, to the Nicolaitans of the Apocalypse and the bishop-opposers of the Ignatian correspondence) has never been credibly worked out. There is, one might say, work to be done in the field.

Supposing some success is achieved in identifying diverse elements in the churches of western Asia Minor, there is, then, the problem of determining the significance of this diversity. The methods currently in use span the spectrum. But often diversity is allowed to imply too much or too little: too much when the only common core that can be found among the diversities is the confession that "Jesus is Lord"; too little when all diversity is harmonized or reduced to insignificance by reading Paul through Johannine eyes or John through Pauline eyes, or by a dogmatic refusal to admit the possibility of diversity within the canonical documents.

I make here no attempt to work through such complexity. The hope of success is dimmed not only by the repeated lack of success

in the multitude of previous works but, also, by the possibility that some of the most voiced questions are not relevant to the problem.

My treatment of the issue of diversity consciously skirts any attempt to identify diversities. That means I leave unanswered questions like, "Is Ignatius Pauline or Johannine?" So, too, the question of whether Johannine theology was consciously reacting to the trend towards early catholicism in western Asia Minor. Nor will I attempt to resolve the diversities. I seek no "common core"¹³ or "controlling canon,"¹⁴ and I find that "harmonization" offers an even less credible route.¹⁵

C. Determining the Significance of Diversity

In the introduction of this chapter, I put forward three questions that would serve as the focus of my investigation. As to the first, it can be said that there is now a basic assumption in New Testament scholarship that the primitive community was marked by theologically diverse interpretations of the Christian message. That assumption can be convincingly supported, and it is from this assumption that the other two guiding questions of this chapter become relevant.

The second question is whether this well-established theological diversity expressed itself in the form of separate communities. This question is useful in calling attention to the primary structure of the developing communities, but it is not of

much further use. One question overshadows this and all other questions concerning primitive diversity; this question strikes at the heart of the issue of the significance of theological diversity. It is this: what was the nature of the contact between the various theological communities? Is the contact better described as open fellowship or as protective isolation?

Bernard Lonergan has made us aware that diversity, in itself, is not problematic but is a feature reasonably expected in the process of the development of human consciousness. In the chapter of his Method in Theology titled "Dialectic," Lonergan identified three kinds of diversity (complementary, genetic and dialectical).¹⁶ There would be genuine and fundamental contradiction only between dialectically diverse views. Brice Martin, in the context of the debate concerning orthodoxy and heresy, appeals to the distinctions that Lonergan had made, and Martin charges that the German discussion of diversity has been marked by a failure to take into consideration "diverse, non-complementary, but compatible perspectives," which for Martin is the forgotten middle ground between diversity that is complementary and that which is contradictory.¹⁷ Whatever criticisms that might be brought against Lonergan's analysis of diversity, none seems serious enough to discredit Lonergan's view as one that does more justice to the issue of diversity than do those views that see all non-complementary diversity as instances of contradiction and opposition.

D. Pool of Acceptable Diversity

In an attempt to do justice to the potential complexity of diversity to which Lonergan has called our attention, I have considered each diverse theological expression in terms of a "pool of acceptable diversity" in which that tradition must have functioned. The concept of a pool of acceptable diversity will remind us of the scope and limits within which a tradition relates itself to the world of diversity in which it is set.

It is this pool of acceptable diversity that indicates the significance of diversity. The mere identification of the diverse features of various perspectives tells us almost nothing about the significance of that diversity (except where the diverse elements stand in intended and hostile opposition to other options). It is not the diversity, itself, but rather the conscious boundaries of exclusion drawn by a community that reveal the significance of diverse elements within a community's tradition. What must be observed here is that the boundaries of exclusion are rarely identical with the distinctive elements that give the community its peculiar shape and character; the boundaries of exclusion are broader and serve not to define the community but to define the community's allied, or friendly, world. A tradition does not exclude everything in any way different from its own proclamation, and we are misled when we first determine what a particular tradition proclaims and then, from that, determine what that

tradition excludes. The knowledge of one does not give knowledge of the other.

It is a complicated task to determine what a tradition will find unacceptable. At the least complicated level (and this applies particularly for polemical documents), a tradition will identify explicitly elements that it rejects and sometimes will even give a fairly reasoned argument for rejecting them. Paul rejects Judaizers, the Apocalyptist rejects Nicolaitans, the author of the Pastorals rejects circumcised myth-spinners, Ignatius rejects docetists. They state this plainly. We have a clear (if incomplete) sense of what, for each of them, is unacceptable diversity.

The matter is markedly more complex when we deal with situations in which one tradition has not explicitly addressed the question of its relationship to another tradition. Where does John stand in relation to Paul, or post-Paulinism to the Apocalyptist, for example? The problem here is that the authors have not indicated their relation to, or opinion of, these other expressions of the Christian message, and though a careful reading of the writings might tell us something, we generally learn no great deal. Bauer thought that the Apocalyptist was anti-Pauline.¹⁸ This could be, but the case that he was anti-Nicolaitan is considerably more certain.

Yet, when it comes to the question of the significance of theological diversity, it is not so much the Apocalyptist's opinion

of the Nicolaitans or Ignatius's opinion of the docetists that is important, it is the Johannine opinion of Paul or the Ignatian opinion of the Apocalyptist. Here we are dealing with elements all of which come to be contained within orthodoxy. Was such friendly association the reality before the efforts of some Rome-dominated thrust towards theological uniformity in the late second century?

I have indicated that my method will be to determine the pool of acceptable diversity in which each tradition related itself to the world of diversity in which it was set. Admittedly, there is some danger in focusing on the perceptions of the early communities in order to determine the significance of early theological diversity. When the communities themselves judge the significance of the early diversity of which they were a part, it is possible that the judgments they made were inconsistent, or conflicting, or politically expedient. A group may have tolerated what, logically, they should not have; they may have rejected what, except for some clash of personality or some surface misunderstanding, was compatible with their own position, if not a restatement of it. These are possibilities and must be considered. But I cannot concede that these possibilities should be a main focus or that they are of sufficient probability to throw suspicion on the way the various theological communities perceived the diversity around them.

III

Theologically Distinct Communities

A. Separate Communities?

It is one thing to argue that the primitive Christian writings reflect theological diversity; it is quite another to argue that this theological diversity expressed itself in theologically distinct, and perhaps even isolated, communities. Yet, it is becoming more in vogue for scholars to say that the diversity of the early period expressed itself in separate theological communities. According to this reconstruction of the early church, one might have found in Ephesus, for example, a Johannine community, a gnostic, a Petrine, a Jewish-Christian, a Pauline, and depending on the perspective of the historian, the catholic church will be one of these, and sometimes the Pauline and the gnostic or the Johannine and the gnostic will be fused, sometimes the Johannine and the Jewish Christian will be, and sometimes the Petrine and the Jewish-Christian.¹⁹ Those who have thought to pay some attention to the house church, too, have argued that each theological community could have had several house churches in the larger cities. A member of the Johannine community would have sought out one of the Johannine house churches, a member of the Pauline community one of the Pauline house churches, and so forth.²⁰

It is of some importance to determine whether the existence of

such independent communities can be credibly argued. If it can be shown that, in spite of diverse interpretations of the Christian message, the individual interpretations did not take the form of separate (or isolated) theological communities, then a more positive sense of the diversity would be demanded. This line of investigation may not tell us exactly what a Johannine thinker would have thought of a Paulinist, but if we can determine that they joined together in the same community for their regular, corporate worship and that they ate of the same eucharist, we would be compelled to see their theological diversity as significantly overshadowed by their sense of unity.

The question to be answered, then, is whether separate theological communities were the norm. That is a basic question before we attempt to evaluate the significance of the diversity of theological expressions in the primitive church--a diversity I take to have been convincingly established.

B. Methodological Difficulties

Raymond Brown, in a recent work in which he identified seven distinct theological communities in the sub-apostolic age, recognized what he calls a "serious methodological problem" in the attempt to identify distinct theological communities in the primitive church. The problem exists primarily because we are forced to reconstruct these communities solely from isolated documentary evidence. Brown's warnings are timely, and I quote him

in full. He says:

As we seek to employ these witnesses [NT documents] to reconstruct community situations in the Sub-Apostolic Period, a serious methodological problem is to ascertain whether the thought expressed is peculiar to the author or is truly shared by a community. When one is dealing with epistles or letters, the situation is often easier to determine. Nevertheless, since all of the works have been preserved (and even accepted as canonical), we are certain that at least some Christians found guidance in them. Another methodological problem involves caution about the partial extent to which the writing portrays community views. If the Pastorals stress presbyteral structure and Colossians/Ephesians stress the body of Christ, that does not mean that the Christians who received the Pastorals and the author who wrote them were ignorant of the theology of the body of Christ, nor that those involved in Colossians/Ephesians were ignorant of the presbyteral structure. One can be certain only of the positive emphasis that Christians were hearing in a particular work. [21]

After such warning, one is surprised to find that Brown identifies seven distinct communities, three of them Pauline! Brown's complex reconstruction, in which almost every New Testament document reflects a distinct community, would seem to call for second thoughts on the entire effort.²²

C. Separate Jewish-Christian Communities

Separate Jewish-Christian communities did exist. During the first few years, there would have been nothing but Jewish communities. After the founding of the church in Antioch, some progressive Jewish Christians admitted Gentiles into the Christian

community, and this decision presented a problem when certain Jewish Christians refused table-fellowship to these Gentile believers because these former pagans had not been circumcised.²³

Whether, from this time, separate Jewish and Gentile churches existed is a matter of dispute.²⁴ We do know that some decades later, distinct Jewish-Christian groups did exist, of which the Ebionites are the classic example.²⁵ But it is not clear that these later groups accurately reflect the earlier tensions stemming from the admission of Gentiles into the church. Surely, the striking series of set-backs and defeats experienced by Judaism in the second half of the first century must have had a profound effect on these Jewish-Christian groups--with Jerusalem devastated by the Romans and the temple destroyed. We know from the book of Acts that as late as the late fifties the temple still played an important role in the lives of Jewish Christians, and nothing suggests a radical change in that attitude in the sixties.²⁶ Further, the stunning success of the Christian mission to the Gentiles, as compared to the mission to the Jews, must have had some impact on the Jewish Christians, who saw themselves reduced to a minority element in the church.

Both the destruction of Jerusalem and the success of the Gentile mission would have been a significant challenge to the life of the Jewish Christians, and the structure such groups reflect in the second century must be seen, at least in part, as an attempt by these Jews to preserve as much of their threatened culture as

possible. But neither of these factors would have been significant to the Jewish Christians in the first two or three decades of the church, and certainly the division in Antioch (whether permanent or brief) is hardly an Ebionite-like phenomenon.

That is not to dismiss outright the hypothesis that the later Jewish-Christian groups like the Ebionites might have represented the most original form of the Christian message. It is simply to point out that the fundamental factors in the shaping of the later Jewish-Christian groups are sufficiently changed from those affecting the original Jewish-Christian communities of Palestine to make such a hypothesis suspect and in need of rigorous defense.

Some scholars have argued for a Jewish-Christian group in western Asia Minor with closer ties to what became the catholic church. Bauer contended that Palestinian immigrants had joined with an anti-gnostic Pauline group and had brought a distinctly Jewish colouring to what developed into the catholic church.²⁷ This, of course, is not a separate Jewish-Christian community; it is merely a Jewish colouring (and possibly, a takeover) of one of the two elements that together constituted the only church in the area. When these two elements divided (around the time of Ignatius), there would have been a separate gnostic and separate Jewish-coloured catholic church. There would have been no distinctly Jewish-Christian church.

Helmut Koester follows Bauer here, as he does for much of his reconstruction. In his recent two-volume Introduction to the New

Testament, Koester says that we know nothing about Jewish-Christian communities outside Palestine and Galatia.²⁸ A few pages later, he says that there is no sign of a self-reliant and independent Jewish-Christian tradition in early Christianity, and that the later Jewish-Christian groups are "not due to any continuing, separate tradition which had originated in the very beginning of Christian history."²⁹

Leonhard Goppelt does not think that separate Jewish-Christian churches existed in western Asia Minor either.³⁰ Nor does E. P. Sanders. Sanders says that Paul never would have wanted a separate Jewish and Gentile church in a city.³¹ But Sanders does not believe that there were Jews in Paul's churches,³² and this raises questions about the Christian mission to Jews outside of Palestine.³³ F. F. Bruce, on the other hand, speaking particularly of Rome, says that few churches would have had both Jews and Gentiles in them. Unlike Sanders, Bruce allows for a mission to diaspora Judaism: Jews and Gentiles apparently generally have separate assemblies.³⁴

Two other scholars have paid special attention to the Jewish character of the Christianity of western Asia Minor. Jean Daniélou argues strongly that a distinctly Jewish and a distinctly Gentile group existed.³⁵ Raymond Brown, too, noticed the Jewish character of the Christianity of western Asia Minor. Brown argued that at least four groups of Christian communities can be identified from the Johannine writings. His theory has a special twist. No

group was distinctly Jewish; no group distinctly non-Jewish. Each of the four groups would have had both Jews and Gentiles, and each would have been distinguished from the others in regard to how they viewed circumcision and other Jewish obligations.³⁶

But Brown does not indicate in what way the Pauline element fits into his reconstruction. He says that the "apostolic" or Petrine group would not have included the Pauline element. This Petrine group is reflected in the Johannine material; the Pauline group apparently is not.³⁷ But that reconstruction is problematic. In a later, more detailed reconstruction, Brown places the Pauline community in western Asia Minor along side the Johannine community; the Petrine community is placed to the north.³⁸ Brown fails to explain why it is not the relationship with the Pauline group that the Johannine group must clarify but its relationship with the geographically-separated Petrine group.

Nevertheless, Brown's theory is important because it points to the possibility of drawing the lines in a new place. Generally, we have thought about the church--if divided at all--as divided primarily between Jew and Gentile. But just as one could have found Jews on every part of the spectrum from conservative to liberal regarding the question of circumcision and Jewish rites, so one could have found Gentile converts on every part of the spectrum, too. Too much emphasis has been placed on the Gentile reservation to enter fully into the Jewish rites of circumcision and food laws. There may have been some Gentiles who were attracted to Judaism, but

who did not commit themselves fully to Judaism because of things like the circumcision requirement, though of late the existence of such a group has been questioned.³⁹ Whatever may be the solution to that particular "riddle of the God-fearers," we do know that the Christian movement was plagued from the early days of Paul's mission until well into the fourth century by Gentile converts' attraction to particular elements within Judaism.⁴⁰ Perhaps Brown is correct: in the church's attitude towards Jewish elements, Gentile converts as well as Jewish converts spanned the spectrum of possible options.

Whether Brown is correct about separate communities, however, remains to be shown. Brown's work will be discussed more thoroughly in the section on Johannine Christianity, for it is in that community that most of Brown's Jews seem to be found.⁴¹

D. Separate Petrine Communities

Some scholars have argued for separate Petrine communities. Corinth is often said to have had a separate Petrine group (based solely on the ambiguous reference that Paul makes to those who express allegiance to Cephas).⁴² Raymond Brown's opinions have just been mentioned. In his most recent book, Brown gave names to the separate groups whose existence he had argued for earlier. As well, he has increased the number of separate theological communities from four to seven, but Peter's figure is unaffected. He remains the leader of the "apostolic" element, which, in Brown's

reconstruction, is distinct from the various Pauline and Johannine groups, and distinct from even the group to which the Gospel of Matthew bears witness.⁴³

The figure of Peter is a puzzling one. The Synoptic tradition, as well as the Johannine, recognizes Peter's leadership role (sometimes quite dramatically);⁴⁴ Acts, too, supports this assessment of Peter's position in the early church: this probably reflects the Antiochene traditions regarding Peter.⁴⁵ Paul recognizes Peter's role in some leadership capacity from an early date,⁴⁶ and his mention of Peter in the letter to Corinth indicates that even in the churches founded by Paul, Peter was a man of some stature.⁴⁷ Somewhat later, the canonical Petrine literature indicates that Peter is held in some esteem in areas for which we have no prior knowledge of his activity.⁴⁸ More problematic with this last material is that Peter stands in a tradition that seems to be heavily influenced by Pauline thought.⁴⁹ He is, still later, claimed as the chief Apostle for Jewish-Christian groups who hold Paul to be the incarnation of the devil.⁵⁰ Finally, there is the tradition that places Peter in Rome during the persecution under Nero, as well as early traditions that posit a friendly relationship between him and Paul in the final months of their lives--a tradition that Koester finds surprising, given reliable evidence of some earlier tensions.⁵¹

But it is doubtful that separate Petrine communities ever existed. Peter seems to have been claimed by too many groups to

have been the possession of any one. If there had been distinct Petrine churches, the lack of evidence for such communities is surprising. We do not know when, where, or even that, such communities existed; we do not know what their distinctive theological position was;⁵² we do not know for what second-century group they were the forebears or into what later group they were absorbed. We are left simply to guess for every detail if we wish to present a reconstruction of the primitive Christian community with distinctive Petrine churches.

The more compelling view is that Peter dedicated himself to a broad spectrum of the church, and he left, as a result, not distinctive Petrine communities but rather a memory of his significant contribution preserved within that broad spectrum of the church (though precisely what those contributions were probably cannot be recovered).

E. Separate Docetic/Gnostic Communities

As in the case of the Jewish-Christian communities, it seems that, in the second century, docetic or gnostic groups existed as independent and isolated theological communities.⁵³ But that statement needs several qualifications.

For one thing, we do not know how seriously we should take the separation of those communities. Certainly from the perspective of the catholic community, the gnostic groups formed separate churches, complete with some label (usually the name of a man who could be

considered the founder: e.g., Valentinus, Basilides, Marcion).⁵⁴

But the evidence suggests that the gnostics were more anxious to represent an element (elitist, no doubt) within the catholic community than an alternative church. Jacques Ménéard notes that some gnostics urge a unity of gnostic and orthodox.⁵⁵ No orthodox would have urged that.⁵⁶ Norbert Brox notes that the gnostics did not seem to see their views as directly opposed to the church,⁵⁷ and Gerard Vallée thinks that the gnostics were not interested in representing a mainstream position.⁵⁸ Helmut Koester goes so far as to say that gnostic churches, with a membership clearly distinguished from Jewish-Christian and early catholic churches, never existed.⁵⁹ It seems that the pool of acceptable diversity maintained by at least some of the gnostics was one that included the orthodox, though at a lower level, as Pagels has argued;⁶⁰ the pool of acceptable diversity maintained by the orthodox, however, was one that invariably excluded the gnostics.⁶¹

Further, there is evidence that the gnostics developed within an orthodox matrix, as some of the critics of Bauer have pointed out.⁶² If at some point in the early history of the church, the gnostics are discovered to be no longer part of the orthodox community, all the evidence seems to point to the gnostics being forced out by the orthodox rather than initiating the break themselves. And here the material considered in the previous chapter must be noted. The Nicolaitans are in the churches that apparently become part of the orthodox movement, as are the

docetists two decades later when Ignatius writes. If these groups are part of the gnostic movement, they are, as we have seen, clearly overshadowed by the orthodox.

The question is to what degree the Nicolaitans and the docetists represented the main element in the gnostic movement. If they represented the majority of gnostics of their day, the gnostic movement would be clearly inferior to the orthodox in numbers and in authority. If, however, the Nicolaitans and the docetists reflected merely the fringes of a vast gnostic movement mainly independent of the orthodox, the situation is greatly changed.

No consensus has been reached regarding the relationship of the Nicolaitans of the Apocalypse with the docetists of the Ignatian letters, or of either of these groups with the later gnostic movements.⁶³ If the Nicolaitans are gnostics or docetists, they are still within an orthodox community in the mid 90's of the first century.⁶⁴ That they were expelled from that church at the urging of the Apocalypticist is certainly possible, but if so, their independent community would seem to have been remarkably unsuccessful. Certainly, it could not be argued that the later independent gnostic communities took root in an early, separate, Nicolaitan movement: we find that fifteen to twenty years after we hear of the Nicolaitans, gnostic-type Christians seem still to be within the catholic church, or if separate, their split from the main body probably cannot be dated much more than a year or two before Ignatius passed through around 110 C.E.⁶⁵

This is a problem for those who argue for an impressive gnostic movement in the first century. The only groups we know of that might be considered connected to the gnostic movement are the Nicolaitans and the docetists of the Ignatian letters, and these groups hardly count as evidence for an impressive gnostic movement. It will not do to widen the search for gnostics. Although the Pastorals, Colossians, and Ephesians might give some evidence for a gnostic-like movement, that analysis of these documents is not entirely convincing.⁶⁶ Even allowing that the opponents of these letters are gnostics, they either stand in line with Nicolaitans and Ignatian docetists and thus fail to witness to an impressive gnostic movement, or they represent another line of the gnostic movement of which we have no other record and which is strangely associated with the same church that is having problems with Nicolaitans and docetists.⁶⁷ That there could have been two branches of the gnostic movement is certainly possible, but such a hypothesis could not explain why the orthodox polemic attempts to counter the Nicolaitans and docetists while allowing a more serious branch of gnosticism to go unchecked.

Nor do individual gnostic teachers serve as useful evidence for a strong gnostic movement. Admittedly, we do know of early teachers who seem to have been propagandists of gnostic ideas,⁶⁸ and we could even admit a core of truth to the tradition that posits the roots of gnosticism in a circle around the Samaritan Simon Magnus.⁶⁹ But our problem still remains. If we associate these

teachers with the gnostic-like elements attached to the church in the time of the Apocalypticist and of Ignatius, they become part of an unimpressive movement. If, on the other hand, we make them leaders of a gnostic movement more detached from the catholic church, these teachers are mute witnesses to the size and significance of the movements with which they have been associated--movements about which we have no other evidence.

The hypothesis of a powerful gnostic movement, capable of overshadowing or even competing with the catholic movement of the late first and early second century, is neither compelling nor positively and solidly probable.

F. Separate Pauline Communities

The existence of an independent Pauline church is difficult to establish. And even more difficult to establish is a Pauline community in the same area as, but separate from and independent of, the developing catholic community.

Those who have argued for a distinct Pauline community have usually recognized the difficulty of placing an independent Pauline and catholic community side by side. Raymond Brown, for example, isolates the Pauline community geographically from the catholic community by keeping the Pauline community in its more traditional locale (western Asia Minor) and placing the catholic community to the northern area of Asia Minor.⁷⁰

Those who place the Pauline and the catholic community in the

same locale generally argue for a split in the Pauline community, with one element becoming part of the gnostic movement and the other a part of the catholic movement.⁷¹ Of the various reconstructions, this seems the least problematic, for it makes sense of the character of the church of western Asia Minor in the first decade of the second century, in which Pauline and catholic elements are found together.⁷²

G. The Lack of a Consensus

Scholars do not seem to agree on whether the theological diversity was expressed in distinctive theological communities. But if there is no general consensus about the existence of numerous theologically distinct churches in the primitive community, in one area, at least, a consensus is quickly being established. That is in regard to the Johannine community. The consensus is that this community was theologically distinct and ecclesiastically separate from other groups within the early church. Oscar Cullmann, whose own work did much to interest scholars in the idea of a Johannine community,⁷³ says that the existence of a Johannine circle can "hardly be challenged."⁷⁴

I turn now to this large problem as potentially the most profitable for considering the question and the significance of independent theological communities in the early church.

IV

The Johannine Community

A. The Evidence for an Independent Johannine Community

Ten years ago, D. Moody Smith called attention to the evidence for the existence of an independent Johannine circle. I list below his main points.

1. Distinct Gospel Tradition

It has been recognized, probably from the time the first person read both the Synoptic Gospels and the Johannine, that marked differences existed between the two traditions. Whatever we make of these differences, it seems that Smith's contention will demand serious attention. He said:

The existence of such an independent narrative tradition [in the Gospel of John] is prima facie evidence, on form-critical grounds, for the existence of a traditioning community...The rather small extent of clear literary relation and other evocations of contact between the Johannine literature and the rest of the New Testament suggests that the Johannine Eigenart reflects the existence of distinctly Johannine communities, rather than communities in which the Johannine option was one of several.[75]

Smith has backed this statement with a detailed discussion of distinctive elements in the Johannine tradition that seem to point to an isolated theological community.

2. Evidence for Redactional Activity

Related to the argument from distinctive tradition is the argument that this distinctive tradition has undergone redaction in a community whose viewpoint was basically a Johannine viewpoint. But Smith's argument here is qualified. He says that "the redaction of a document likely takes place in a community in which that document is already valued or regarded as authoritative."⁷⁶ That it need take place there cannot be convincingly argued. A church comfortable with a range of diversity and which finds in apostolic tradition the source of its self-understanding and order may have been the home of traditions as distinctive as the Johannine.

3. The Idea of the Beloved Disciple

The Fourth Gospel repeatedly mentions a disciple who is so distinguished as one for whom Jesus had special affection that scholars have called him "The Beloved Disciple."⁷⁷ The title is a convenient one: it is descriptively accurate, and it provides a label for a character for whom no personal name has been provided in the Gospel itself. A good case has been made that the Beloved Disciple is the Apostle John.⁷⁸ Even if he might be some other disciple--perhaps unmentioned in the Synoptic tradition--it is certain that he is intended as the guarantor of the traditions behind the Fourth Gospel.⁷⁹

The argument is made that the Beloved Disciple holds a

position among the readers of the Fourth Gospel unlike the one he held in the wider Christian community--a community whose views are better reflected in the Synoptic tradition, where no character of a "Beloved Disciple" appears and where no particular disciple stands out as the special guarantor of the tradition.⁸⁰

**B. A Separate Johannine Community:
Some General Difficulties**

If we posit an isolated, or at least a separate, Johannine theological community but discover a lack of evidence for such a community--outside of the Johannine documents themselves--we must question whether the hypothesis of a distinct Johannine community is not a hasty judgment from an isolated documentary analysis of the theologically distinct writings that comprise the canon.

Theologically individualistic documents could reflect the position of the writer--not the position of his whole theological community, as Brown has noted.⁸¹ A theological genius may have considered his theological community to be considerably wider than merely those who held each detailed feature characteristic of his own thought.

The primary thinker behind Johannine thought need not have considered the theological community of which he was a member as strictly a Johannine community. Neither would those believers especially devoted to Johannine thought necessarily have had such a limited view of the theological community of which they considered themselves members.

And this is the key question. Of what theological community

did "Johannine Christians" consider themselves members? If they considered themselves part of a Christian community that included "non-Johannine Christians," that would be an important perspective from which to evaluate the significance of the distinctiveness of Johannine thought and community.

In the following discussion, I present elements that either call into question an independent Johannine community or render the independence of this community relatively insignificant.

1. Lack of Evidence for Such a Community in the Early Histories

If there ever was a distinctive Johannine community separate from what came to be known as orthodoxy, no early writer gives any evidence of knowing of it. Neither Papias nor Irenaeus, both of whom speak of the Apostle John, represents him as a leader of a group outside of the mainstream. They consider John a credible witness to the traditions they themselves hold, and both stand quite firmly in the developing catholic orthodoxy of the second century.⁸²

It might be argued that evidence for and interest in the phenomenon of a separate Johannine community would have quickly disappeared as soon as the divided Johannine community was absorbed on one side by the growing orthodox community and on the other by the gnostic movement. This argument is credible enough. If the Apostle John once led a separate theological community, which at the time of Papias had been absorbed by the orthodox, it would be natural for Papias to have written of John as a member of the

orthodox camp. So, too, for Irenaeus. His interest in the Johannine element within the catholic community would relate, more naturally, to the period after the alignment of the Johannine element with the catholic.

Yet the witness of these early writers should not be set aside on account of that. Irenaeus does explicitly associate Polycarp's early training directly with the Apostle John, and he claims to make that association on the good word of Polycarp himself.⁸³ We might dismiss this statement: Irenaeus may have misunderstood what Polycarp had said, or Polycarp may himself have erred, though it would be difficult to account for such an error, either deliberate or accidental. But if we accept the tradition,⁸⁴ then the clearly catholic Polycarp has as credible links as any "Johannine Christian" with the Johannine community at a time when it is supposed to have been a separate theological community.⁸⁵ And Polycarp's links with the Johannine tradition would be even stronger if Ignatius, a man with whom he obviously shares much, is also influenced by the Johannine tradition.⁸⁶ But however much Ignatius and Polycarp may have been influenced by Johannine thought, they are both deeply influenced by Pauline thought, and this at a time when the Johannine community is supposed to be in its heyday.

2. Lack of Distinctively Johannine Leaders

I have just called attention to the influence from both Johannine and Pauline thought on Ignatius and Polycarp. Is it not surprising that in the period in which a distinctive Johannine

community is supposed to have existed, we are unable to find leaders who are distinctly Johannine in their thinking? Ignatius is not distinctly Johannine. Polycarp is not distinctly Johannine. Even the Apocalyptist, who has been almost universally considered a member of the Johannine movement, is not distinctly Johannine in his thinking: a good case has been made for the influence of Pauline thought upon him.⁸⁷ The only real "distinctly Johannine" thinkers we know of are the author of the Fourth Gospel and the writer of the three Johannine epistles.

But to argue that we have distinctively Johannine leaders by appeal to separate authorship of the Johannine materials is hardly a proper response to the problem. Even though most scholars do think that the author of the epistles was not the author of the Gospel,⁸⁸ thus positing two distinct "Johannine authors," one of these authors is clearly writing in some kind of dialogue with the work of the other,⁸⁹ and this, in itself, could account for much of the similarity of thought of the two men. Only if the Gospel and epistles were not written in conscious dialogue with the content of the other would these materials bear worthwhile witness to a second individual whose thought is distinctively Johannine. Otherwise, the "Johannine colouring" of the second writer's thought could be accounted for by admitting that one work came from the hands of a theological genius; the other from an orthodox leader in sympathetic dialogue with, but qualified interpretation of, Johannine ideas not fully understood by elements within the community. The question,

then, is to what extent the work of a theological genius, and works clearly prompted by this primary work, witness to a separate theological community or merely to a larger theological community attempting to appropriate a distinctive interpretation of the gospel.

The proponents of a separate Johannine community need to explain this lack of distinctly Johannine leaders at the time when the Johannine church is supposed to be at its peak. History is not so completely silent for this period that we can appeal to the incompleteness of the historical materials. We know of the Apocalyptist, we know of Ignatius, we know of Polycarp, we know of Papias. All can be credibly associated in some way with Johannine tradition. None, however, are Johannine in any way similar to the author of the Gospel or the epistles.

3. Ignatius's Argument Against Separate Assemblies

Ignatius wrote to several churches in western Asia Minor around 110 C.E. This places the writings, both in time and place, in the centre of Johannine Christianity when Johannine Christianity would have been, supposedly, at its peak. Ignatius's arguments stand as solid evidence that separate Johannine communities did not exist in western Asia Minor at the time we would expect them.

Note Ignatius's argument in support of the bishop. Separate assemblies should not be formed, for only in the bishop's church is reliable apostolic tradition to be found. Those outside the bishop's church are discredited and cut off from valid eucharist and

ministry. Ignatius repeatedly uses such arguments to discredit the newly formed separate assemblies of the schismatics who had, until recently, been members of the bishops' churches.⁹⁰

Our problem is how to explain this kind of argument if separate Johannine churches existed in the area--and the more so if they have existed separately for some time. How could Ignatius hope to censor the separate assemblies of the schismatics in the bishop's church if a credible (and apostolic) group, with even less loyalty to the bishop than the schismatics had, populated the area? Quite clearly, the weight of Ignatius's argument depends on the absence of separate assemblies.

Further, Ignatius himself reflects some positive contact with Johannine thought, and it is difficult to imagine that he would exclude Johannine Christians from authentic Christian life.⁹¹ Yet, if the Johannine Christians form separate communities in western Asia Minor at this time, Ignatius's criticisms attack these assemblies, too, for Ignatius grants valid eucharist and ministry to nothing outside the bishop's church.

We could try to escape the implications of Ignatius's censoring of whatever is outside of the bishop's church by claiming that the once separate Johannine communities had joined with the bishop's church sometime before Ignatius wrote. Brown's reconstruction might work here. Brown dated the Johannine epistles around 100 C.E. and found in them the dying breath of the Johannine community.⁹² The only difficulty with Brown's reconstruction is

that this leaves no more than a fifteen-year life for an independent Johannine community, for Brown dates the expulsion of the Johannine group from the synagogue in the late 80s.⁹³ A group that experiences so many rapid changes (expelled from one group, torn apart by internal conflicts and then swallowed by foreign movements, all within a decade or so) hardly can serve as useful witness to the diversity and isolation of groups in the early church. The only period of possible independence and isolation for the Johannine community is the last few years of the first century and the first few of the second century,⁹⁴ and that brief period was, for the Johannine community (on Brown's reconstruction), one of a loss of identity and a hopeless struggle towards a coherent self-understanding. It was not a period in which we could find a Johannine group with a clear self-consciousness, set off from other bodies in the church.

4. Preservation of the Johannine Material

The Johannine community must have ceased to exist by the early years of the second century. Its literature, however, was able to survive the crush of whatever forces there were that terminated the Johannine community, and this literature even managed to shape the Christianity of the developing catholic church quite markedly.⁹⁵ The survival of this literature poses a problem.

Many Johannine scholars have attempted to explain the survival of the displaced Johannine tradition by arguing that the literature was interpolated so as to make it palatable to the catholic church.⁹⁶

Some such modification of the Johannine documents does seem to be required, if we are to explain the vigorous survival of the material in a foreign context.

The last chapter of the Fourth Gospel frequently is pointed to as evidence of such reshaping--a reshaping that is said to provide for the distinctive Johannine thought an air of acceptability within the catholic community. Both Peter (the supposedly catholic theologian) and the Beloved Disciple (the guarantor of the Johannine tradition) are there put forward as accredited leaders of the community.⁹⁷

Yet that theory is rendered suspect by the preservation of the markedly unmodified, distinctly Johannine letters within the catholic community. Not only are these letters not modified to tailor them to their new home in the catholic community, they are--of any material preserved by the catholic community--the most desperately in need of modification in the direction of catholicism. The Johannine letters are, according to the judgment of many scholars, as sharply anti-catholic as anything in the canon and make sense and demand assent only of those whose perspective is that of a still separate Johannine community.⁹⁸ This is especially true of the ecclesiology. The catholics promote a monepiscopate; the Johannine letters speak of a functioning community without teachers, where each believer has access to the truth.⁹⁹ Compare the attitude in the Pastoral letters both in regard to offices of ministry and the importance of the teaching role to those offices.¹⁰⁰

The hypothesis that the Fourth Gospel has been altered in the direction of catholicism is perhaps in need of a second examination in light of the survival of the unaltered Johannine epistles.

Further, when the Fourth Gospel is taken as a whole, the idea of modification in favour of catholicism is dubious. It is not just in chapter twenty-one that Peter is highly spoken of; throughout the Gospel, Peter is positively associated with the Beloved Disciple¹⁰¹ and appears in a better light in the Johannine gospel than in the Synoptic tradition, with which he is often more closely identified. No other disciple, except for the Beloved Disciple, fares so well in this gospel.¹⁰² If the Gospel has been edited in favour of Peter, it must have been extensively edited. Not only is positive reference to Peter made throughout the document, there is no indication that Peter ever stood in a less positive position in the Johannine tradition. In that tradition, Thomas and Philip play the role of the spiritually dim-witted disciples.¹⁰³ Nothing suggests that Peter ever stood in that position, rehabilitated by a Johannine redactor only when the Johannine community wanted to establish closer links with the catholic community.

Given this repeated close association of Peter with the Beloved Disciple and the generally positive comments about Peter, it is solidly probable that rays of historic truth are reflected in the tradition. It is proportionately unlikely that the Johannine community was linked only late with the community most closely associated with Peter. That the link is an interpolator's fiction

is hardly plausible.

V

Isolation or Koinōnia?

A. The Fundamental Question

The evidence for separate assemblies in the first eight decades of the Christian movement is not compelling. That is true even concerning the community for which the evidence of a separate community is the strongest; that is, the Johannine community.

Where the debate about the Johannine community will lead is not yet clear. In spite of the numerous studies over the past two decades, nothing resembling a consensus has been established: all options still seem open. Bauer had argued that the Johannine element was part of the developing catholic church,¹⁰⁴ and Koester and others follow him on that point.¹⁰⁵ Daniélou's view is similar, but he gave greater significance to the Johannine element in the catholic church.¹⁰⁶ D. Moody Smith¹⁰⁷ and C. P. Hammond Bammel¹⁰⁸ reflect a different understanding of the Johannine community. For both, the Johannine community was relatively isolated from the mainstream. But the hypothesis that the Johannine community was isolated is challenged in works by two Johannine scholars of note, namely J. A. T. Robinson and Raymond Brown. Their works will be discussed below.

Assuming that distinct theological communities did exist (and the evidence for this is not overwhelming), there are three possible relationships an independent community might have had with other communities. First, the community might have been isolated ecclesiastically: its theological position would have made koinōnia with other Christian groups difficult or impossible. Second, the community might have been isolated geographically: it could have comfortably maintained koinōnia with other Christian groups had other Christian groups been in the area. Third, the isolation might have been minimal: if the community had its own regular meeting, it would not have intended by such an assembly to deny koinōnia to other Christians or to withdraw its own participation from the larger body of Christians in the area.

Robinson and Brown both deny radical theological isolation of the Johannine community. Brown contends that the Johannine community would have been one of several theological groups with house-churches in western Asia Minor. They would have been overshadowed by the larger non-Johannine element in the area, and when a faction tears their community apart, the elements in the community are lost to the non-Johannine communities, one element swallowed, perhaps voluntarily, into the developing catholic church.¹⁰⁹

Robinson argued for a Johannine community much stronger than that set forth by Brown. According to Robinson, the Johannine community in Ephesus was founded prior to Paul's mission in the area (this based partly on Robinson's drive to date the Johannine material as

early as possible, but not solely on that).¹¹⁰

If there was a separate Johannine community, we are left to choose between a reconstruction of this community that makes that community an isolated sect or that makes it a member in communion with the larger Christian community.

Keenly interested in this question, Brown tried to determine whether the Johannine community constituted a church or a sect. He posed a question that gives focus to a major concern of the present inquiry. Calling attention to the significance of the distinctiveness of the Johannine community, Brown asks:

Was [the Johannine community] an accepted church among churches, or an alienated and exclusive conventicle? In this dialectic, the Johannine community would de facto be a sect, as I understand the term, if explicitly or implicitly it had broken communion (koinōnia) with most other Christians, or if because of its theological or ecclesiological tendencies, most other Christians had broken koinōnia with the Johannine community. [111]

The significant question is not, then, whether the Johannine Christians formed a distinct community, but whether the Johannine community had koinōnia with Christians who may have been considered more representative of the mainstream.

I have already mentioned several reasons why the hypothesis of a separate Johannine community is not persuasive. Even if those arguments are not compelling enough to call into question the existence of an independent Johannine community, most of the arguments are relevant to the question of the isolation of this

community and are possibly more weighty in this context. I repeat the relevant points. First, apart from the writers of the Johannine documents,¹¹² we do not find distinctly Johannine thinkers. We do, however, find thinkers influenced by the Johannine tradition. This suggests a lack of isolation and points to the correctness of Brown's conclusion that the Johannine community was not a sect. Then, there is the preservation of the unmodified Johannine letters in the catholic church. This calls for explanation, especially if these documents express the anti-catholic concerns of the Johannine community at a time when that community was isolated.¹¹³ Finally, there is the relatively short time for the life of this community.¹¹⁴ This factor would argue, if not against the isolation of the community, certainly against the significance of the short period of isolation.

B. The Koinōnia of Early Christian Communities

A major section of this chapter has dealt with the Johannine community. There was a reason for that. Of the various theological perspectives found in the early period, only for the Johannine can a plausible theory be put forward for its existence as an independent theological community. And the argument for the independence of even this community was found to be far from compelling.

But in light of the possibility that this community had an independent life for a few years, the question of the significance of the independence of a theological community must be addressed.

As we have seen, the evidence seems to point to a Johannine community, if separate from, nonetheless in fellowship with, other Christians in the area. This, I have argued in agreement with Brown, greatly reduces the significance of the independence of the Johannine community.

In Brown's most recent work (in which he proposed the existence of seven independent communities), Brown again raises the question of isolation and koinōnia. It is his judgment that the various communities reflected in the New Testament materials had koinōnia with the other communities in their area. I quote Brown here, and again I quote him in detail, for he calls attention to the crucial issue with clarity. Brown says:

...some Christian scholars harden the detectable diversity of the NT into dialectic struggles and contradictory stances. No one can show that any of the churches I have studied had broken koinōnia or communion with another. Nor is it likely that the NT churches of this Sub-Apostolic Period had no sense of koinōnia among Christians and were self-contained conventicles going their own way. Paul is eloquent on the importance of koinōnia, and in the Pauline heritage concern for Christian unity is visible in Luke/Acts and in Ephesians. Peter is a bridge figure in the NT, and the concept of the people of God in I Peter requires a collective understanding of Christianity. For all its individualism, the Fourth Gospel knows of other sheep not of the fold and of Jesus' wish that they be one. Matthew has a concept of the church and expands the horizons of Christianity to all nations.
[115]

Brown's statement calls attention to what I have earlier

called the "pool of acceptable diversity" in which each group related itself to the world of diversity in which it was set. We may not be able to specify the exact boundaries of that pool of acceptable diversity, but any responsible evaluation of the diversity in early Christianity is forced to give due consideration to the matter.

Admittedly, the evidence does not allow us to specify exact boundaries of acceptable diversity, but that results more from the nature of the documents than from ambiguity on the part of the early Christians to specify acceptable diversity. Earlier, I noted that polemical documents generally will identify unacceptable diversity. The reverse is not true. Non-polemical documents only rarely identify the diversity that is acceptable; they generally simply address the concerns of a particular audience, and the boundaries of acceptable diversity need not always be one of those concerns.

VI

Common Opponents

One final observation points to the usefulness of the concept of a pool of acceptable diversity. Repeatedly, the groups that came to form the catholic movement exclude, as unacceptable the same tendencies or perspectives; they seem to have had common enemies. Those who would argue against a fundamental unity between Paul, the author of the Pastorals, the author of the Apocalypse, Ignatius, and the Johannine authors must surely explain how it is that these

authors, all living in the same area, and not greatly separated in time, spoke out with rather vicious language against Judaizers (and Jews) and against gnostic-like elements but never engage in attacks on each other.¹¹⁶

This argument must be used cautiously, for a number of factors complicate the issue.¹¹⁷ In spite of this, if a rigorous investigation determines that the various New Testament perspectives included each other in their pool of acceptable diversity but excluded similar tendencies, then we are called to a more sympathetic evaluation of the diversity found within the New Testament.

VII

Summary

Any study of the diversity in the primitive Christian community that does not begin with the possibility of a positive evaluation of the phenomenon of diversity must be challenged to reexamine its assumptions before it can expect to receive a hearing. Mere identification of theologically-diverse elements in the primitive Christian traditions leads nowhere. What is needed is an evaluation of the significance of this early diversity. In light of no clear evidence for separate theological communities on the one hand, and on the other, suggestive evidence that there was koinōnia rather than isolation between Christians of various theological perspectives, a positive appreciation for the diversity reflected in

the primitive Christian community would seem to do more justice to the phenomenon of primitive diversity than does either the view of Bauer or that of Eusebius.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE DETECTION OF HERESY

I

Detection or Slander?

One of Bauer's primary assertions was that the first-century church was relatively free of the kind of serious polemic against heresies engaged in by the catholic element of the second-century church. Bauer argued that the reason a sharp polemic against heresies surfaced in the second century was not that the first-century church was relatively free of divergent views (as the Fathers thought),¹ but because the first-century church had no framework upon which to make distinctions between right belief and wrong belief.² The cause for the marked move against heretics in the second century was not a marked rise in the number of heretical views but rather a new consciousness reflected by the orthodox regarding what was to be tolerated and what was to be excluded. For Bauer, this obsession with heresy by the second-century orthodox church had no parallel in the first-century church.³

Of those who agree with Bauer's general thesis that the concept of orthodoxy (as generally understood) does not make sense in the context of the first century, few appear comfortable with

Bauer's analysis of the lack of conflict in the first century. Most now would admit, unlike Bauer, that Paul, for example, does sharply draw lines between right belief and false belief.⁴ And it seems that a mass of evidence can be compiled from other parts of the New Testament, showing materials that reflect some kind of boundary between beliefs that are acceptable and those that are suspect.⁵ The calling into question of particular interpretations of the Christian message had a tried history well before the second century.

Yet, in spite of Bauer's failure to give proper attention to the frequent drawing of boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable belief exercised by the church of the first century, his work does call attention to a significant problem. It is this. Although the first-century church could (and often enough did) draw boundaries between adequate belief and inadequate belief, our evidence for a sense of orthodoxy and heresy in the first-century church, when compared to that of the second-century church, suggests that those in the second century had a much sharper sense of what beliefs should not be tolerated within the church. Views rejected unequivocally in the second century frequently do not seem to have met the same sharp rejection in the first century. Heretical beliefs often were not identified as heretical when they first appeared. It may not be possible to trace such beliefs back to the Apostles (as the heretics frequently claimed),⁶ but a good case can be made that some of the beliefs sharply rejected as heresy in

the second century may have been quite freely expressed in the church of the first century.⁷ This, on the surface at any rate, suggests a different standard for determining heresy, or at least a different response to the problem of heresy. A crucial question is whether the anti-heretical polemic of the second century operates on a different framework from that for the polemic of the first century, perhaps making distinctions that would have been completely foreign to the distinctions that made sense to the earliest church, and perhaps reflecting an entirely different consciousness of acceptable and suspect belief.

A further observation that makes this question even more pressing is that church members did not seem to be as aware of the heretical character of specific teachings as certain leaders of the church were. Generally, it is some church leader who identifies a teaching as heretical; the masses appear unable to make such distinctions on their own and are expected merely (and meekly) to follow the decisions of the church leaders. For example, when the Apocalypticist rejects the Nicolaitans and others equally difficult to identify, most of the church had no such negative opinion of these people. In fact, those whom the Apocalypticist rejects were able to teach freely in some of the churches.⁸ The case is much the same for Ignatius. He appears to draw lines more sharply than had many in the churches of Asia Minor prior to his arrival.⁹ Nor is there anything that would make it difficult to believe that the Apocalypticist had at one time enjoyed the fellowship of the

Nicolaitans and Ignatius the fellowship of the docetists.

Consider, too, Irenaeus and other church leaders who turned their attention to the heretics. They often saw their work as a detection of heresy and recognized that most in the church would not be able to judge particular views as heretical without the aid of works like theirs.¹⁰ Quite likely, the rejection of heretical views by the masses in the Great Church reflects as much a positive response to an authoritative leader who labelled something as heretical as it reflects a negative response to the heresy itself.

We have, then, two problems. One is the delayed detection of heresy: views frequently are not judged as heretical when they are first introduced into the church. The other is that the identification of particular views is not universal: usually a few church leaders (and sometimes only one church leader) make the identification; the masses in the church are expected to accept that judgment though, prior to the call of the church leader, the masses frequently held no such negative view of the teaching in question. Thus, if one is to maintain that the first-century church was no less conscious of its own orthodoxy than was the second-century church, one must explain why it is usually the second-century church that identifies particular beliefs as heretical (in spite of no such identification by the first-century church), and one must further explain why the heretical character of particular teachings is not recognized as such by the masses within the church until some lone figure inveighs against the belief. Unless such things can be

explained, Bauer's charge will appear attractive. Bauer contended that the second-century polemic against heresy was basically a power struggle engaged in by the church at Rome to extend its influence widely and had little to do with maintaining a deposit of truth received from the Apostles, as the Great Church claimed.¹¹ If this is the case, the whole process is better described as "slander" than "detection."

II

Some Modern Comments on the Problem

Influential scholars of the primitive church have called attention to these features of the polemic against heresies. Elaine Pagels pointed out that Irenaeus, when attempting to define the issues that divided the gnostic Christians from the ecclesiastical Christians, admitted that the question was a difficult one: gnostic teaching and orthodox teaching were so similar that Christians generally could not distinguish one from the other. Pagels then goes on: "Irenaeus insists, nevertheless, that the differences are crucial..."¹² Pagels seems to be suggesting that Irenaeus was wrong to draw crucial distinctions; she seems suspicious of what Irenaeus is attempting to do. Indeed, she contends that Irenaeus's "major complaint" against the gnostic doctrine that "there is another god besides the creator" is really a cover for Irenaeus's concern for the authority of the bishop.¹³ It is not important here to determine whether Pagels has proven her contention that

Irenaeus's primary concern is to reinforce the authority of the bishop; the point is that Pagels seems suspicious of the distinctions that Irenaeus draws between the gnostics and the Christians in light of the prior inability of the masses in the church to draw the same boundaries.

James D. G. Dunn expresses much the same reservations about some of the distinctions made by the second-century church. I quote some of Dunn's comments. The underlined material in these citations appears in italics in Dunn's Unity and Diversity in the New Testament and must be recognized as factors Dunn considers the most significant. Of the gnostics, he says:

[T]here were gnostics within the church at Corinth, and Paul did not denounce them as non-Christian sham believers...[W]e are only half way through the first century, but already we can see an early form of gnostic or pre-Gnostic Christianity gaining ground--not as a threat or attack from outside the church, but as part of the spectrum of Christianity itself.
[14]

A short space later, Dunn mentions "how blurred was the border of Hellenistic Christianity" in Asia Minor,¹⁵ and still later, with reference to the Apocalypse, Dunn says:

...the teaching rejected by the seer and by the church at Ephesus was being entertained...by the churches at Pergamum and Thyatira. In them at least there were no clear limits marking off orthodox from heretic, Christian from non-Christian. [16]

And further:

There are various attempts made by the letter writers to achieve a clearer idea of what is acceptable diversity and what beliefs and conduct ought to be unacceptable. But in the communities themselves a considerable spectrum of diversity was evidently counted acceptable--a diversity which embraced within itself elements which later characterized full-blown Gnosticism, the gnostics participating in the inner life of the church as fully accepted members....[T]here were as yet no well defined or unanimous views regarding orthodoxy and heresy, and that these were only beginning to become appropriate concepts as the first century drew to a close. [17]

I have quoted Dunn extensively because he has contributed significantly to the discussion of the character of primitive Christianity; not because he alone has made such comments. Maurice Goguel expressed a similar view: the mass in the church did not have the same attitude towards heretics as did Jude;¹⁸ Asia Minor did not judge the Nicolaitans as severely as did the Apocalypticist;¹⁹ the author of Ephesians did not see gnosticism as a false doctrine;²⁰ and so on. Similarly, William R. Schoedel notes that Ignatius draws lines more sharply than the Smyraeans, for example, did,²¹ and that the dividing line between Christians and Judaizers was clearer to Ignatius than to others.²² And Howard C. Kee notes that the church slowly learned to draw lines between "right" belief and false belief.²³

Most of these comments are accurate. But a disturbing tendency is reflected in some. Scholars often have noted the presence of diversity and the lack of clear boundaries between

orthodoxy and heresy within the first-century church; then, without further ado, they have drawn their discussions to a close in the form of suggestive statements implying a lack of a sense of orthodoxy in the first century and, in so doing, grant to Bauer rather than to Eusebius an accurate understanding of the nature of earliest Christianity. But the significant question is left unaddressed. It is this: why was diversity tolerated within the community, and why were clearer boundaries not drawn?

It is not obvious that the only answer to this question is that the first-century church had no categories of orthodoxy and heresy or that the categories they did have were inadequate. Other factors must be considered, as a few scholars have argued.²⁴ Specifically concerning the issue under discussion in this chapter, the possibility exists that there may be a stage in the process of the detection of heresy when both the presence of heretics and the lack of boundaries are to be reasonably expected. This need not demand a historical reconstruction of the primitive Christian community in which the distinction between orthodoxy and heresy is either absent or arbitrary.

Unless we allow for the possibility of a natural stage in the process of self-definition in which the boundaries between orthodoxy and heresy are blurred at points, we will be accepting too quickly the contention of Bauer that heresy is merely an alternative view, rejected for political reasons by a powerful, Rome-dominated, second century element that called itself "orthodox." But that, of course,

is precisely what is at question.

We cannot answer the question of why heresy was not detected sooner until we know what conditions are required for heresy to be detected at all. And that gives rise to my final questions. Is it possible to specify the conditions under which theologically-inadequate interpretations of the Christian message are likely to be identified as "heresy"? And are these conditions, rather than ecclesio-political conditions, the ones most significant in the initial detection of the early heresies?

III

Factors for Detecting Heresy

A. Sharp Contradictions

I have already mentioned that few scholars today would argue that the first century was without some attempt to draw lines between adequate and inadequate beliefs.²⁵ Helmut Koester's comment that since there was diversity in the earliest days undoubtedly there was conflict too from the very beginning²⁶ would today be generally accepted.

The attempt (if not always the ability) of the earliest church to draw lines and to make judgments concerning what belief is adequate and what belief is inadequate should not surprise us. Even if lines are not yet drawn to mark off every belief later judged by the catholic church to be inadequate, we must credit even the first

Christians with enough sense to find problematic any statements of sharp contradiction. For example, to the Jewish Christian who claimed that circumcision was necessary for all Christians, whether Jew or gentile, Paul's view of a circumcision-free mission to the gentiles had to be rejected: Paul was wrong. Paul, on the other hand, found the view of the Judaizers equally impossible to fit into his scheme of God's dealings: the Judaizers were wrong.

For the purposes of the discussion here, we need not determine which of the two was correct. The important point here is that the detection of the inadequacies of a particular teaching does not simply depend on a consciousness of a distinction between right belief and wrong belief; it depends, as well, on the way in which the inadequate view is expressed. If it is expressed in terms of a stark denial of an accepted view, it will be identified as problematic from the start. This would not be the case with a view expressed more skillfully, with its radical differences hidden beneath pretensions of agreement. Even persons lacking ability to discriminate between various artful interpretations will find problematic those interpretations that are open denials of the views they hold. In other words, one of the factors in the detection of false belief is the degree to which it confronts head-on the view generally held. A view that is less controversial--or more skillfully controversial--is more likely to escape early detection than that which starkly challenges accepted doctrine.

Consider the situation faced by Irenaeus. The issues there

are more subtle than that regarding the circumcision of Gentile converts. The circumcision issue was clear; the views were expressed in terms of contradiction of alternative views. It would have been surprising to find anyone in the church at that time unable to distinguish between the positions in that polemic. But the fight with gnosticism is different. There are no such clear contradictions; the views, on the admission of all, are similar.²⁷

Refined views, hiding stark contradictions (whether intentionally or not) will go undetected for a longer time. That does not mean that such views are any less inadequate: it simply means that they are framed in such a way that the striking differences at their core are not readily noticed. Perhaps not until a group of heresy detectives come onto the scene, fully conscious that the discrimination they exercise supersedes that of the average believer, will the inadequacies of such beliefs be demonstrated. So aware were some of these heresy-fighters of the hidden features of heresies that they conceived their work not just to be the overthrow of the heresy--but the actual detection of that heresy as well.²⁸

Refined views require refined, and perhaps artful, polemic. Admittedly, it could be that the churchmen drew lines too sharply; it could be that they were frequently mistaken. But they cannot be dismissed merely because they are artful in their polemic. The field is changed from that of the polemic against a starkly-contradictory view.

**B. Adding to or Taking Away
from Received Tradition**

Related to the first factor in the detection of heresy is another. The early detection of heresy depends somewhat on whether the heretical interpretation is seen as adding to or taking from already-held beliefs. If a teaching is seen as taking from, or in some way challenging, accepted belief, the contradiction will be obvious, and the detection immediate. If it is seen as adding to accepted belief, contradictions may not be nearly so obvious. Paul's rejection of circumcision for Gentile converts is a clear rejection of accepted belief in the Aramaic-speaking Jewish-Christian communities of Palestine: the contradiction is obvious. But the requirement of circumcision made by the Judaizers in the Galatian assemblies may have been viewed by the Gentile converts there as an addition to beliefs already held, and it is possible that the conflict of the two sets of views was not obvious to the Galatians until Paul made it clear in his letter.²⁹ Another illustration of this factor at play in the detection of inadequate belief is the willingness of the Jews to tolerate those Christians who claimed that Jesus was a prophet (or even the Messiah) compared to their intolerance of those Christians who challenged the continued validity of temple and cult. (The rejection of those who call Jesus Messiah seems to come later, after the implications of the confession are more clearly understood.)³⁰ Or consider the

apparently-early appeal by some Christians to special wisdom or knowledge. The full implications of a teaching that claims there is a realm of special revelation will not be comprehended nearly as quickly as some teaching that openly challenges revelation already received.

To summarize, only when a diverse view attempts to offer a different solution to a problem (in other words, when it contradicts, rather than complements) will the diverse view become an issue. This must be especially true for a young church in which the diversity between Christian and non-Christian is the primary diversity. Such a factor should always be considered when discussing the survival of a heretical view undetected in the orthodox community.

C. Boundaries Fixed

As the implications of the beliefs of the community become clearer, so too will the implications of heretical interpretations. The fuller the statement of faith, the greater is the possibility of a new interpretation being seen to contradict some aspect of received tradition and the less the possibility of it being seen simply to add to that tradition. Thus, we should expect an increased ability to detect heretical interpretations as the church consciously reflects on, and more fully clarifies, the beliefs they hold. Any criticism of the developing catholic church for drawing sharper lines and for ruling out previously tolerated views does not

do justice to this natural sharpening of the ability to detect inadequate belief.

D. Perceptive Church Leaders

I have already briefly mentioned the role perceptive church leaders may have played in the detection of the heretical nature of the less blatantly contradictory interpretations of the Christian message. It must be admitted that the more aware a person is of the implications of theological issues, the more likely it is that he will see the dangers of a heretical interpretation before those dangers become obvious to the general Christian community. Yet, as we have seen, if a churchman draws sharper lines than his community had done, it is, for many modern scholars, the churchman's perception of the heresy that is suspect. Such suspicion is without grounds if it is based merely on the differences in perception of a particular view between a church leader and the general Christian community. We must not only allow for such differences, we must expect them. And we must be willing to expect that, at least on occasion, it will be the church leader rather than the general Christian community who has the better grasp of the situation.

E. The Impact on Christian Life

It has often been pointed out that the first distinctions were drawn not along doctrinal lines but along ethical ones. This is what Bauer had argued, and others have observed the same pattern in

the early polemics.³¹

The observation is not without some validity. The Apocalyptist does not condemn a false Christology of the Nicolaitans (if, indeed, they had a false Christology); he condemns their willingness to eat meat offered to idols.³² Paul does not condemn the elitist element in Corinth primarily for some fundamental defect in their doctrine; he condemns them for their failure in moral and community behaviour.³³ And Ignatius, in spite of making the docetic Christology a major issue, may not condemn the docetists for a defective Christology as much as for providing a way for a Christian to escape martyrdom.³⁴

Yet there are many instances in the New Testament where the doctrinal issue is clearly primary, and if there is an ethical issue, it is secondary. Paul's dispute with Judaizers is the classic example. The dispute of the author of 1 John with the "anti-Christ" schismatics would seem to be another.³⁵

The emphasis on ethical failure should not be allowed to cast suspicion over the whole process of the detection of heresy. For one thing, ethical concerns are not always the main issues (even in the early days); for another, ethical behaviour is often justified from some particular teaching, and the two generally go hand-in-hand.

IV

Summary

We have seen that heretical views often were tolerated within the church in its early period. The two ways to make sense of this is either to argue that the early church had no sense of orthodoxy and heresy from a doctrinal perspective or to recognize that there is a natural process in the detection of inadequate belief, and this process allows for the presence of tolerated heresy even within a church with a concern to distinguish between adequate and inadequate belief. The latter option seems the better in that it reflects some appreciation for the possible complexities of defective beliefs and the certain complexities of the human context in which beliefs are received and evaluated.

CONCLUSION

In the examination of the character of the primitive church in western Asia Minor, I have found that neither Bauer nor Eusebius have given an adequate account of early Christian diversity. Eusebius failed to admit its existence. Bauer failed to appreciate its positive character, and he gave inadequate attention to the process by which groups define themselves and establish the boundaries of the world of diversity to which they are open.

Most of Bauer's charges against the Eusebian scheme stand, and we gain nothing by trying to salvage a reconstruction that has no appreciation for the openness of Christians from various theological perspectives to Christians of other perspectives in the primitive Christian movement.

But Bauer's own reconstruction is not an adequate replacement for the Eusebian one. Serious reservations can be expressed about Bauer's interpretation of the evidence, as I have demonstrated in chapter three. There I have considered the same evidence as Bauer had, but I have concluded that the early diversity should be viewed more positively, and I have argued for the possibility that the developing catholic community had the better

claim to reliable and primitive tradition.

Then, I discussed whether the early diverse perspectives are better characterized as isolated from, or as in koinōnia with, various other Christian perspectives. The concept of a "pool of acceptable diversity" was introduced at this point to provide a more insightful context in which to view diversity, challenging those who rush quickly from the identification of diverse perspectives to negative conclusions about the sense of adequate and suspect beliefs in the primitive church. In stepping from the identification of diversity to an evaluation of the significance of this diversity, one does not adequately discern the complex character of the phenomenon of diversity unless one understands each diverse perspective in terms of the pool of acceptable diversity in which that diversity relates itself to the larger world of diversity.

Finally, I called attention to the detection of heresy as process.¹ Every discussion of orthodoxy and heresy must see in the drawing of boundaries between acceptable and suspect beliefs a natural process rooted in a concrete historical context. Unless it does, one cannot evaluate the significance of the difference in ability expressed by the first-century church on the one hand and the second-century church on the other to define precisely the content of the categories of "orthodoxy" and "heresy." The movement in scholarship that follows closely in Bauer's footsteps seems especially at fault here, and the few voices that called some attention to this problem have yet to gain the hearing due them. In

particular, H. E. W. Turner had a sense of this process when he argued that the centre was more one of instinctive feeling than fixed form in the earliest period.² There is nothing suspicious about Turner's judgment. Turner has pointed to a feature reasonably expected in the process by which a group defines itself with reference to the complex world of diversity in which it finds itself.

In calling attention to Turner's work, I do not wish to leave the impression that I have, in my own work, merely repeated elements found in the only substantial critique of Bauer's work,³ the Bampton Lectures Turner gave in 1954. Turner's work has a theological emphasis that mine does not have. I have attempted to keep my work as historically grounded as possible, and as a result, I have not used Turner's work extensively, though that does not stem from a desire on my part to dismiss the theological questions. The theological questions remain. But before we can begin to determine which of the various interpretations of the Christian message should be judged as orthodox in the theological sense, it must be determined whether the historical context in which the question is set does not itself rule out the possibility of raising the theological side of the question. In the shadow of Bauer's work, many have concluded that the theological question no longer makes sense. The thrust of my work is to demonstrate that such a negative conclusion rests on a failure to grasp the historical and human contexts in which self-identification takes place. Such contexts,

when viewed positively--as they should be--opens to us the potential for a discussion in which the theological aspect of the categories of "orthodoxy" and "heresy" make sense in the context of the first century. In other words, although I attempt no defense of the claims of second-century orthodoxy to exclusive possession of reliable apostolic tradition, I do, nonetheless, argue, primarily against Bauer, that the historical context in which such a question must be considered is not such that the attempt to resolve that theological issue is suspect or impossible.

A full self-understanding cannot be expected to be either immediate or fixed. To demand that it be is to fail to grasp the natural and historical character of the process by which a group's self-identity takes shape. In order to do justice to these features of the process of self-identification, I propose the following three observations as necessary elements in any adequate treatment of orthodoxy and heresy in primitive Christianity. First, the emphasis will be on defining pools of acceptable diversity rather than on defining theologically-diverse communities. The latter is but a first step; the former a final. Second, self-identification will be viewed as a natural process bound within history and complicated by the complex character of diversity and the added complexity of the human context in which self-identification takes place. Any discussion of orthodoxy and heresy that is suspicious of these features of the process of self-identification must be judged as misguided, for it demands an idealistic non-historical and non-

human context for the defining of adequate and inadequate belief.

No such context exists for the historian of primitive Christianity.

And third, western Asia Minor will become the primary area for a more precise resolution of the questions arising from the debate concerning orthodoxy and heresy in primitive Christianity.

Decisions reached from investigations of other areas are unlikely to carry weight unless they are supported by observations made about orthodoxy and heresy in western Asia Minor, where material of unmatched quantity and quality is available to us.

None of this answers the theological question. It does not dismiss it either. What it does is to give some basis for attempting to answer the theological question, and, in so doing, calls the discussion from the direction it has so often taken since the work of Walter Bauer.

APPENDIX 1

ORIGEN'S VIEW OF PRIMITIVE DIVERSITY: AN EXCEPTION?

It is frequently pointed out that though most of the ecclesiastical leaders of the second and third centuries held a view of the primitive period that excluded diversity, Origen was an exception.¹ He is supposed not only to have admitted diversity in the earliest years of the church's existence but to have judged that diversity as healthy for the church.

The passage to which appeal is made is Contra Celsum 3.10-13. I quote some of the clearest examples of Origen's recognition of diversity in the primitive period. Origen said that:

from the outset there were disagreements among believers about the interpretation of the books regarded as divine....In the Epistles of Paul...there were some statement to be found which concern certain disputes about the resurrection, and about the view that it had already occurred, and about the question whether the day of the Lord was already present or not...[These] show that from the beginning there were certain varieties of interpretation (3.11). [2]

In light of such statements, it appears that scholars are not without good grounds for claiming that Origen recognized the existence of significant diversity in the earliest period.

Not only does it seem that Origen admitted the presence of

diverse interpretations in the most primitive era of the church, he seems to have had a healthy regard for such diversity, too. He said:

any teaching which has had a serious origin, and is beneficial to life, has caused different sects....Sects inevitably come to exist, not at all on account of factions and love of strife, but because several learned men made a serious attempt to understand the doctrines of Christianity....It seems to me that Paul's words on the subject are quite admirable: 'For there must also be heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.' The man who is qualified in medicine is he who is trained in the various [medical] sects and who after examining the several schools of thought with an open mind chooses the best....So I would say that a man who looks carefully into the sects of Judaism and Christianity becomes a very wise Christian (3.12-13).

Both in his admission of diversity in the primitive period and in his positive attitude towards it, Origen appears to stand in sharp contrast to the other fathers of the second and third centuries, whose views are so well expressed in the Ecclesiastical History of the fourth-century Eusebius.³

Yet, there is reason to believe that Origen was considerably more close to the view of other church leaders than these passages would seem to suggest. Origen has, in another passage in his work against Celsus, made statements that stand in stark contrast to the view expressed in 3.10-13, the passage we have just quoted rather extensively and the passage to which appeal is made by those who

claim that Origen's view was an exception to that generally held in the ecclesiastical circles of the second and third centuries.

To illustrate: it was not Eusebius, but Origen, who said:

Neither...can those be Christians who introduce strange new ideas which do not harmonize with the traditional doctrines received from Jesus (Contra Celsum 5.61).

Then there is the charge made by Celsus that of those who call themselves Christians

some have found as their leader one teacher and daemon, and others another, for they go astray in evil ways and wander about in great darkness more iniquitous and impure than that of revellers of Antinous in Egypt (5.63).

It was not Irenaeus, but Origen, who replied: "In touching on these matters, [Celsus] seems to me to have said something true..." He goes on to expand on where the heretics stand in relation to the Great Church. His comments place him much closer to the view of Irenaeus and Eusebius than might be argued when appeal is made mainly to the first passage considered in this appendix. Origen spoke of heretics as people to be "won over," and he believed that everything possible should be done to "convert them to a better life so that they rely on the Creator alone and do every action as men who will be judged" (5.63).

His opposition to the heretics exhibits a touch of Christian charity usually (but not always) lacking in the writings we have of other church fathers.⁴ He will not utter "unspeakable words of

abuse about those who hold opinions other than those that [the Great Church] has accepted" (5.63). Celsus had noted the frequent and bitter attacks Christian groups made against each other and the literature we have from the period does not suggest that Celsus had greatly exaggerated the polemic.⁵ But for Origen,

those who have understood the sayings 'Blessed are the peacemakers,' and 'Blessed are the meek,' would not detest those who debase Christian doctrines, nor would they call people who are in error Circes and wily agitators (5.63). [6]

Yet, in spite of Origen's unwillingness to engage in the abusive name-calling that often was the substance of the dialogue between Christian groups of the period, there is no doubt that in Origen's mind some line had to be drawn between orthodox and heretic.⁷ He not only seems to know where the line should be drawn, he seems to believe that those who stand separated from him by that line are discredited.

The line that he accepts is that which distinguishes the Great Church⁸ from other Christian groups. Celsus apparently noted the existence of Marcionites,⁹ Valentinians,¹⁰ and Jewish-Christian sects, and he tried to discredit the church by pointing out the disagreements within it. Origen replies to each group identified:

But let us grant that there are some among us who do not say that God is the same God as that of the Jews [probably Celsus had in mind the

Marcionites]. Yet that is no reason why they are to be criticized who prove from the same scriptures that there is one and the same God for Jews and Gentiles. So also Paul, who came to Christianity from the Jews, says clearly: 'I thank my God whom I serve from my forefathers in a pure conscience' (5.61).

In Origen's mind, a significant distinction between the orthodox and the Marcionite had to be recognized. Origen drew attention to the same kind of distinction when Celsus referred to the Valentinians, objecting:

What has this to do with us who belong to the Church, who find fault with those who maintain that natures are saved or lost in consequence of the way they were made? (5.61)

And Origen appealed again to this distinction when he responded to Celsus's report of Jewish-Christian sects. He asked:

What criticism is there in this against those who belong to the Church, whom Celsus calls the multitude? (5.61).

In each case, Origen, as a member of the Great Church, dismissed any serious association between the Great Church and the variety of gnostic and Jewish-Christian sects pointed out by Celsus.

But to draw a line between the Great Church and the various sects of gnostic and Jewish-Christians is not necessarily to dismiss these groups as non-Christian. Yet, in particular cases, Origen is prepared to go that far--which would have warmed the heart of even Eusebius. I have already mentioned Origen's statement that those who introduce strange new ideas not in accord with the "traditional

doctrines received from Jesus" cannot be called Christians. This he said of gnostics and perhaps particularly of the Valentinians.¹¹

We have already noted, as well, Origen's remark that undoubtedly some who are called Christians actually follow a daemon and go astray in evil ways and in darkness. If such people¹² could not be "won over," Origen agreed to the treatment practised by the Great Church: after the first and second admonition, such a one is to be "refused";¹³ he is "perverted" and "self-condemned" (5.63).

Then Origen noted that Paul seems to have spoken of such people:

In later times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of daemons...branded in their consciences. (5.64) [14].

These people "debase Christian doctrines" and "pervert the simple folk who are easily led astray from sound teaching" (5.64). That is hardly a more positive attitude towards heretics than that generally expressed by the ecclesiastical leaders of the second and third centuries.

We have considered two fairly extensive passages from Origen's work Contra Celsum. The first passage (3.10-13) reflects both a clear recognition of diversity in the primitive church and a positive attitude towards such diversity. It is to this passage that reference is made to show that Origen's view of diversity in the primitive period was an exception to the more uncritical views generally held by the ecclesiastical leaders of the second and third

centuries. Yet, the second passage we considered (5.61-64)--a passage just as extensive and just as relevant--expresses a view quite in line with that expressed generally by the ecclesiastical element. Origen offers, then, what appears to be sharply contradictory opinions regarding diversity within the Church. The problem demanding resolution is whether there is, in fact, a contradiction here, and if there is, which of the two opinions is likely to express more accurately Origen's deepest conviction.

Before we attempt a resolution of the problem, attention should be given to one other passage in the work against Celsus. Although this passage is not as detailed as the other two, it does provide some suggestive indicators regarding Origen's attitude towards heretics. The passage is near the conclusion of the work (8.14-16); the context does not primarily concern diversity, as do the other two,¹⁵ but some of the comments bear directly on our problem.

The immediate context is a discussion of various beliefs about Jesus as the Son of God. The group whose ideas are mentioned by Celsus is probably some sect of Marcionism,¹⁶ though Origen denied any knowledge of the group Celsus mentioned, and suggested Celsus might have even created imaginary Christian groups with strange doctrines.¹⁷ Whatever the precise nature of the group being discussed, Origen's comments are worthy of note. He distinguished the "Church" from the variety of sects, and refused, as a member of the "Church," to take responsibility for the beliefs

of heretics. He said:

If Celsus misunderstood certain people who do not confess that the Son of God is the Son of Him who created this universe, that is a matter between him and those who agree with this doctrine....But we may grant that some of those among the multitude of believers take a divergent view, and because of their rashness suppose that the Saviour is the greatest and supreme God. But we at least do not take that view...(8.14)

Shortly thereafter, Origen noted a comment supposedly taken by Celsus from another Christian group. Origen dismissed this as a statement from "another sect," claiming:

We who belong to the church named after Christ alone say that none of these things are true. [Celsus] seems to be attributing to us sayings which are nothing to do with us....But this is a matter for those who tread 'another road and 'other paths,' who deny Jesus and have given themselves up to a new-fangled fiction and to a merely nominal God who they suppose to be greater than the Creator...(8.16).

The comments here complement those more explicit ones in 5.61-64, where Origen drew a line between the "Church" and the heretic, and generally dismissed the claim of the heretic to authentic doctrines from Jesus.

To return to our primary question, we should note that if there is a contradiction between the two views expressed by Origen in regard to diversity and heretics in general, that should not be surprising. The rhetorical nature of Origen's work against Celsus should warn us of the possible presence of overstatements and

debaters' points. Origen described his method (perhaps suggested to him by 'God-loving' Ambrose, who asked Origen to write the work)¹⁸ as an attempt to respond to Celsus's book point-by-point (Preface 3). Given this method, it would not do to pass over significant points: something must be offered in response to each point put forward by Celsus, and the response must carry sufficient weight to discredit Celsus's attacks. These are limiting conditions for any writer to work under. When we give adequate recognition to these conditions, we will not expect that every point Origen makes should reflect--unqualified and unmodified--the position Origen would have espoused had the conditions been different. Origen's primary purpose was to refute specific arguments put forward by Celsus and this should not be forgotten. If Origen called to his aid arguments that serve this purpose but which, unqualified, would not in another context have won his approval, we must allow him that freedom. He would hardly be, in the last three millennia of western rhetoric, the isolated case of an author using that tactic.

I wish here to propose, and briefly to defend, an alternative judgment regarding Origen's view of primitive Christian diversity. My contention is that what Origen says in 3.10-13 probably reflects Origen's rhetorical abilities more than it reflects a heartfelt conviction; his heartfelt conviction is better reflected in a passage like 5.61-64, and this places him in rather marked agreement--not marked disagreement--with the general view of diversity held by the ecclesiastical group in the second and third

centuries.

First, as we have already seen, Origen is able to draw a line that separates the "Church" from the heretic. He drew that line often, and his comments regarding those who stand apart from the Great Church were generally negative, and at times, sharply so. One might counter that it is in a passage such as this that Origen is the rhetorician: he side-stepped certain of Celsus's serious charges by claiming that they are not relevant objections to the view of the Great Church. Although Origen did write for members of the Great Church (Preface), and he needed to reply only to those points that affected the Great Church, he nonetheless did repeatedly identify with the position of the Great Church, and he quoted standard ecclesiastical arguments against heretics,¹⁹ accepted the ecclesiastical rejection of heretics,²⁰ and judged heretics as harshly as Irenaeus or Eusebius.²¹

What, then, are we to make of the positive attitude towards diversity reflected by Origen in 3.10-13? For one thing, it deserves to be pointed out that Origen was not so fully positive towards diversity as some modern scholars seem to imply when they appeal to this passage as proof that Origen stood apart from other church leaders in regard to his views on diversity. When Origen mentioned disputes about the resurrection and about the day of the Lord in the Epistles of Paul (3.11), he must have recalled the harsh denouncements of these views voiced by Paul.²² This would suggest that Origen may not have had such a positive appreciation

for the elements of early diversity he mentioned here. Origen even quoted a rather stinging rebuke of heresies from Paul, using language like "profane babblings and oppositions of the knowledge which is false so-called," judging that such have made "shipwreck" of their faith (3.11).²³

Yet, as I pointed out at the beginning, Origen made statements that are clearly positive regarding diversity in primitive Christianity. But, perhaps, in the context of rhetoric, this is precisely what we should expect. Celsus had attacked the Christians specifically because of their diversity. All Origen really did was to ask how, logically, diversity within Christianity is supposed to discredit Christianity when similar diversity in medicine and in philosophy is not considered to discredit either medicine or philosophy (3.12). He went on to expand on this idea (3.12-13), even including the sects of Judaism as an example of diversity which is generally not thought of as discrediting (3.12).

Then comes his conclusion: if it is logical that diversity does not discredit medicine, philosophy or Judaism, "why may we not make a similar reply concerning the sects among the Christians" (3.13). In the shadow of this conclusion must every word of Origen on the subject of diversity be understood. When this is done, Origen stands in marked agreement with the view of other ecclesiastical leaders of the second and third centuries, and his role as a defender of orthodoxy against the heretics becomes more intelligible.²⁴

APPENDIX 2

JOHN'S RESIDENCE IN EPHEBUS: A Note on the Ignatian Omission

A number of patristic writers report that the Apostle John spent the last years of his life in Ephesus. The reports are early; the witnesses seem to be credible.¹ Numerous scholars consider the tradition reliable. Others, however, find the tradition of John's residence in Ephesus not completely above suspicion.² Although a number of reasons have been offered for discounting the tradition, only one is widely thought to present a serious problem: the failure of Ignatius to refer to John in his letters.³

This omission is considered significant for three reasons. First, Ignatius's letters are addressed to the very churches in which John would have been well-known and respected had he lived in Ephesus and worked among the churches in the area.⁴ Second, John's death was apparently quite recent (according to the traditions that placed John in Ephesus);⁵ his memory should have been still alive and his influence still weighty. Third, and most puzzling, in the letter to the church at Ephesus (the city where John is supposed to have lived), Ignatius mentions Paul as an apostle connected to that church (12.2), but he makes no mention of John. Stephen S. Smalley states the case pointedly: Ignatius is

silent about the apostle John; and even if this is understandable in the majority of the letters, it is very hard to explain when he is writing to Ephesus itself--particularly since he mentions the association between Paul and the Ephesians. [6]

Of course, the problem of the omission of reference to John in the Ignatian letters vanishes if John never lived in the area.

The question is this: is it possible to explain how an apostolic figure of John's stature could have been passed over in silence by Ignatius had John lived in the area and only recently died, especially given Ignatius's appeal to Paul when he writes to the Ephesian church? In the following brief discussion, I wish to make a case for that possibility.

The question, I contend, is usually posed in the wrong way. Whether made explicit or not, the question usually contrasts a "recent John" to a "long-past Paul." If John had lived in the area in the late 90s, why is appeal made, not to John, but to Paul, who had lived in Ephesus for only three years, and that in the distant past--the middle of the first century?

But the question, when posed this way, is loaded. It assumes that a John who lived in Ephesus some ten to twenty years before Ignatius wrote would have stood out to Ignatius as considerably more recent than a Paul who had died forty-five years earlier. This is a questionable assumption. It is crucial to

recognize that it is not the "historical Paul" whom Ignatius knows but the "literary Paul,"⁷ a Paul known to Ignatius mainly through his many letters, and possibly through the Book of Acts.⁸ Such a Paul would have been firmly associated with the Ephesian church in the mind of Ignatius--just as Paul is firmly associated with this church in the minds of modern students of Paul who know Paul only through the canon. The "literary Paul" has a connection to Ephesus that is neither "relatively recent" nor "long past"; the connection of the "literary Paul" to Ephesus simply cannot be posed in such terms. Paul is permanently bound to Ephesus, to Corinth, to Philippi, to Thessalonica--he cannot be separated from these churches by decades or distance. If we wish, then, to compare Paul to John in the context of Ignatius's comments to the Ephesian church, John should not be favoured because he is the more recent. There is no reason to grant John that priority from the perspective of Ignatius.

Still, we are left with the question why Paul is mentioned but not John. This is a considerably less loaded question than why Paul is mentioned rather than the "more recent" John. Yet, though we probably must admit that, from Ignatius's perspective, John is not likely to have been favoured above Paul, the problem remains: Paul is, in fact, mentioned; John is not. We can still ask why it is that John is not mentioned at all. Surely, if an apostle of John's stature had lived in Ephesus in the last decade of the first century, the bishop of Antioch in the first decade of the second

century would have known that. That much, I think, must be admitted. But it is one thing to grant that Ignatius must have known of John's residence in Ephesus; it is another to expect him to have mentioned John in his letters. I offer two reasons for thinking that such an expectation demands too much.

First, the reference to Paul is not as significant as is usually held. It is, in fact, almost accidental. Ignatius had just spoken of his sufferings and his approaching death and has indicated the importance of the prayers of the Ephesians regarding the rigours that face him (11.2). It is in this context of specific reference to the importance of the Ephesians in supporting him in their prayers that Ignatius comments more broadly on the Ephesian church's frequent help to those on their way to martyrdom. He describes the church as "the passage for those who are being slain for the sake of God" (12.2). Apparently a number of Christians had been sent through Ephesus on their way to execution in Rome.⁹ Ignatius recognizes the contribution that the church in Ephesus had made to these martyrs, and it is in this context that Paul comes to mind: the martyrs who had passed through Ephesus were, Ignatius says, "fellow-initiates with Paul" (12.2), and Ignatius hopes that he himself will be found walking in Paul's footsteps to Rome and martyrdom. Then comes the one and only time that Ignatius associates Paul with the Ephesians. He reports that Paul mentions the Ephesians in "every epistle." The reference is natural enough: having mentioned Paul for some other reason, Ignatius notes, almost

as an aside, that Paul had frequently praised the Ephesians. That complements Ignatius's own praise for the Ephesians.

The significant aspect of Ignatius's appeal to Paul is that he never appeals to Paul to give credibility or authority to his argument. No course of action called for by Ignatius is supported by appeal to Paul. This emphasizes the incidental nature of Ignatius's reference to Paul in the passage just discussed. Thus, while it is true that Ignatius mentions Paul but does not mention John, the role the reference to Paul plays in the shaping of Ignatius's main argument is of so little consequence that John can hardly be described as slighted or forgotten by Ignatius's omission of him.

So our initial question must again be modified. Now we ask simply why it is that Ignatius did not mention John. Related to this question is another: why is it that Paul is mentioned only incidentally? Surely, appeal to apostles of such stature would have lent considerable weight to Ignatius's arguments against the schismatics. His clear use of material written by Paul, and possibly material written by John,¹⁰ indicates that Ignatius believed the material carried weight in his argument. Yet he never names a particular apostle as his authority.¹¹ This is particularly puzzling in the case of Paul and John, whose weight in western Asia Minor must have been considerable.

I contend that Ignatius does not appeal to particular apostles because, quite simply, he cannot--his understanding of the

church forbids it. For Ignatius, the apostles all stand in one body and their message is harmonious. It is not individual apostles who, for Ignatius, possess authority but the whole Council of the Apostles. When appeal is made to the Apostles to support his argument, consistently it is to the whole Council of Apostles that the appeal is made, and the thrust of his entire argument depends on this: all the apostles spoke the same message. This apostolic message is now the possession of the bishop's church, and it is guaranteed by the present, God-ordained officials in the church, who are a reflection of the Council of the Apostles.¹² Given the absolute consistency with which Ignatius appeals to the whole Council of the Apostles and not to individual apostles, the lack of appeal to the authority of John hardly calls for explanation.

Did John live in Ephesus? The weight of the tradition clearly favours it. Ignatius's "failure" to mention John is not of sufficient significance to cast suspicion on that tradition.

APPENDIX 3

POPULATION FIGURES FOR THE EARLY CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT

Before a study of the diversity in the primitive church can be accepted as credible, two issues must be resolved. One is the size and the structure of the basic unit for corporate worship; the other is the size of the Christian population of particular areas.

In the following appendix, I shall discuss the importance of the house church in the life of the primitive Christian community. There I shall show that these basic units for corporate worship would generally have consisted of not more than three or four dozen members each. The number of such units in a city would depend, of course, on the number of Christians in the city. If the Christian population was small--let us say, one hundred or so converts--it is conceivable, if not probable, that all the believers crowded together in the home of a wealthy convert: the entire church would have met together as a joint body for their regular, corporate worship. If, however, the Christian population was much larger than a hundred, a common assembly for the entire Christian community would be improbable; smaller, and scattered, house churches would have functioned as the regular units for the corporate worship.

Consider the city of Ephesus, for example. Given even limited

success of the Christian mission there, the church of that city must have consisted of scores of these small, primary house church units. Taking even unrealistically low figures of fifteen converts each year, we should expect to have found some thousand or more Christians in Ephesus at the beginning of the second century.¹ At least a score of house churches would have been required to accommodate this number of converts. I point this out to show that given even the least generous estimate of the success of the Christian mission, it is not possible to discuss the structure of the early church without thinking of a number of small units for the regular corporate life of the church--a matter frequently not considered in studies on the early church.²

But can we be more precise with regard to the size of the Christian population of particular cities? Robert Grant says that the issue is not close to a solution,³ and with this we must agree. Yet, that should not prevent some attempt at a solution to the question, even if that solution might need to be qualified. Grant, himself, thinks that there were "many" Christians.⁴ This can hardly satisfy those who want something more concrete--something, for example, along the line of J. B. Lightfoot's contention that there were hundreds of thousands of Christians at the time of Hadrian.⁵ The question is whether such a figure as this can be supported by some kind of more formal method of calculation? The

"hundreds of thousands" of Lightfoot seems more of a guess or an impression than a careful calculation.

Bo Reicke has made a careful attempt to calculate the Christian population in the early period. His figures are just as surprising as Lightfoot's "hundreds of thousands." Reicke thinks that by 67 C.E., Christians would have numbered 40,000 throughout the empire, 5,000 of these being in Asia Minor. Reicke contends that, by 100 C.E., the number of Christians in Asia Minor would have grown to about 80,000.⁶ Admittedly, Reicke has employed a method of questionable reliability, but it is probably the only method available. What Reicke did was this. Recognizing that the size of the Christian population is unknown to us, Reicke turned to two populations whose size was easier to determine: (1) the total population of particular areas; (2) the population of the Jewish community. Reicke then proceeded on the assumption that the Christian group was not likely to have appeared as a serious threat to the Jews or to the larger population until Christians made up at least two percent of the respective populations.⁷ Reicke admitted that his figures were both hypothetical and approximate; he denied, however, that they were exaggerated.⁸

Evidence from other sources suggests that large figures cannot be ruled out. Tertullian, writing as a Christian apologist about the end of the second century, says that Christians have filled every conceivable place in the empire; he even says that "nearly all the citizens...in nearly all the cities are Christian" (Ap.

37.4.8). Robert Grant noted the obvious exaggeration in Tertullian's statement.⁹ In another book, Grant referred to Tertullian's statement that there were more Christians in one province than there were Roman soldiers in the entire empire (Apol. 37.4). Grant wanted to qualify that figure as well, though he was prepared to admit that for the entire empire, Christians outnumbered the Roman armies, which probably had a force of about 150,000 men.¹⁰

Perhaps, however, Tertullian is more correct than Grant. Suppose that some provinces of the empire had 150,000 Christians--or the empire itself some million or more, as was implied by Tertullian.¹¹ Christians would represent only one and one-half to two percent of the population. According to Grant's figures, the Christians would have made up less than one-third of one percent of the entire population, or one Christian for every 350-500 people in the Empire.¹² It would be incredible that an intelligent spokesman for a group hardly represented at all in the society would make the grand claim that just about everyone in the empire was a Christian. Admittedly, numbers do have a way of unrealistically increasing (or decreasing) in the hands of those who appeal to them. Tertullian could have been attempting to give some credibility to the Christian movement by exaggerating its size, though even exaggeration, with someone as intelligent as Tertullian, undoubtedly would have had sufficient limits to keep the exaggerated claim within the domain of the credible. Indeed, one might ask whether Tertullian did not himself underestimate the Christian population

when he compared it to the Roman armies.

That there may be some basis to Tertullian's claims is suggested by an even earlier comment made by a critic of the Christian movement. Alexander of Abonuteichus, around the year 160, complained of his poor reception in Pontus, and explained it by contending that Pontus was filled with atheists and Christians.¹³ Although it is in Alexander's interest to exaggerate the strength of the atheists and Christians, the charge can hardly be completely groundless. Indeed, in the same area some fifty years earlier, Christians were of sufficient numbers to be singled out for persecution by those whose vested interest was in the pagan religions of the empire. We know of this from correspondence Pliny the Younger sent to Emperor Trajan. This correspondence is the classic evidence for the substantial success of the Christian movement by the early second century, though it lends itself to two quite different interpretations.

Scholars have debated to what degree certain statements in the correspondence can be taken to indicate a large Christian population. The problem in evaluating Pliny's statements is that Pliny could have been exaggerating (perhaps unintentionally) the size of the Christian population. Without detailing the discussion of Pliny's statements over the past few years, I will merely point out that Lightfoot, Harnack and Ramsay had used Pliny's statements to argue for a sizeable Christian population in the early second century.¹⁴ Bauer did not take this use of Pliny's statements

seriously, and Frend argues that "Christians are rare enough for Pliny to refer the whole affair to his master,"¹⁵ which is, strangely enough, exactly opposite to the reason Pliny himself gave,¹⁶ but it is fully in line with Frend's belief that the Christian movement did not experience significant expansion until about 130 C.E.¹⁷

Although the precise size of the Christian population will not easily or soon be worked out, most studies of the primitive church could profit as much from an awareness that the Christian population numbered into the many thousands as from a definite calculation specifying the exact number of thousands. For this study, even the least generous reading of the evidence for a sizeable Christian population forces us to think in terms of scores of house churches in cities like Ephesus, and this provides a concrete context for some of the questions raised in this thesis.

APPENDIX 4
THE HOUSE CHURCH

I

The Importance of the House Church
for Understanding Earliest Christianity

In recent years, a number of studies regarding the house church in primitive Christianity have appeared.¹ This is, in part, due to a new appreciation for and application of sociological insights in the study of the early church.

The insights are timely. Although the exact nature of the house church is still disputed and the various stages of development basically unknown, there is general agreement that private houses served as the regular meeting places for the collective worship of Christians, at least in the initial years. The primary implication from this observation is that, given the most minimal successes of the Christian mission in a city, one would expect to find several, if not scores of, small house churches serving as centres of worship and life for the Christians of that locality. The only way to escape this conclusion would be to argue that the private houses that served as the first meeting places were quickly replaced by adequately large assembly halls for all believers as the church expanded. I will attempt to demonstrate that no such argument can be made; the small house church units were not replaced by larger

assembly halls until well after the period of our study here. I will further argue that not only did larger buildings not replace the small house church units in the early period, they did not supplement the activities of these small units either.

Most scholars would agree on the first point. A number would argue, however, that large assemblies, along with the smaller private homes, played a regular role in the life of the Christian community from an early period.² This point is a key one to the discussion here, and if it can be shown that larger assembly halls did not play a part in the regular corporate life of the church in the period of our study, we will be provided with questions of considerably sharper focus than has often been the case in discussions of the character of primitive Christianity. I list here a few of the more focused questions. If there was no large assembly for all the Christians of an area, how would the separation of one group from the community have been expressed? Did the separate assemblies sense themselves to be part of a larger body within their city, and if they did, what gave them this sense of unity, and was it such that some of the house churches could be excluded? Would house churches have reflected pockets of theological unity within a city-wide pool of theological diversity, or would theological diversity be reflected even within the small house church units? If individual house churches reflected a theological unity in contrast to a theological diversity within the Christian community of the area as a whole, were these differences such that the groups

consciously opposed one another, or did they have a broad sense of unity within this diversity which set them apart as the church against the world?

In the following discussion, I will present and evaluate the evidence for a change in church structure from a collection of individual house churches to a larger, perhaps city-wide gathering for worship. From that study, I will offer some reflections regarding how our understanding of the primary structure of corporate worship in the primitive church can inform our study of a number of matters. Thus my review of the evidence for house churches has a more limited focus than some of the recent works on the subject. I will select from those works whatever points are relevant to the questions important to this thesis. Other questions will not be considered. For example, some scholars have attempted to determine to what extent the house church was basically a converted household,³ or to what extent the overseer of a house church was also the head of the household from which that house church drew most of its members.⁴ For my purposes, I need only determine whether the regular worshipping unit was too small to include all the Christians of the area--in other words, whether more than one place of assembly would have been required for each locality. Whether several converted households constituted one house church or each household functioned as an independent worshipping unit makes little difference to my primary question. In either case, if the Christian community was large, more than one

house church would have been needed.

Nor is it particularly important to determine the grounds for, and the time of, the development expressed in the setting aside of a private house solely as a place of worship from the earlier use of a private house both as the regular meeting place of a worshipping unit and as the living quarters of the generous host family who had opened its home for these regular meetings. Here, too, in either case, the place of meeting would still be limited in the number of members it could accommodate, and this would have demanded several such assembly places in any area where the Christian mission had even minimal success. That is not to deny, however, that such a change reflects a significant development, as Stuhlmacher has noted.⁵

Further, it is of only secondary importance to determine what secular or religious structure the house church most closely copied, though that has been the focus for much of the discussion of the house church. I will consider this question only as it throws some light on the probable size of the house church units. I do not think that we can learn much about the character of the house church by a close examination of the character of the various secular and religious structures the house church may appear to have copied. The danger is that the uniqueness of the house church will not be recognized in such a study, and that what the Christians may have copied merely as a practical matter could mislead us in our conclusions regarding the essential purpose and character of the house church in the life of the Christian community.

In summary, then, the main concern of my survey of the evidence for the house church in early Christianity is to establish that for almost every city in which the Christian message was preached, we must reckon with not one assembly but with several, and in a city like Ephesus where the success of the Christian mission was perhaps unusually spectacular, probably with scores of house churches at the time of the Apocalypticist or of Ignatius.

II

Small Units: The Literary Evidence

Although much of the material that mentions the house church is ambiguous, it is generally not so ambiguous as to exclude a conclusion of reasonable certainty.

A. The New Testament

1. Acts

According to the author of Acts, the first believers remained members of the synagogue and participated in the regular, religious life of the temple.⁶ That aspect of the author's tradition seems credible, perhaps more so for the synagogue than for the temple. We have independent evidence (in the Gospel of Matthew and the Gospel of John, for example) that the break with the synagogue came several decades after the beginning of the church.⁷ The case for continued loyalty to the temple is somewhat less certain. There is an anti-temple strain in traditions about Jesus, and the

author of Acts himself admits an anti-temple movement in the early church, though that is balanced by accounts of loyalty to the temple on the part of many thousands of other Christians.⁸

The author of Acts also reports that, though the earliest Christians continued to attend those institutions that good Jews always attended, the early Christians were not without some sense that those who believed in Jesus stood apart from the rest of Judaism. The most concrete evidence for this early sense of uniqueness on the part of Christians is the house church, or so it would seem from the accounts in Acts. The author of Acts reports that in spite of continuing to attend synagogue and temple, the earliest believers also had their own private meetings.⁹

Separate Christian meetings should not be surprising. The original core of followers of Jesus had shared in common fellowship before: they ate together, travelled together, sat together as Jesus taught, and as a group seem to have attended synagogue and visited the temple.¹⁰ Thus, what would need to be explained is not an early sense of uniqueness on the part of the first Christians, resulting in special meetings, but an absence of it.

The author of Acts says little about the actual structure of the Christian assemblies except that Christians did meet together for some form of fellowship.¹¹ These meetings appear to have been conducted in private homes, though, as C. F. D. Moule points out, the evidence in the New Testament for the nature of the early assemblies is inconclusive.¹²

2. The Epistles

We are not assisted much by the references to the house church outside the book of Acts. In a number of passages, the phrase, "the church which is in the house of 'X'" is used.¹³ Exactly what is being described here can be, and has been, disputed. One group minimize the content of the word "church": it simply refers to those who are believers in a particular household and does not, in any sense, refer to a functioning worshipping unit; the "church" of a particular household would have joined for collective worship in a larger community.¹⁴ Others maximize the content of the word "church": it is a full-fledged, valid and primary unit for collective worship.¹⁵

It seems, then, that explicit references to the house church in the New Testament materials is generally not clear enough to determine what served as the primary unit for corporate worship during most of the early period (though later I will discuss some of the material that might lead one to conclude that large assemblies were used by the Christian communities). Scholars have read the New Testament evidence quite differently. Moule argues that in the New Testament, there is no direct evidence for any collective units larger than the household;¹⁶ Wayne Meeks says that house churches were the usual meeting places, but some larger, common meetings were held also.¹⁷ Meeks notes his disagreement with Nicolas Afanassieff, who argues that there were never separate household groups; the unity of the church in any area was maintained

because the church united in a common assembly for worship.¹⁸

We have here three different interpretations of the same material.

B. Ignatius

The evidence in the Ignatian letters is equally ambiguous. In the letter to the Ephesians, Ignatius speaks of Christians severally joining in the common meeting, breaking one bread (20.2). Earlier in the letter (5.3), Ignatius had said that the one who does not join the common assembly has separated himself. But the phrases "one loaf" and "common assembly" are intelligible for either the situation in which one common meeting is attended by all the Christians in a city or for the situation in which Christians attend a number of small house assemblies, all of which are considered part of and come under the authority of a common bishop and presbytery. In the latter situation, the Christians would understand the house church as the "common assembly", for that unit would have been precisely that--the place, and the only place, where Christians gathered together regularly for collective worship. "Common assembly" is a relative term, and takes its meaning from structures already present, and cannot serve to indicate the exact nature of the "assembly."

In spite of this ambiguity, Koester says that Ignatius speaks as though there is one local church.¹⁹ If Koester means that there was one common meeting for collective worship in each city, that meeting could not be described as a house church. The numbers

forbid that. It would seem, however, that, if each of the many house churches of a city recognized themselves to be part of a larger, though abstract, "church" in their city, the Ignatian comments can make sense without the reconstruction suggested by Koester. Virginia Corwin also suggests that by the time of Ignatius the house church was being replaced by a large assembly for collective worship. But Corwin's reading of the text at this point is unconvincing and is challenged by the kind of evidence I will put forward later.²⁰

C. Justin

Justin states that on Sundays, those in the country and those in the cities gather together "in one place" for their common assembly (First Apology 67). Yet, this does not really tell us much about the size of the assemblies. Justin is simply pointing out that it is on Sunday that Christians gather together for collective worship. That there could have been many such assemblies on Sundays in each city is not called into question by Justin's statement, and if for any other reason we are led to believe that each city had a number of Christian assemblies, that evidence would serve to interpret Justin's statement, rather than the reverse. Regarding the meetings in Rome, Justin knows (or perhaps to protect other house churches, says that he knows) of only the group that met in his own residence over some bath (Mar. Jus. 3.3). The impression is of a small assembly, and that is probably precisely the situation

Justin wanted to portray.²¹ It might be argued that Justin's statement makes sense only if there was no large assembly to which each of the small house churches regularly came. The presence of such a group under the very nose of the suspicious Roman government is unlikely to have gone unnoticed.

D. Celsus

The second-century polemist Celsus cannot be expected to be fair in his criticism of Christians, but in regard to some of his comments, he can be expected to be reliable. In criticizing the Christian preachers, Celsus says that they entice children and women to come "to the wooldresser's shop, or to the cobbler's or to the washerwoman's shop, that they may learn perfection."²² The location of the Christian meetings is suggestive. Admittedly, if the church was accustomed to meeting both in a large common assembly as well as in smaller house groups, Celsus would no doubt have pointed to the unimpressive small shops and residences as the places of Christian instruction in order to discredit the movement. But Celsus does not invent these despicable meeting places to discredit the Christians; the despicable meeting places are at the disposal of his polemic, and he wisely calls attention to them. The Christian evidence itself, especially that of Justin from the same time and the same city, witnesses to the small, unimpressive premises for at least some of the Christian meeting places.

III

Small Units: The Theological Argument

Robert Grant mentions what I consider to be one of the strongest arguments against the existence of large assemblies for collective worship. He notes the "philosophical-theological objections to the idea of templelike buildings."²³ C. F. D. Moule makes the same point: Christians were considered to be atheists because they had no special place to worship.²⁴ Two passages in the primary materials clearly support the point. First, when Celsus compared the Christian movement to some of the more questionable religious movements of his day, Origen challenged the contrast by pointing out that Christians had no temples, and from their particular theological perspective, could not have such buildings (Contra Celsum 3.34). Celsus himself, later in his work, calls the Christian movement into question precisely because they have no temple (Contra Celsum 8.17). Celsus thinks the lack of temples and images indicates that the Christian movement is an obscure and secret society (8.20). Origen explains the absence in theological terms:

...we avoid things which, though they have an appearance of piety, make impious those who have been led astray from the piety which is mediated through Jesus Christ. (8.20) [25]

It is without consequence here why the Christian movement had no temples, or any buildings or meetings that could be mistaken as

such; the point is that unless they lacked such buildings, Celsus's criticism of the movement in the latter part of the second century and Origen's defense in the earlier part of the third century would make no sense.

In another work, Grant refers to an ancient writer whose comment sheds some light on the discussion at hand.²⁶ Porphyry, another critic of Christianity, complains that Christians were erecting very large houses, resembling temples for their worship. Porphyry wrote that during the reign of Aurelian (270-275), and the implication seems to be that this is something novel for the Christians. This new activity could stem directly from the restoration by Gallienus (261 C.E.) of church property that had been seized in the recent persecutions.²⁷ This property seems to have been merely private houses that had been set aside as the regular meeting places (a number in each city), and the larger buildings, which disturbed Porphyry, would seem to indicate that the Christians were taking advantage of imperial protection of their meeting places.

IV

Parallel Social and Religious Structures

Some scholars have argued that the matter could be better understood, if not resolved, by an examination of comparable institutions within the non-Christian society. But I have found

these studies generally helpful only in suggesting the probable maximum size of the Christian assemblies; I do not find that much insight into the fundamental character of the Christian house church is gained by comparisons with particular contemporary structures, whether social or religious.

A. The Household

The household of the Greco-Roman era was, in a sense, a religious unit. The household recognized its allegiance to particular household gods, and all members of the household were expected to participate in the cult of the household of which they were members.²⁸

Some think that references to "the church" in a particular house refers to a similar worshipping unit in the Christian church, arguing that the basic unit for corporate worship was simply a converted household.²⁹ Others dispute this, contending that references in the New Testament to "the church" in someone's house merely indicate a converted household, not necessarily a separate worshipping unit. E. A. Judge argues that the household was the natural unit of conversion for the church: when the head of the household converted, the whole household converted with him. These "churches" in private homes were not worshipping units; they would have met together with other converted households for regular, corporate worship.³⁰

Judge appears to be correct on this point. If the primary

unit of conversion was the household, that unit would not have served as the primary unit of corporate worship. From the first days of any new mission, the unit for corporate worship would have consisted of a converted household to which were attached converts whose own household had not yet been converted. We do know of slaves whose masters were not believers,³¹ and there is no reason to think that these were rare cases where the slave had been converted before he was purchased by his present master. Further, sometimes it is specified that a woman had become a Christian, and the implication seems to be that her husband had not.³² Also, reference is frequent enough in the New Testament material regarding conflicts within families over the Christian message for household conversion not to have been the rule.³³

We have, thus, rather extensive evidence that conversion of households was not always the case and that many converts would not have had the benefit of a converted household themselves and would have had to join some other household for any collective worship. The house church, then, though at its core perhaps no more than a converted household, would have been open to individual converts who lacked a similar converted household of their own.

But whether mainly a converted household, or a unit comprising members from several households, the number of people that could be contained by the house church is restricted by the limited space available in an average room. Although we cannot determine what that number might be merely from our conclusion that homes were used

as regular assembly places, two other considerations aid us in determining the probable size of the early assemblies. One is the size of various other groups that used homes as their place of meetings. (This will be discussed in the next section.) The other is the archaeological evidence that at a later period, the walls of homes were removed to make a larger hall for the common meetings. This would suggest that prior to this time, assemblies were restricted to the size of one of the larger rooms of a house. This is suggested, too, by the frequent phrase, "the church in the house of 'X.'"³⁴ The implication of this expression is that the house remained the normal living quarters of the host family, and this would be impossible if the walls of the various rooms had been removed to accommodate a larger crowd.

It is probably unwise to argue that huge courtyards were used from the beginning in order to accommodate as many believers as possible. If that were the case, one would need to explain what appears to be a later shift to the use of whole houses for the place of meeting, for a courtyard would have contained at least as many people as would a whole house. It would be difficult to explain the late move to use whole houses, since that change is basically merely a move from outside to inside, and thus raises the question of why this kind of move would have taken two centuries. On the other hand, if the move was from the use of a room to the use of a whole house, the change is more radical, and this makes the delay of the change less puzzling.

Whether we opt for a room (as seems the most reasonable) or for a courtyard or a renovated house as the place of regular assembly of the various house-church units, scores of such units must have existed in any city with a successful Christian mission.

B. Associations

Robert Banks calls attention to the numerous private associations throughout the empire during the early days of the church. Decades earlier, William Ramsay had done the same, believing that the church could best be understood in terms of the clubs or "collegia" common during the first century. These associations were frequently organized to provide a channel for proper funeral rites, but the members also met for the occasional common meeting. Numerous scholars appeal to this structure to explain the character of the early Christian assemblies,³⁵ and they have the support of some ancient writers, both churchmen and civil rulers, who described the church as a collegium. Pliny, in the early second century, seems to have viewed the Christian assemblies as collegia.³⁶ Tertullian, while admitting that the church was not a legal association, argued that it should be allowed that status, or, better still, that its religious character should be recognized.³⁷ I have already noted Celsus's comment that Christians had no temples because they were a secret society.

But we can gain little insight into the character of the church from this comparison, though certain implications regarding the size

of the house churches are worthy of note, as Bank points out. Whether the members of the house churches understood their assemblies as private associations similar to those about them is not of primary importance for determining the size of the house churches. The maximum size is most likely limited mainly by the amount of space in a private home that could accommodate the collective meetings. That limitation would be relevant to the situation of the house church and the private association, whether or not they had anything else in common. Banks thinks that the average membership of the house churches would have been about thirty, and at the most about forty or forty-five. This figure, or one slightly higher, is supported by others.³⁸

Yet, whether the associations averaged thirty members, or as many as five times that, during the reign of Trajan they were generally forbidden, and in the case of Christians, expressly forbidden in the area governed by Pliny.³⁹ And perhaps that prohibition on Christian assemblies should be regarded as wider than just the small area reflected in Pliny's correspondence. Whatever allowances were made for the existence of legal collegia, everything seems to argue against the extension of that particular right to Christians. Christians were regarded with extreme suspicion in the empire, and if we want to make comparisons to structures that the Roman government would tolerate, we need at least to mention the Bacchanals, which were permitted no more than five members at an assembly at one time.⁴⁰

De Robertis' theory that the church was allowed considerable freedom and would not have been restricted by the controls of collegia may be correct in so far as it makes a distinction between collegia and religious associations,⁴¹ but whatever favour Rome was prepared to show religious associations is made insignificant in a context where Christians are generally regarded as atheists or adherents to a most shameful superstition. That seems to be the point Tertullian tried to make: Christians might appear to be organized into collegia--and necessarily illegal ones--though they should be considered a religious group and thus excused from the charge of holding illegal assemblies.⁴² If the Christians enjoyed greater freedom as a religious movement prior to this, in what period can this greater freedom be set? Christians are charged by Pliny as a collegium, and, as such, forbidden. If, at some point after that, they are excused from the controls over collegia because they come to be understood by the Romans as a religious movement, is that positive understanding of the Christians not refuted by everything we know about the attitude of the society towards Christians in the second century?⁴³

C. Synagogues

Even if the church attempted to imitate the synagogues, the size of their primary units for collective worship need not have been greater than thirty or forty members. Although we do know of large synagogues (the one at Sardis could accommodate about one

thousand, and others could accommodate considerably more than the average private home), most of the diaspora synagogues excavated to date are on the scale of private dwellings.⁴⁴ There is, too, the rabbinic tradition that Jerusalem had 460 or 480 synagogues when Titus captured it.⁴⁵ The number may be exaggerated, but whether exaggerated or not, the tradition does seem to require a context in which it makes sense to think of numerous synagogues within the boundaries of a city. As well, the requirement that synagogues have at least ten adult males points to the probability of numerous small synagogues.⁴⁶ If Tcherikover is correct that the average size of Jewish families was five persons,⁴⁷ a synagogue could easily have had as few as thirty members, considering that the children of the older men would likely have been grown and married themselves, and some of the younger men would have had yet to start families. The size of these synagogues would be comparable to the size of private associations and house churches.

V

Archaeological Evidence

Few dispute a stage in the life of the primitive Christian community when house churches were the primary units for corporate worship, and when the size of each unit was small. What is obscure about the structures of the church is the shift from a number of smaller house churches in a city to a much larger corporate assembly, or perhaps an intermediate stage when, along with regular

meetings in the house churches, an occasional meeting of all believers in a city took place.

We get little help from archaeology here. Few pre-Constantinian buildings remain, and even after Constantine, houses continued to be adapted for worship.⁴⁸ The earliest dateable church (outside of Rome and Palestine) is found in Asia Minor, and is from around the middle of the fourth century.⁴⁹ The first known house church (with baptistry) is at Dura Europos (c. 232 C.E.).⁵⁰

VI

Evidence for Larger Assemblies

The evidence for the house church in the New Testament writings must be read with some caution. The more primitive the tradition, the greater the possibility that the picture of the house church may not reflect the situation in a later period.

This is sometimes forgotten in the use of 1 Corinthians as a source for information on the house church. Klauck, for example, uses 1 Corinthians as his principle evidence from the New Testament.⁵¹ The problem with the use of this epistle is that it is written to a church that may have existed under circumstances markedly different from those under which the church of a slightly later time existed. According to the accounts in Acts, synagogue leaders were converted and became the leaders of the church.⁵² The church would have been no more than three or four years old at the time of the writing

of the letter, and it is possible that it could have met in a large assembly under the guise of a synagogue. But that situation surely would have changed when attention was drawn to the Christian movement as a sect distinct from official Judaism, and such a distinction seems to have been made at least by the time of Nero, and other evidence supports an early identification of the Christians as a distinctive movement.⁵³

Thus, even if one may be able to argue from 1 Corinthians that a large common assembly was used regularly for Christian worship,⁵⁴ that argument is heavily qualified by everything we know of the Christian situation at a later period when the Christian community is judged by the society to stand apart from Judaism.

VII

Further Questions

Two further lines of investigation promise some insight into the character of early Christianity. First, there is the question of whether individual house churches would have reflected a particular theological perspective.⁵⁵ Second, there is the question of whether the phenomenon of the house church contributed to party strife and the formation of isolated communities.⁵⁶

The answer to both questions must take into consideration the fact that we can find no church leader who reflects in any clear way a commitment to one particular theological perspective while rejecting other perspectives.⁵⁷ If the leaders were able to, or

could not help but, incorporate into their Christian thinking both the ideas of Johannine and Pauline thought, for example, we would seem to have little grounds for expecting the opposite to have been the case for the average member of a house church. Surely to such people, both the thought of John or Paul could have carried considerable weight, and there is no more reason to demand that they accept one and reject the other than to demand it of the Christian today who hears God speaking, not in a significantly different way, both when he reads the Johannine material and when he reads the Pauline material. That is not to say that some preference will not be shown; it is merely to object to the view that requires theological preference to always entail a conscious and sharp rejection of alternative views.

These are but some of the issues that are likely to be more convincingly resolved if attention is directed to the phenomenon of the house church in the first two centuries of the Christian movement, for that small structure provides a more concrete and satisfying context in which to investigate the early Christian movement than past studies have often had available to them.

APPENDIX 5

THE HERETICS IN THE IGNATIAN LETTERS

One of my more important arguments against Bauer relies heavily on a close examination of the situation in the churches at Magnesia and Philadelphia, and, to a lesser extent, in the church at Smyrna (pp. 97-113). Some scholars maintain that the situation in Magnesia and Philadelphia involved Judaizing schismatics, whereas, in the other churches, the problem involved docetic schismatics. The basic question is whether there is one or two heresies reflected in the Ignatian material. Unfortunately, the question cannot be answered conclusively, and scholarly opinion is divided. I shall not discuss in detail the various points in favour of one position or of the other. That has been done in several recent articles.¹

I am myself persuaded by those who argue for one heresy, a docetism with a Jewish colouring. I am led to that position for the following reasons. First, I think it unlikely that anything attached to the Christian movement at this time would be without some Jewish colouring. By "Jewish," I include whatever elements a Samaritan influence might leave, for I do not see any clear way to determine for many "Jewish" traits whether their immediate source was Samaritan or more directly Jewish. More specifically, in the two letters that supposedly confront a Judaizing heresy, I find

several passages that are more convincingly explained against a docetic background.² Many scholars who have argued for two distinct heresies have found it necessary to qualify their conclusions in light of some of these more troublesome passages.³

In this thesis, I shall not attempt to convince the reader that only one heretical element is involved. The task would likely not be successful in light both of the ambiguity of some of the primary material and of the past inability of scholars to reach a consensus in spite of extensive discussion. My aim here is much more modest. I wish only to specify in what way my argument in chapter three (and especially in section H of that chapter) might need to be qualified if it is a Jewish heresy in Magnesia and Philadelphia, rather than a docetic one.

Those who agree with me that there is but one heresy in western Asia Minor should have no preliminary difficulties with my argument against Bauer in section H, where I discuss the situation at Magnesia and Philadelphia. Even those who argue for a distinctly Jewish heresy in Magnesia and Philadelphia should find that the conclusions I have reached, based on an examination of the letters to Magnesia and Philadelphia, for the most part, remain unaffected, for my conclusions in that section are not tied to an analysis of the heretical beliefs of the schismatics. Whether they were Judaizing or docetic matters little; my conclusions regarding the schismatics' relatively positive relationship to the bishop and the early date for the introduction of the monarchical office follow in

either case.

In fact, if there was a Judaizing heresy in Magnesia and Philadelphia and a docetic heresy in the other churches, my argument is made even stronger regarding the unimpressive character of the docetic movement at the time of Ignatius. This movement may not have even established separate assemblies, for it is in the letters to Magnesia and Philadelphia that the evidence is strongest for the formation of separate assemblies.⁴ Ignatius seems to have considered separate assemblies as the primary evidence pointing to opposition to the bishop,⁵ and if the docetists did not yet have separate assemblies, one of two conclusions would seem to follow. (1) The docetists were few in number and represented mainly by missionaries. Although they opposed the bishop, they had yet to gain sufficient adherents to set themselves up as an alternative Christian community to the catholic community. (2) The docetic movement had a large number of adherents, but they had yet to break with the bishop's church, and they continued to show deference to the bishop. In either case, the docetists at the time of Ignatius hardly were part of an independent and established movement. This would seem, at least, to be our only conclusion if there were two groups of heretics, with the docetists found only in Ephesus, Tralles and Smyrna.

The docetic movement does not gain much in credibility even when the situation at Magnesia and Philadelphia is judged to reflect a docetic schism. As I have argued extensively in section H of

chapter three, the separate assemblies were a recent phenomenon, and the schismatics continued to show deference to the bishops, who held an office that was well established.

As for the other sections of chapter three, my analysis of particular issues spans the entire Ignatian corpus. Whatever can be said about the churches at Magnesia and Philadelphia can also be said about the other three churches, and a decision about the number of heretical groups confronted by Ignatius would not alter my conclusions in any serious way.

APPENDIX 6

IGNATIUS'S PRIMARY OBJECTION TO THE SCHISMATICS' POSITION

Ignatius was alarmed by the formation of separate assemblies for particular aspects of the church's community life by some of the members of the churches in western Asia Minor. The schismatics who participated in such meetings are judged to stand in opposition to the bishop,¹ though Ignatius's criticism of the separate meetings may have been much sharper than the criticism of the separate meetings voiced by the bishop's church.² The question that calls for an answer here is why the separate assemblies (which, from Ignatius's perspective, constitute opposition to the bishop) should have been a matter of concern for Ignatius.

No insight is gained by answering that Ignatius rejected the separate assemblies of the schismatics because he found, at the heart of the matter, opposition to the bishop. Such an answer leaves us with the same question merely rephrased. That question is: why has Ignatius placed his loyalties on the side of the bishops and not on the side of the schismatics?

Ignatius stated explicitly a number of reasons for his call for unity under the bishop and for his rejection of the separate assemblies. The bishop is appointed by God; the bishop is a type of

God and has a representative function in the church; the bishop holds the chief position of authority in a structure that has a parallel on a more spiritual level.³ And other specific arguments could, no doubt, be identified. We need not gather all such arguments; the ones just mentioned are sufficient to indicate the basic thrust by which Ignatius hoped to convince the church that the only valid place for the believer in the church was under the authority of the bishop.

The logic is sound enough. If the position of the bishop is part of God's ordained order, whatever opposes the bishop is discredited. There is, however, reason to believe that this was not the real reason for Ignatius's taking the side of the bishops and censoring separatist tendencies.

The arguments used by Ignatius to convince Christians that they should be loyal to the bishop are not necessarily the factors that caused Ignatius himself to see that loyalty to the bishop was required for the health of the church. The following discussion depends on that distinction. That is not to say that those arguments put forward to unite the church under the bishop played no role in the shaping of Ignatius's view of the valid ecclesiastical structure and order. Those factors probably were important. But, at the time of the writing of the letters, such factors were not the ones compelling Ignatius to action. He opposed the schismatics not simply because he saw in the separatist tendencies an opposition to a validly ordained office, but because he found that the schismatics

held an inadequate view of the nature of Christ.⁴

That presents a more specific question. It is this. What particular factor prompted Ignatius to judge a docetic understanding of the nature of Christ to be inadequate? His own christology was not itself particularly thought out, and some scholars have even argued that his thought reflects the influence of gnosticism.⁵ But here too, as with the previous analysis of Ignatius's argument, we must distinguish those points Ignatius offered his readers to convince them that a docetic christology is inadequate from those points that led Ignatius himself to conclude such an understanding inadequate. That the docetic view is not the planting of the Father (ITral 11.1) or that it is a deadly poison mixed with honeyed wine (ITral 6.2) may well have been useful points to make in a polemic against the docetists that Ignatius expected would be read to the church, but these tell us nothing of the "real" reason that Ignatius himself came to reject a docetic christology. We must ask further questions. Why is it that a docetic interpretation is not the planting of the Father? What makes such a view poison? The answer seems to come from the less polemical (but more substantial) part of Ignatius's argument against the docetists.

Although a series of slanderous remarks are made by Ignatius, these generally are not helpful in determining the beliefs or practices of the schismatic community.⁶ But there are passages in which Ignatius was more specific (and less slanderous) in his report of the schismatics' position (ITral 9-11; ISmyr 1-7; IMag

11). In these passages, Ignatius reported errant views regarding the reality of the life, sufferings, death and resurrection of Christ "in the flesh." In light of the specific charges here against the schismatics, the repeated emphasis throughout the letters on the reality of these aspects of Jesus' life must be seen as key elements separating the thought of Ignatius from that of the schismatics.⁷

In two of the passages just mentioned, Ignatius not only identified what was defective about the beliefs of the docetists; he attempted, as well, to refute the beliefs, and he did so with arguments free from the kind of slander that seems to be reflected in some of his criticisms.⁸ The substance of his argument is revealing: he offered only two counter-points, and the one that would appear to be the most convincing was offered only once and is clearly of secondary significance in Ignatius's refutation of the docetic claims.

The first point: having charged that some say the passion was merely in semblance" (ISmyr 2.1), Ignatius stated:

...I know and believe that [Christ] was in the flesh even after the resurrection. And when he came to those with Peter he said to them:
"Take, handle me and see that I am not a phantom without a body."

Then Ignatius continued: "And after his resurrection, he ate and drank with them as a being of flesh" (ISmyr 3). The argument here involves neither slander nor name-calling: Ignatius simply appealed

directly to an element in the tradition to argue against a docetic viewpoint. So adequate is this point in an argument against a docetic christology, one would be tempted to say that it was tailor-made by Ignatius himself were it not for clear evidence of that point in the tradition at Ignatius's disposal.⁹

But, for some reason, Ignatius did not use the argument repeatedly. Whether, on some point, the argument was weak is difficult to say, but Ignatius's use of it (if only once) would seem to suggest that it carried some weight. There is, however, an argument Ignatius did use repeatedly. It is the sufferings and martyrdom of credible witnesses, and Ignatius made special appeal to his own position as martyr. In both passages in which Ignatius attempted a reasoned refutation of the docetic viewpoint, it is Ignatius's own life as a "true" disciple that was the crux of his attack. The prominent position of his sufferings and martyrdom in the only specific refutation of the docetic christology offers some insight into the significance of Ignatius's repeated references throughout his letters to his own sufferings and fast-approaching martyrdom as marks of true discipleship.¹⁰

In the passage considered above (in which the tradition is appealed to in order to demonstrate the reality of Christ's "flesh" after the resurrection), Ignatius claimed that because the disciples were convinced of this, they "despised even death" (ISmyr 3.2). Here Ignatius has not only attempted to prove that Jesus was in the flesh after the resurrection (for which the appeal to the tradition

should have been adequate), he proceeded to connect the reality of Jesus' flesh to the willingness of the disciples to die. The thrust of this statement is similar to Ignatius's appeal to his own sufferings and death (just four sentences later). He said:

For if it is merely in semblance that these things were done by our Lord I am also a prisoner in semblance. And why have I given myself up to death, to fire, to the sword, to wild beasts? Because near the sword is near to God; with the wild beasts is with God; in the name of Jesus Christ alone am I enduring all things that I might suffer with him. (ISmyr 4.2)

The same argument is used in the letter to the Trallians, in which Ignatius also spoke in some detail of the defects in the beliefs of the schismatics. After listing seven distinct aspects of the life of Jesus in which Jesus was truly "in flesh" (ITral 9), Ignatius continued:

But, if, as some affirm who are without God...his suffering was only in semblance... why am I a prisoner, and why do I even long to fight with the beasts? In that case, I am dying in vain. (ITral 10)

Before I attempt an explanation of Ignatius's argument that makes sense of the features identified above, I offer a summary of the most important points. First, in order to discredit the schismatics, Ignatius offered a variety of arguments to prove that the bishop's office is ordained by God. But his real reason for opposing the schismatics was not that they challenge the ordained order but that they hold an inadequate view of the reality of Jesus'

existence "in flesh." Second, Ignatius refuted this docetic christology with two arguments. One was the appeal to statements in the tradition that challenge the docetic interpretation: Christ appears to the disciples after the resurrection and offers convincing proof that he is still "in flesh." But this argument seems to be subordinated to another argument. Ignatius's primary argument against a docetic christology was that the sufferings and willing death of credible witnesses (he offers himself and the disciples as examples) cannot be explained unless the sufferings and death (or more generally, the whole life of Jesus) was truly "in flesh."

The prominence given in Ignatius's anti-docetic argument to the sufferings and death of credible witnesses marks this as a possible key to our understanding of what is at stake in the debate from the perspective of Ignatius. The repeated charge that the schismatics teach that the sufferings and death of Jesus were merely in semblance, side by side with the repeated claim of Ignatius that he suffers and embraces martyrdom because he wants to be a true disciple,¹¹ makes it difficult not to conclude that what Ignatius saw as the heart of the problem of the docetic christology was the practical impact it could have on the attitude of Christians regarding sufferings and martyrdom.

The docetic christology provided a foundation for a radically different option under the rubric of the Christian church. Under it, a person could escape persecution and martyrdom without, at the

same time, blatantly forsaking Christ. (If under the docetic interpretation that option was not offered to Christians, the entire argument of Ignatius becomes incomprehensible.) This would have been a powerfully attractive option under the Christian rubric. Not every Christian rushed gladly to martyrdom. Some not only wished to escape martyrdom but actually succeeded in doing so. One way was simply to cease being a Christian, and many may have done precisely that.¹²

But suppose that the sufferings of Christ were merely in semblance. Suppose that it was not "in flesh" that Christ appeared, and particularly, not in flesh that he suffered. Suppose that the life in the flesh was not the realm where spiritual battles were to be fought and won. Then the grounds for the Christian enduring suffering and death could possibly be completely removed. Such an option would have been attractive enough to compete seriously against the kind of Christianity argued for by Ignatius and those holding the office of bishop in western Asia Minor, the very men Ignatius was anxious to support against the docetic schismatics.

I propose the following reconstruction for the church in western Asia Minor at the time of Ignatius. My reconstruction is based on the observations made in this appendix and in other parts of this dissertation.¹³ First, the churches were, until a year or two prior to Ignatius's visit, united under the monarchical office. Second, the theological position represented by Ignatius (and by the bishops) had recently been challenged by a new and

radical interpretation (docetic) that allowed for escape from persecution and martyrdom. And third, the docetic interpretation proved so attractive that a strong emphasis on the validity of the older, non-docetic interpretation was required.

Elaine Pagels has demonstrated that a large section of the gnostic movement did reject martyrdom as a necessary and meaningful form of witness and that a docetic christology was frequently what provided the theological basis for that position.¹⁴ But Pagels has considered evidence from a later period than that of Ignatius. The question to be settled for this discussion is whether persecution is likely to have been a pressing issue at the time of Ignatius. If it can be demonstrated that it was, then my analysis of the conflict between Ignatius and the schismatics would give a coherent explanation for the various features and emphases of Ignatius's argument against the schismatics. In the following appendix, I argue that persecution was a matter of concern, and I take issue with various authors who recently have contended that the situation reflected in Antioch (known to us from the concerns voiced by Ignatius in his letters) is better explained by internal church conflict than by civil persecution.

APPENDIX 7

THE SITUATION IN ANTIOCH

I

The Problem

It had been commonly assumed that the problems faced by the church at Antioch at the time of Ignatius's martyrdom related primarily to external persecution by the Roman government. Then, about fifty years ago, P. N. Harrison argued that the problem related more specifically to an internal church conflict than to civil persecution: when Ignatius speaks of the "peace" restored to the church at Antioch, he means simply that the bitter internal conflict in the church has been resolved in his favour.¹

Harrison's argument developed a point made by B. H. Streeter a few years earlier.²

In more recent years, a number of scholars have given this reconstruction a prominent place in their discussion of the situation at Antioch.³ William R. Schoedel summarizes the main points that support Harrison's interpretation:

The frequent juxtaposition of these themes--Ignatius' desire to bring his martyrdom to a successful conclusion, his hope that the church in Antioch will be refreshed, and his feeling of unworthiness vis-a-vis the Antiochenes--strongly suggests that all these matters are closely (and curiously) intertwined. [4]

But the matter has yet to be resolved by a convincing explanation of all the elements of the situation in Antioch. For one thing, the discussion has not provided a convincing explanation for Ignatius's status as a Roman prisoner on his way to martyrdom in Rome, and it has often failed to recognize the evidence that several other Christians were facing the same fate (section II below). Second, the discussion has failed to explain the issue at the heart of the internal church dispute in Antioch that caused tension in the first place (section III below), and has failed to explain the various responses stemming from the restoration of peace in the church at Antioch (section IV below). Finally, it has not related the main concerns of Ignatius (desire for martyrdom; attack on the docetists; and the support of the bishops) to the situation in Antioch (section V below). After pointing out in more detail precisely what it is that needs to be resolved, I will offer an explanation that seems to achieve some success in bringing all the various elements into a satisfactory reconstruction of the situation in Antioch.

II

The Civil Persecution

When Lightfoot wrote his commentary, it was generally assumed that Ignatius was the victim of an organized civil persecution.⁵

But the evidence for the persecution of Christians in this period is

not without ambiguities. There is evidence that the Christian movement did not stand out as especially troublesome or noteworthy to the Roman government, and that, in the rare cases when the civil government did act against Christians, action was neither widespread nor long in duration.⁶ That evidence is countered by the concern about persecution reflected throughout the Christian documents of this period, and by a long list of church leaders who are known to have been persecuted or executed for their Christian confession.⁷

We gain greater clarity when we view the issue of persecution from the perspective of the Christians at the turn of the first century. It is almost without consequence that the later persecutions may have been a hundred times more severe than any that confronted the church at the time of Ignatius. The issue of persecution could have been the one shaping much of the theological thinking of Ignatius's day, even if persecution was, at that time, minimal by the standards of the bloody persecutions of the third century. How many Christians must be hauled off from the church to the Forum before believers feel the threat of persecution? The presence of an elder at the eucharist on one Sunday, his confinement in the city jail on the next, and his public execution a few weeks later as entertainment for the townsmen must have had an astounding impact within the Christian community, who knew that the society at large looked on them as objects of contempt⁸--a contempt that could be fanned into violent attacks.⁹

Harrison's reconstruction fails to provide a convincing explanation for Ignatius's status as condemned prisoner. Harrison did hint that Ignatius was probably falsely condemned by elements within the church,¹⁰ but he left unexplained why the civil government should have convicted Ignatius, or, having convicted Ignatius, why they should have sent him to Rome under heavy guard. Rome is too involved in the process for the matter to be adequately explained by reference solely to some internal conflict within the church of Antioch, as Harrison attempted to do.

C. P. Hammond Bammel thinks it might be possible to explain the problem in Antioch by a disputed election of Ignatius as bishop. Bammel speaks of Ignatius's "voluntary martyrdom" which was supposed to have healed the rift in the community.¹¹ But Bammel's reconstruction is no less flawed than was Harrison's, for it fails to account for the martyrdom of others at the same time,¹² and leaves unexplained in what way a "voluntary martyrdom" would have healed the rift.

There is another problem. If the situation in Antioch was primarily an internal church matter that became so disruptive that the civil authorities had to intervene (at which time Ignatius offered himself as a scapegoat so the remainder of the community would not suffer), how does one explain Ignatius's actions in western Asia Minor, in which he encourages the churches there to draw lines more sharply than they had previously, leading in all probability to the same kind of bitter conflict that turned the

civil authorities against the Christians in Antioch--the very situation Ignatius hoped to reverse by offering himself to the authorities for execution?

III

The Dispute About Ignatius's Position

Harrison and Bammel fail to give sufficient attention to what is at the heart of the internal church conflict. Harrison mentioned two possible causes for the conflict: (1) disagreement concerning docetic speculations, or (2) disagreement about the monarchical office. It seemed, however, not to matter to Harrison which of the two (if either) was the cause for the conflict.¹³ Similarly, Bammel mentions that it is possible the conflict in Antioch stems from Ignatius's appointment as bishop, but Bammel seems not to sense that the actual cause of the tension must hold a fundamental place in the analysis of the situation in Antioch, for she gives it only passing notice.¹⁴

Further, both Harrison and Bammel fail to note that even if the appointment of Ignatius as bishop was the reason for the immediate conflict, it cannot have been the fundamental reason.¹⁵ Ignatius's appointment as bishop would result in bitter conflict only if there was already some reason other than his appointment that caused Ignatius to be opposed. The question is not what caused Ignatius to be opposed as bishop but what caused Ignatius to be opposed at all.

IV

The Various Responses to the Restoration of Peace at Antioch

A. Ignatius

How does one explain Ignatius's continued desire for martyrdom if the restoration of internal harmony was achieved simply by Ignatius's offering himself to the civil authorities? Would he not have accomplished what he had hoped to do (according to Harrison), and would a willingness on his part to be delivered from the sentence of death have destroyed the newly achieved peace in Antioch if that peace has come about precisely because the church had been cut to the heart upon seeing Ignatius carried off as a prisoner? On Harrison's and Bammel's reconstructions, one would have expected Ignatius to take advantage of any possibility of release and to return in triumph to his church. He does not do that. In fact, he makes the greatest of efforts to prevent that,¹⁶ and that leaves too much unaccounted for by Harrison or Bammel.

Harrison's explanation of Ignatius's desire for martyrdom is particularly unconvincing. Harrison noted that Ignatius's continued desire for martyrdom after learning that the church at Antioch had obtained peace might be taken by some to indicate that Ignatius was not particularly sane--that he had lost a grip on reality. In his reply, Harrison basically admitted the validity of that assessment. He asked:

What of it?...It is not only the unhappy victim of some old complex, who is liable to be thrown (in a sense) off his balance by the tragic failures and maddenening ironies of life. [17]

Harrison's response here is only a less direct way of admitting that he can offer no explanation for Ignatius's continuing desire for martyrdom after the situation in Antioch has been stabilized.

B. The Schismatics

If, as Harrison claimed, Ignatius's condemnation itself brought about the resolution of the conflict in Antioch,¹⁸ why is there not similar impact on the schismatic tendencies in western Asia Minor? Harrison worked with the unknown situation of Antioch. When we test Harrison's conclusions on an area for which we have considerable information, Ignatius's approaching execution has no visible impact in restoring harmony to those churches in which separate assemblies have been formed.

V

Ignatius's Primary Concerns

A number of concerns are reflected in the Ignatian letters. There is the concern that "peace" be restored to the church at Antioch and that the other churches take some active interest in the situation there. What is at the heart of these concerns has been, as we have seen, a matter of considerable debate since Harrison's reconstruction of the situation in Antioch. But Harrison's

hypothesis is weakened by a failure to consider the other chief concerns of Ignatius in his final weeks. Ignatius wants (1) to discredit the docetic position; (2) to complete his discipleship by embracing martyrdom; and (3) to bring the church to unity behind the bishops. I have already shown that Harrison could not explain Ignatius's continued desire for martyrdom after having heard that the church at Antioch had gained its peace. Harrison did not address the other two points, but surely, as primary concerns on Ignatius's mind as he is led from Antioch to martyrdom, they play some role in providing insight into the problem in Antioch.

VI

A More Comprehensive Reconstruction

We have seen that Ignatius regards his own martyrdom in terms of an anti-docetic polemic,¹⁹ and we have noted that his final letters (written with the situation at Antioch always on his mind) were given to refuting and excluding the docetists. These observations make it appealing to try to understand the situation in Antioch in terms of a conflict with docetists. There is nothing particularly original about the reconstruction that I present. I offer it here simply by way of contrast to the reconstruction of Harrison to show that it provides a more comprehensive explanation of the various elements of the situation.

If the tensions in Antioch stem from a conflict between a docetic interpretation of Christology and an anti-doetic

interpretation to which Ignatius was committed, it would be easy to account for that tension if the docetic interpretation was gaining in appeal against the more traditional understanding, which had the support of the church leadership. The situation in which the docetic interpretation would be particularly appealing would be one of civil persecution of the Christians. A docetic interpretation, denying the real sufferings of Christ, could provide a theological justification for Christians who looked for some way to escape persecution without simply deserting the Christian faith.

Given these considerations, I would admit both persecution and internal church conflict in Antioch, but I would give a more prominent place to the civil persecution than it had been given in Harrison's reconstruction. It is persecution that makes a docetic interpretation of the Christian message attractive. Harrison reversed the order; it was an internal church conflict that drew the attention of the civil authorities. Harrison's reconstruction, as we have seen, pays almost no attention to the matter at issue in the internal church conflict. The reconstruction I offer can identify the matter in dispute (by appeal to the clear concerns Ignatius's expresses in his letters), and it can explain in what way this particular issue would be a matter of considerable concern (in a context of persecution, a new and attractive option is presented by which a Christian could remain a Christian without putting his life on the line). More important, on this reconstruction, we can account for Ignatius's continued desire to embrace martyrdom even

after learning that peace has been restored in Antioch, for if the substance of his opposition to the docetists was that Christians should not try to escape martyrdom, his own escape from martyrdom could seriously blunt his argument. This analysis fits well with the way Ignatius uses his own martyrdom as a polemic against the docetic position.²⁰

A reconstruction such as Harrison's leaves far too many questions unanswered when compared to the analysis of the situation that I offer here and in Appendix 6. Although there are a few questions that have been raised about the kind of reconstruction I offer, these are not particularly serious when compared to those confronting Harrison's reconstruction.²¹

NOTES

Notes to Chapter One THE QUESTION OF THEOLOGICAL DIVERSITY IN PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY

¹Brief reviews of the issues at stake are given in two major works on the subject: Walter Bauer, Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), xxi-xxv, and James D. G. Dunn, Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: An Inquiry into the Character of Earliest Christianity (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977), 1-7.

²See pages 8-11 below.

³The discoveries at Nag Hammadi reflect the frequent gnostic appeal to particular apostles; see the collection in The Nag Hammadi Library in English, trans. by members of the Coptic Library Project of the Institute for Antiquity and Christianity (New York: Harper & Row/Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1977).

⁴The text used in this thesis is that from the Loeb Classical Library. Vol. 1. ed. and trans. Kirsopp Lake; vol. 2. trans. J. E. L. Oulton from edition by H. J. Lawlor (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University/London: William Heinemann, 1930).

⁵Bauer's work, Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei in ältesten Christentum, Beiträge zur historischen Theologie, 10 (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1934), was reprinted in 1964 with minor additions and corrections, along with two supplementary essays by Georg Strecker. This revised edition was the basis of the English edition, Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity, trans. by a team from the Philadelphia Seminar on Christian Origins, eds. Robert A. Kraft and Gerhard Krodel (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971). References to Bauer's work are included in the text of this thesis rather than in the endnotes. All references are enclosed in brackets; the page number of the second German edition is given first, then, following the diagonal stroke and the abbreviation "ET:," the page number of the English edition. References to all other modern works are found in the endnotes.

⁶Quotations from Irenaeus are taken from The Ante-Nicene Fathers, eds. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, American edition rev. A. Cleveland Coxe (1885); reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), vol. 1: The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus.

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⁷On that point, Irenaeus's charge may carry some weight. The catholic community had, by this time, considerably more uniform beliefs than did the various gnostic groups, as Irenaeus delights in pointing out.

⁸IEph 2.2, 3.2, 4.1, 5.2, 6.1; IMag. 6, 7.1; ITral 2, 3.1, 7; IPhil 3.2, 4, 8.1; ISmyr 8, 9. References to Ignatius are, unless otherwise stated, from The Loeb Classical Library edition: Kirsopp Lake, ed., The Apostolic Fathers, vol. 1 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University/London: William Heinemann, 1925). Frequent reference is made, as well, to the edition of J. B. Lightfoot, ed. The Apostolic Fathers, part 2, vol 2, Ignatius and Polycarp (London: Macmillan, 1889-1890; reprint ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981).

⁹See pages 7-8 for further discussion of the Tübingen school.

¹⁰A brief review of the discussion is given in Stephen Neill, The Interpretation of the New Testament 1861-1961, The Firth Lectures 1962 (London: Oxford University, 1964), 21-27. Neill, 24, notes Baur's observation that the author of Acts makes Paul look as Petrine as possible, and Peter as Pauline as possible.

¹¹Paul can use such language as false brothers (Gal 2.4) for those who contradict his message, and he can call down curses and hurl insults not only on his Judaizing opponents but on straying angels as well (Gal 1.8-9; 2 Cor 11.13-15). John has some equally colourful language for his opponents: "anti-Christ" and "liar" among the more memorable (1 John 2.18, 22; 4.3).

¹²This was Bauer's claim (236-7/ET:234-5). See, too, Maurice Goguel, The Birth of Christianity, trans. H. C. Snape (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1953), 431.

¹³Leonhard Goppelt, "The Plurality of New Testament Theologies and the Unity of the Gospel as an Ecumenical Problem, in The Gospel and Unity, ed. Vilmos Vajta (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1971), 106-30, in which Goppelt heads one section of his article with the title "Paul's View of the Limits of Diversity in Terms of Heresy." Ernst Käsemann, "The Canon of the New Testament and the Unity of the Church," Essays on New Testament Themes, trans. W.J. Montague, "Studies in Biblical Theology," 41 (London: SCM, 1964), 100, says that only doctrinal differences can account for the conflict in Acts 6. C. F. D. Moule, The Birth of the New Testament, 3d. ed. Harper's New Testament Commentaries (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1982), 247, thinks that 1 and 2 John reflect a consciousness of orthodoxy. I. Howard Marshall, "Orthodoxy and heresy in earlier Christianity," Themelios 2 (1976):7 says: "Granted that there is

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diversity and development in the theologies expressed in the New Testament, the question is whether this is the same thing as saying that no distinction between orthodoxy and heresy was being made, or that this concept did not exist prior to the development of a vocabulary to describe it."

¹⁴Arnold Ehrhardt, "Christianity Before the Apostles' Creed," Harvard Theological Review 55 (1962):78.

¹⁵The McMaster Project in Judaism and Christianity was a research project of the Religious Studies Department of McMaster University. The project ran from 1976-81 and resulted in the publication of a number of books.

¹⁶George W. MacRae, "Why the Church Rejected Gnosticism," in Jewish and Christian Self-Definition, vol. 1. The Shaping of Christianity in the Second and Third Centuries, ed. E.P. Sanders (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 127.

¹⁷R.A. Markus, "The Problem of Self-Definition: From Sect to Church," in Jewish and Christian Self-Definition, vol. 1. The Shaping of Christianity in the Second and Third Centuries, ed. E.P. Sanders (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 7. Markus thinks that the church committed itself to the "canonicity of diversity" when it selected the canon it did. That may be. But it is only in recent years that this diversity is being widely recognized, as Markus notes (p. 4).

¹⁸For an overview, see Neill, The Interpretation of the New Testament, 21-27.

¹⁹See Wayne A. Meeks, The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul (New Haven/London: Yale University, 1983), 223, n. 41.

²⁰Markus, "The Problem of Self-Definition," 4.

²¹Daniel J. Harrington, "The Reception of Walter Bauer's Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity During the Last Decade," Harvard Theological Review 73 (1980): 297.

²²Patrick Henry, "Why Is Contemporary Scholarship So Enamored of Ancient Heretics?" Proceedings of the 8th International Conference on Patristic Studies, ed. E. A. Livingstone (Oxford: Pergamon Press, cited by Robert L. Wilken, "Diversity and Unity in Early Christianity," The Second Century 1 (1981):105.

²³Wilken, "Diversity and Unity," 105.

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²⁴Ibid., 101-2. The history of the publication of Bauer's work runs thus: first German edition (1934); second German edition with added appendices by Georg Strecker (1964); and the English translation of the second German edition (1971).

²⁵Ehrhardt, "Christianity Before the Apostles' Creed," 93.

²⁶Wilken, "Diversity and Unity," 101.

²⁷For a list of the eleven translators, see Bauer, xviii.

²⁸See n. 1 above.

²⁹Dunn's emphasis on the unity, as well as the diversity, of the New Testament documents sets Dunn apart from Bauer, but it could be argued that Dunn's minimal common core of the traditions (i.e. the confession that Jesus is Lord) does not provide a common confession much different from that provided by Bauer's thesis, taken at its most extreme.

³⁰Bauer, xxii. Some have wondered whether Bauer acted as an impartial judge of the heretics or as their vigorous advocate.

³¹Rudolf Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, trans. K. Grobel (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955), 2:137.

³²See Bauer's book, appendix 2, "The Reception of the Book" for a list of those who favour Bauer's approach. Also, see Hans Dieter Betz, "Orthodoxy and Heresy in Primitive Christianity: Some critical remarks on Georg Strecker's republication of Walter Bauer's Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum," Interpretation 19 (1965):299-311, and Daniel J. Harrington, "The Reception of Walter Bauer's Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity During the Last Decade," Harvard Theological Review 73 (1980):289-98.

³³See chapter four.

³⁴Raymond E. Brown, The Epistles of John, Anchor Bible 30 (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1982; London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1983), 55.

³⁵Betz, "Orthodoxy and Heresy," 311.

³⁶Georg Strecker, "On the Problem of Jewish Christianity," in Bauer, Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity, 242/ET:241.

³⁷Dunn, Unity and Diversity, 3.

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³⁸Ibid., 3-4.

³⁹Ibid., 5-6. Dunn says that the terms "beg too many questions, are too emotive, provide categories that are far too rigid..." Dunn chooses to use the terms "unity" and "diversity." These terms are somewhat attractive, but they do remove us somewhat from the language of the early church (which may not be bad) and, perhaps, from the concerns of the early church (which may not be good).

⁴⁰For a review of the attempt to define these terms more exactly, see Moule, The Birth of the New Testament, viii-ix. There Moule discusses the attempt at the conference on gnosticism at Messina in 1966 to work out an acceptable terminology, and notes the failure of the effort.

⁴¹The clearest examples of docetism are found in 1 John and the letters of Ignatius. There, it is the reality of the physical nature of Jesus that is denied. The grand mythology of the later gnostics may not have been part of the docetic view. It is difficult to determine whether docetism developed into full-blown gnosticism (see ch. 4, pp. 137-41).

⁴²See R. M. Grant, Gnosticism and Early Christianity, 2d. ed. (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1966), and G. Quispel, "Gnosticism and the New Testament," Vigiliae Christianae 19 (1965):65-85.

⁴³Greek cities had been established throughout the eastern Mediterranean area, and the Romans, after the defeat of the Greek kingdoms, established their own colonies in the east too. The countryside may not have been significantly influenced by the Greek and Roman element. See Chester G. Starr, The Roman Empire: 27 B.C. - A.D. 476 (New York/Oxford: Oxford University, 1982), 91-108. Related particularly to the expansion of the church, see Wayne A. Meeks, The First Urban Christians, 14-6. From the information we have of the early period, no other cities play the role that Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus and Rome did. Of course, Alexandria and Carthage make their own significant contributions to Christianity, but not in the primitive period.

⁴⁴Even Roman Christianity is not Latin Christianity until late. Tertullian is the first Latin writer of note, and Carthage, perhaps, is the real centre of Latin Christianity, as is argued by Helmut Koester, "The Intention and Scope of Trajectories," in Robinson and Koester, Trajectories through Early Christianity (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 275-6.

⁴⁵In particular, Raymond E. Brown and John P. Meier,

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Antioch and Rome: New Testament Cradles of Catholic Christianity
(New York/Ramsey: Paulist, 1983).

⁴⁶See especially chapters 5 and 6 of Bauer's work.

⁴⁷Paul's letter to the Romans tells us much about Paul; little about the church at Rome. The letter from the Roman church to Corinth (1 Clement) tells us much about Corinth; little about Rome. 1 Peter is not of considerable help either, and Ignatius's letter to Rome is not without its puzzles. Brown, Antioch and Rome, ix, recognizes the limitations of the materials for both Rome and Antioch.

⁴⁸Bauer began his discussion of Rome by examining the letter known as 1 Clement, written from Rome around the mid 90s (99/ET:95).

⁴⁹For the most recent attempt, see part II of Brown and Meier, Antioch and Rome.

⁵⁰Rome is not without later problems with heresy. See Ehrhardt, "Christianity Before the Apostles' Creed," 108-19, and H. E. W. Turner, The Pattern of Christian Truth: A Study in the Relations between Orthodoxy and Heresy in the Early Church, Bampton Lectures 1954 (London: A.R. Mowbray, 1954), 72-4.

⁵¹Turner, The Pattern of Christian Truth, 72, quoted G.L. Prestige, Fathers and Heretics, 55, who noted that in the second century, "all roads led to Rome." See, too, the comments by Ehrhardt, 108-19, and Turner, 72-4.

⁵²See n. 53 above, and Frederick W. Norris, "Ignatius, Polycarp, and I Clement: Walter Bauer Reconsidered," Vigiliae Christianae 30 (1976):36-41.

⁵³Acts 6.1-6. See Helmut Koester, Introduction to the New Testament (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), 2:89-90.

⁵⁴The account in Acts emphasizes the practical side of the issue (the widows of the Hellenists were not receiving proper provision in the daily distribution of food) and excludes the theological side. We have indication that there was a theological side, for in a conflict with the Jewish authorities, it appears that only the hellenists were forced to flee Jerusalem: see F.F. Bruce, New Testament History, Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1971), 226. Dunn, Unity and Diversity, 268, calls this "The First Confessional Schism in Church History."

⁵⁵Acts 8.1-3. According to the author of Acts, the

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internal church tensions were resolved (6.5).

⁵⁶See discussion in Leonhard Goppelt, Apostolic and Post-Apostolic Times, trans. Robert A. Guelich (London: A. and C. Black, 1970), 61-8.

⁵⁷Other than for Paul's letters, most scholars believe that the documents in the New Testament were written after the destruction of Jerusalem. Those who argue for the apostolic authorship of the letters of James and Jude might find Jerusalem a plausible place of composition.

⁵⁸The status of the gentile converts was the theological issue; the break in table fellowship between Jewish and gentile converts was the practical issue.

⁵⁹Peter and Barnabas withdrew themselves from table fellowship with the gentile believers (Gal 2.12-3). The author of Acts records a break of Paul from Barnabas, but explains it as a personality clash between Paul and the young nephew of Barnabas, John Mark (Acts 15.36-40). The theory that there was a harsh break between Paul and the church at Antioch has been vigorously debated (see ch. 2, p. 35).

⁶⁰Meier, in Brown and Meier, Antioch and Rome, 39-40.

⁶¹According to Acts, Paul returned to Antioch only one other time (Acts 18.22-3). On the other hand, the "Jerusalem collection" (organized by Paul for the poor in Jerusalem) seems to serve as evidence that Paul had, or wanted to establish, good relations with Jerusalem. But these two points cannot be forced together in any coherent framework of separation and realignment, for according to the account in Galatians, Paul's anger with Peter and others stems from their bowing to pressures from the more conservative in Jerusalem (Gal 2.12). The more coherent reconstruction is one that, in light of the collection, qualifies the seriousness (or the permanence) of the break with Antioch. Paul's reconciliation with Jerusalem would seem to require a reconciliation with Antioch as well, since the situation in Jerusalem reflects the sharper differences.

⁶²Gal 1.6-9; 2 Cor 11.13-15. I do not mean to say that Paul was inflexible. He reflects an attitude of openness and accommodation to a variety of theological positions: (as Ben F. Meyer argues in a forthcoming work), but Paul seems to be able to do that only because he is convinced that he knows what the fundamental issues are, and at those points, quite without hesitation, he is prepared to draw lines.

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⁶³See Goppelt, "The Plurality of New Testament Theologies," 113-7.

⁶⁴For a recent attempt to draw together the evidence for the Christianity in Antioch, see Meier's part I of Brown and Meier, Antioch and Rome.

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EPHESUS AND WESTERN ASIA MINOR:
THE KEY CHRISTIAN CENTRE
70-100 C.E.

¹Bauer, himself, found almost no material from Edessa, and he began his chapter on the church in Egypt with a quote from Harnack, in which Harnack called attention to the "most serious gap in our knowledge of primitive church history," which was "our almost total ignorance of the history of Christianity in Alexandria and Egypt...until about the year 180..." (49/ET:44).

²For a full discussion of the problem, see Appendix 5 and Appendix 6.

³According to PolPhil 13.2, Polycarp has not yet learned what had happened to Ignatius, and it seems that Polycarp is not even sure that Ignatius would have been executed by this time. Note also the matters of concern to Polycarp (PolPhil 13). These matters are most reasonably related to a time not long after Ignatius had passed through. Note, though, P. N. Harrison's theory: Polycarp's Two Epistles to the Philippians, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1936).

⁴It is difficult to determine the precise nature of the heresy or heresies, but some group known as the Nicolaitans is definitely a problem (Rev 2.6; 15 and possibly 20).

⁵The Pastoral letters must be dated earlier than the Ignatian material, because the Pastoral letters, written to the same general area of the Ignatian letters, do not reflect a church structure as developed as that in Ignatius, where a bishop is clearly set off from a subordinate presbytery. Some have, admittedly, argued that a monarchical-like office does exist in the Pastorals. For a review of this issue, see A.T. Hanson, The Pastoral Epistles, The New Century Bible Commentary (London:

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Marshall, Morgan & Scott/Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 32-34. In this context, the cautions of Norbert Brox should be considered: Brox, Die Pastoralbriefe, Regensburger Neues Testament 7.2 (Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 1969), 148-9.

⁶ Again, as with inadequate beliefs attacked in other documents, it is difficult to determine the precise nature of the belief attacked by the author of the Pastorals. Most believe that there is only one heretical element: see Martinus C. de Boer, "Images of Paul in the Post-Apostolic Period," Catholic Biblical Quarterly 42 (1980):371.

⁷ "Anti-Christ" (1 John 2.18-9) and "liars" (1 John 2.4, 22) are two of the terms the author uses to describe those who have broken with his community.

⁸ Raymond Brown and J. A. T. Robinson, both of whom have made recent significant contributions to Johannine studies, place the Johannine community in western Asia Minor: Brown, The Gospel according to John, Anchor Bible 29 (Garden City, N.J.: Doubleday, 1966/London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1971), ciii-civ; Robinson, Redating the New Testament (London, SCM, 1976) 307. Brown comments briefly on Alexandria and Antioch (or, more generally, Syria) as possible places for the composition of the Fourth Gospel.

⁹ The account in Acts begins at 18.18. This account contains a mixed bag of incidents (the disciples of John, the inadequately taught Apollos, the healings and exorcisms, the book burning and the riot). The author believes Ephesus to have been the centre from which all Asia heard the gospel (19.10), and it is to the Ephesian elders that Paul addresses his great speech against heresy (20.28-31). As for the conflict that caused Paul to be arrested, the author of Acts attributes it to a riot stirred up by some Jews from Asia (21.27), and in all probability the author has Ephesian Jews in mind, for the Jews who start the riot knew one of Paul's companions, Trophimus, who was a resident of Ephesus (21.29). Given the theological significance of the author's mention of Jerusalem and Rome, his frequent mention of Ephesus at key points is, perhaps, all the more striking.

¹⁰ Colossians, as a whole, seems to be directed against a particular false teaching (see standard commentaries). The letter to the Ephesians is not so clearly directed against a particular false teaching, though it is clear that false teaching is something of a problem (Eph 4.14). Concerning the question of the destination of the letter to the Ephesians, I contend that, if not originally addressed exclusively to the church at Ephesus, Ephesus would have at least been included in any wider address.

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¹¹Helmut Koester, Introduction to the New Testament, 2 vol. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), argues that Philipians, Philemon and 2 Cor 10-13 were written during an imprisonment in Ephesus (2:104), and allows that most of Paul's letters may have been written from Ephesus (2:116).

¹²Werner Georg Kümmel, Introduction to the New Testament, trans. Howard Clark Kee (Nashville/New York: Abingdon, 1975), 314-20. Koester, Introduction, 2:139, thinks it is possible that Romans 16 was originally addressed to the church at Ephesus. See Harry A. Gamble, Jr., The Textual History of the Letter to the Romans: A Study in Textual and Literary Criticism (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), for a challenge to that theory.

¹³The author writes his letter to Christians in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia (1 Peter 1:1). This basically includes all of Asia Minor. Note that the Roman province of Asia was only one of several provinces comprising what we call Asia Minor. When reference is made to western Asia Minor, the area intended is usually the Roman province of Asia only. Bauer (85-6/ET:81-2) attempted to make a case for heretical majorities in the Asia Minor provinces of Lycia, Pamphylia and Cilicia, on the grounds that the author of 1 Peter omits these provinces but includes most of Asia Minor. It is doubtful, however, that whole areas went so completely into heresy. The three provinces omitted are all crowded together along the south coast of Asia Minor, and even if omitted intentionally because of the presence of some strong heretical element there, these three provinces would represent only a small part of Asia Minor. Although we do not know why the provinces were not addressed, it is possible that they were assumed to be included in the address. We do know that at the time of Ignatius, the area was not closed to orthodoxy. Philo, a deacon, is from Cilicia (I Phil 11.1), and neighbouring churches sent representatives to Antioch after the problem there had been settled (I Phil 10.2). The closest places would have almost certainly included the two most easterly of the provinces omitted in the address of 1 Peter. Bo Reicke, The Epistles of James, Peter and Jude, Anchor Bible 37 (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1964), 72, thinks that the provinces addressed by the author of 1 Peter were under the sphere of Rome; the provinces omitted, under the sphere of Antioch. As for 2 Peter, although it has no specific address, the note in 3.1 suggests that the letter was intended for the same general area as was 1 Peter.

¹⁴1 Cor 16.8. It is clear that Paul considers his ministry at Ephesus to be particularly successful. The Marcionite prologue of Colossians suggests that Paul wrote not only 1 Corinthians from Ephesus, but 2 Corinthians as well.

¹⁵John J. Gunther, St. Paul's Opponents and Their

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Background: A Study of Apocalyptic and Jewish Sectarian Teachings (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 77; Robert Jewett, Paul, Messenger and Exile. A Study in the Chronology of His Life and Letters (Valley Forge, Pa.: Judson, 1972), 151-60.

¹⁶Koester, Introduction, 2:7.

¹⁷Koester, "Gnomai Diaphoroi: The Origin and Nature of Diversification in the History of Early Christianity," Harvard Theological Review 58 (1965):306, recognizes both the quality and quantity of the literature associated with western Asia Minor. But others show more reservation. As for Paul's letters, F.F. Bruce points out that only 1 Corinthians is, without question, written from Ephesus: New Testament History (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1972), 330.

Only two documents of the New Testament lack any connection to western Asia Minor. They are Matthew and James (and, if 2 Thessalonians is pseudonymous, that, as well). All of the others have some connection, though for some that connection is slight or uncertain. Even those authentic Paulines which were written neither from nor to western Asia Minor, at least, have the prime mover of the church in western Asia Minor as their author. That observation is significant when it is noted that other areas do not have even this tenuous connection to the literature of the New Testament. The letter of Jude has no specific address and no indication of the place of composition. But it appears to have been used by the author of 2 Peter, and that author has links to western Asia Minor (see n. 13 above). Tenuous connection? Admittedly, but considerably better than many areas can claim.

¹⁸Ephesus, Smyrna, Sardis, Pergamum, Thyatira, Philadelphia, Magnesia, Tralles, Laodicea, Colossae, and we have explicit reference to others; Hierapolis and Troas, in particular.

¹⁹Smyrna is addressed by the Apocalypticist and by Ignatius, as is Philadelphia. Laodicea is addressed by the Apocalypticist and, possibly, by the author of Colossians (Col 4.16), though that letter is now lost. And, of course, Ephesus is addressed by a number of early churchmen (see n. 20 below).

²⁰The church at Ephesus is addressed by the Paulinist who wrote the Pastorals (1 Tim 1.3), and the author of the letter to the Ephesians (unless this was a form letter, and even then, Ephesus must have been addressed by it); by the Apocalypticist; by Ignatius; perhaps by the author of Hebrews (see n. 15 above); and perhaps even by the author of Acts (see n. 9 above). And the Johannine material may have been addressed to Ephesus (see a discussion of the Johannine community in the next chapter).

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²¹The Apocalyptist addresses seven churches; Ignatius addresses five.

²²Consider the recent work by Raymond E. Brown and John P. Meier, Antioch and Rome: New Testament Cradles of Catholic Christianity (New York/Ramsey: Paulist, 1983). For Antioch, Meier uses Matthew, the Didache, Ignatius, some of Acts and Galatians 2. Most of this material is of little service in the discussion of orthodoxy and heresy. Brown finds slightly more material for Rome (Paul's letter to the Romans, 1 and 2 Peter, Hebrews, 1 Clement, Paul to the Philippians, to the Ephesians, the Gospel of Mark, Ignatius to the Romans, The Shepherd of Hermas, and the Legends of Peter and Simon Magus at Rome. The list is long, but were we to eliminate from it the late, the irrelevant, and the strained connections to Rome, it could hope for no credible comparison to the material firmly associated with western Asia Minor--material that takes the question of heresy seriously.

²³Adolf Harnack, The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries, trans. James Moffatt, with intro. by Jaroslav Pelikan (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1962), 76.

²⁴Burnett Hillman Streeter, The Primitive Church, (London: Macmillan, 1929), 258.

²⁵G.S. Duncan, St. Paul's Ephesian Ministry (London: 1929).

²⁶E.J. Goodspeed, The Meaning of Ephesians (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1933), and Goodspeed, An Introduction to the New Testament (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1937), 211-18.

²⁷Goodspeed, Introduction, 217-8.

²⁸F. F. Bruce, New Testament History, Anchor Books, (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1971), 303.

²⁹James Moffatt, The Expository Times 45 (1933/4):475.

³⁰Koester, Introduction, 2:251.

³¹J. G. Davies, The Early Christian Church (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1965), 86.

³²Jean Daniélou, The Christian Centuries (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1964), Vol. 1 The First Six Hundred Years, trans. Vincent Cronin, 40, speaks of Asia Minor as the centre where Christianity "shows the most extraordinary vitality..."

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³³Raymond E. Brown, The Community of the Beloved Disciple (New York: Paulist, 1979), 98.

³⁴W. H. C. Frend, The Rise of Christianity (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 38.

³⁵Ibid., 127.

³⁶Koester, "Gnomai Diaphoroi," 286, says that Paul not only lost at Antioch, but charges that Paul was wrong, as well, though Koester admits continued Pauline influence in Antioch. See, too, John P. Meier, in Brown and Meier, Antioch and Rome: New Testament Cradles of Catholic Christianity, 39. The thrust of Brown and Meier's work is to show that it was not the Pauline stream that became dominant in Christianity, but the Petrine stream. As Brown says (vii-viii): "...it is often assumed that in the areas of NT Mediterranean Christianity which really came to matter in subsequent western church history (Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy) Paul's thought "won out....[We] are convinced...it was not the Pauline view about the Law and Judaism that prevailed but a moderate view that could be associated with Peter--even though ultimately some of the Pauline strains were domesticated and incorporated into that Petrine strain....We are convinced that the somewhat-right-of-Paul strains of Christianity that emerged at Antioch and Rome in association with Peter were a key factor in the emerging church catholic." But not every scholar thinks Paul lost at Antioch. See B. Holmberg, Paul and Power (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 34, n. 117.

³⁷So Brown and Meier turn to Rome and Antioch as the "cradles of catholic Christianity." See n. 36 above.

³⁸See n. 36 above.

³⁹For a good review, see Martinus C. de Boer, "Images of Paul in the Post-Apostolic Period," Catholic Biblical Quarterly 42 (1980):359-80. Also, C.K. Barrett, "Pauline Controversies in the Post-Pauline Period," New Testament Studies 20 (1974):229-245.

⁴⁰See n. 36 above. Note, too, Bauer's repeated charge that, even in Ephesus, the memory of Paul is quickly lost (87-91/ET:83-7).

⁴¹As is illustrated by Brown and Meier's recent work (see n. 36 above).

⁴²Kirsopp Lake, Landmarks, 102.

⁴³Jarsolav Pelikan, "The Two Sees of Peter: Reflections on

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the Pace of Normative Self-Definition East and West," in Jewish and Christian Self-Definition, Vol 1., The Shaping of Christianity in the Second and Third Centuries, ed. E.P. Sanders (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 59.

⁴⁴For the most recent theory, see Farmer, "The Collection of Paul's Letters," in William R. Farmer and Denis M. Farkasfalvy, The Formation of the New Testament Canon (New York/Ramsey/Toronto: Paulist, 1983), 77-81.

⁴⁵See general discussion in Farmer and Farkasfalvy. That Marcion was active, for a time, in western Asia Minor might be reflected in the tradition concerning the confrontation between Marcion and Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna.

⁴⁶We cannot be sure whether a large number of immigrants came to western Asia Minor. We know the names of only the more prominent (see p. 37-8), but that list surely does not count the full number who would have moved from Palestine around the time of the destructive war of Vespasian and Titus. Bauer (89-90/ET:85-6) has a brief discussion. He rejects the theories of Holl and Schwartz, who see a more organized immigration into the west Asia Minor area.

⁴⁷E.H. 3.31.2; 3,39.5-9; 5.24.2. The tradition of Mary's residence in Ephesus is later and would seem to reflect nothing more than the passion tradition in which Jesus assigns to "the beloved disciple" the responsibility for his mother (John 19.26-7).

⁴⁸Papias is cited in Eusebius, E.H. 3.39.4.

⁴⁹As possibly the area of Paul's most successful mission, Ephesus might well have come under the leadership of Timothy after the death of Paul. Unfortunately, we have no reliable historical data for Timothy's activities after Paul's death, though the memory of Timothy is not lost. In the late first century, Timothy figures prominently in Acts and in the post-Pauline material (1 and 2 Tim, Colossians, if pseudonymous, and 2 Thess). Timothy's connection to Ephesus seems to be reflected in the Acts material. There, Timothy is associated with Paul during the Macedonian, Corinthian, Ephesian circuit (Acts 16-20). This complements the frequent mention of Timothy in the authentic Pauline letters written from Ephesus (Romans, 1 and 2 Cor, Philippians). According to these letters, Timothy is either with Paul or in his service. And if Hebrews was written to Ephesus (see n. 15 above), Timothy's association with Ephesus is further strengthened. Timothy is expected, according to the author of Hebrews, to visit there after his release from prison (Heb 13.23).

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⁵⁰Reflected in 1 and 2 Peter (see n. 13 above), and mentioned in Eusebius, E.H. 3.1, but Eusebius was clearly dependent on the epistle of 1 Peter for his information.

⁵¹Mentioned by Papias; cited in Eusebius, E.H. 3.39.4.

⁵²There is a possible confusion here of Philip the evangelist and Philip the Apostle (E.H. 3.39.4-9). See Hugh Jackson Lawlor and John Ernest Leonard Oulton, Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea: the Ecclesiastical History and the Martyrs of Palestine, (1928), 2:114-5; reprint. London: S.P.C.K., 1954.

⁵³Eusebius, E.H. 3.31.2; 5.24.2.

⁵⁴E.H. 5.24.8. Polycrates listed twelve non-apostolic witnesses and said that, were he to list them all, they would number to the "many multitudes."

⁵⁵Cited in Bauer, 169/ET:166.

⁵⁶See pp. 33-5.

⁵⁷See Appendix 3.

⁵⁸Richard Duncan-Jones, The Economy of the Roman Empire: Quantitative Studies (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1974), 261, thought that there were about 180,000 people in Ephesus (though possibly that figure does not include the slaves: p. 273). David Magie, Roman Rule in Asia Minor to the End of the Third century After Christ (Princeton: Princeton University, 1950), 146, thought the population was about 200,000. Nigel Sitwell, The Roman Roads of Europe (New York: St. Martin's, 1981), 192, estimated the population at 250,000. These figures are possibly more realistic than those of a half million or so, offered by Xavier Léon-Dufour, "Ephesus," in Dictionary of the New Testament, trans. Terrence Prendergast (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980), 178. Duncan-Jones argued cautiously, recognizing that half of the population of the area would have been rural, and should be considered residents of the near-by cities only in the broad sense (p. 260). The countryside was generally considered to be under the control of the near-by city, where many of the land-owners would have lived.

⁵⁹Several cities seem to have been almost as large as Ephesus. Magie, 146, stated that Smyrna and Pergamum were about the same size as Ephesus. They may well have been, for it seems that they competed vigorously with Ephesus for the title of "First of

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Asia"; see W. M. Ramsay, The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1904), 175. And other cities may have been of considerable size too; see n. 61 below.

⁶⁰Alexandria, the capital of the Ptolemaic empire; Antioch, the capital of the Seleucid.

⁶¹I have mentioned Smyrna and Pergamum. The cities of Cyzicus, Halicarnassus, Rhodes and Miletus were also huge cities (Sitwell, 192).

⁶²Ibid., 192.

⁶³Ibid., 192-3.

⁶⁴Leonhard Goppelt, Apostolic and Post-Apostolic Times, trans. Robert A. Guelich (London: A. and C. Black, 1970), 91; Sitwell, 193; M. Stern, "The Jewish Diaspora," in The Jewish People in the First Century, vol. 1, eds. S. Safrai and M. Stern (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1974), 144, 152; and Bo Reicke, "The Inauguration of Catholic Martyrdom according to St. John the Divine," Augustinianum 20 (1980):181. Leon-Dufour, Dictionary, in the article on Ephesus, called Ephesus the capital of Asia Minor, but qualified that statement by adding that Pergamum was capital as well (p. 178).

⁶⁵H.T.F. Duckworth, "The Roman Provincial System," in The Beginnings of Christianity, eds. F.J. Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake (London: Macmillan, 1920), 1:201, stated that Pergamum was the capital; this position of Pergamum is recognized by G.B. Caird, A Commentary on the Revelation of St. John the Divine, Harper's New Testament Commentaries (New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, 1966), 29, 37; by J. Massyngberde Ford, Revelation, Anchor Bible 38 (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1975), 388; and by F. F. Bruce, Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 288. See, also, n. 66 below.

⁶⁶A good discussion of the position of Ephesus and Pergamum is part of a soon to be published work by Colin Hemer on the Seven Churches of Asia.

⁶⁷Caird, 29.

⁶⁸J. Massyngberde Ford, Revelation, 388.

⁶⁹Leon-Dufour, 39.

⁷⁰See n. 66 above.

⁷¹See Duckworth, "The Roman Provincial System," 1:201-17.

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⁷²Tacitus, Annals IV.53-6. Eleven cities are said to have competed for the right to build the first temple in Asia Minor.

⁷³Duckworth, 205; J. B. Lightfoot, The Apostolic Fathers, II.1:467-8. But Ford, Revelation, 399, thought that Pergamun held that position. Bo Reicke, The New Testament Era: The World of the Bible from 500 B.C. to A.D. 100, trans. David E. Green (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968), 231, pointed out that the right to build a temple to Roma and to Augustus was granted to Pergamum under Augustus, to Smyrna under Tiberius, and to Ephesus under Claudius.

⁷⁴Sitwell, 185-6.

⁷⁵Eduard Lohse, The New Testament Environment, trans. John E. Steely (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976), 147; Raymond E. Brown, in Brown and Meier, Antioch and Rome: New Testament Cradles of Catholic Christianity (New York/Ramsey: Paulist, 1983), 1.

⁷⁶See E. Mary Smallwood, The Jews Under Roman Rule: From Pompey to Diocletian, Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1976), 121, and Victor Tcherikover, Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews, trans. S. Applebaum (New York: Atheneum, 1970), 287-8.

⁷⁷Jean Juster, Les Juifs dans l'empire romain: Leur Condition juridique, économique, et sociale, 2 vols. (Paris: Guethner, 1914), 1:188-90.

⁷⁸Meeks, The First Urban Christians, 34, five to six million in diaspora; Leon-Dufour, 36, seven to eight million in Roman empire; F. J. Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake, "The Dispersion," The Beginnings of Christianity, eds. Foakes Jackson and Lake (London: Macmillan, 1920), 1:159; Smallwood, 374.

⁷⁹Cited in Tcherikover, 292.

⁸⁰Tcherikover, 292.

⁸¹Lohse, The New Testament Environment, 122.

⁸²Adolf Harnack, The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries, trans. James Moffatt, with introduction by Jaroslav Pelikan (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1962), 8-9.

⁸³Leon-Dufour, 46; Lohse, 122.

⁸⁴Lohse, 36, eight to ten percent; Reicke, The New

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Testament Environment, 284, six to nine percent.

⁸⁵A useful collection is Menahem Stern, Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Science and Humanities, 1974); vol. 1, From Herodotus to Plutarch.

⁸⁶Tcherikover, 294.

⁸⁷If one half or more of the general population was rural (Duncan-Jones, 260), and if Jews were mainly urban, the Jews would be proportionally greater in the cities. And considering that particular cities would have been more attractive than others, the Jews could have easily made up fifteen percent of the population of some cities.

⁸⁸Tcherikover, 289.

⁸⁹Smallwood, 127, n. 24.

⁹⁰Meeks, The First Urban Christians, 34.

⁹¹Duncan-Jones, 260.

⁹²The Jews settled in large numbers in the Greek cities of Alexandria and Antioch. The Greek cities in western Asia Minor were not much farther from Palestine. For a summary of the evidence for Jews in Asia, see M. Stern, "The Jewish Diaspora," 143-7.

⁹³Cicero, Pro. Flaccus 66-9.

⁹⁴Cited in Ford, Revelation, 420.

⁹⁵Meeks, The First Urban Christians, 206, n. 151, estimated that there were about 50,000 adult Jewish males in Asia Minor at the time of Flaccus. Meeks calculates that from figures presented in Smallwood, 126. But A. J. Marshall, "Flaccus and the Jews of Asia," Phoenix 29 (1975):146-7, cautioned against the use of these figures for calculating the Jewish population. The population could have been considerably greater if the amount seized by Flaccus represented only what was collected in four cities rather than the entire province; the population could have been considerably smaller if the amount seized represented the temple tax for the entire province with the additional donations of gold for the temple.

⁹⁶Tcherikover, 293.

⁹⁷If each of the 50,000 males had three children, the total Jewish population would have been about one quarter of a million. But that figure must be lowered to account for the overlap

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in family units: the parents of a young family units are the children of some older family unit.

⁹⁸There seems to have been an immigration by some Palestinian Christians to western Asia Minor by the turn of the first century (see n. 46 above). And Josephus, Antiquities XIV.223-64, writing about the same time, calls attention to a series of Roman decrees protecting the rights of the Jews. Many cities of western Asia Minor have been addressed by specific decrees, and Ephesus figures prominently.

⁹⁹Duckworth, "The Roman Provincial System," 1:186, thought Jews had citizenship rights in most cities. This view is no longer widely held; see Tcherikover, 309-32.

¹⁰⁰A. H. M. Jones, The Cities of the Eastern Roman Empire (Oxford: Oxford University, 1937), 60-95.

¹⁰¹See chapter 2, "The Law of Status," in J. A. Crook, Law and Life of Rome, 90 B.C.-A.D. 212 (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University, 1967), 36-67. Citizenship in the polis was a Greek idea, not a Roman one (p. 37).

¹⁰²This is illustrated by the intense effort made by the citizens of various Greek cities to restrict the rights of Jews. See Tcherikover, 309-32, for full discussion.

¹⁰³S. Applebaum, "The Social and Economic Status of the Jews in the Diaspora," in The Jewish People in the First Century. 2 vols. eds. S. Safrai et al, Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum 1 (Assen/Amsterdam: Van Gorcum, 1976), 2:701-27. Meeks, The First Urban Christians, 44-5.

¹⁰⁴Cf. Sherman E. Johnson, "Christianity in Sardis," in Early Christian Origins: Studies in honor of Harold R. Willoughby, edited by Allen Wikgen (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1961), 81-90.

¹⁰⁵M. Stern, "The Jewish Diaspora," in The Jewish People in the First Century, vol. 1, edited by Samuel Safrai and Menahem Stern, Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum 1 (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974), 152.

¹⁰⁶Alf Thomas Kraabel, "Judaism in Western Asia Minor under the Roman Empire, with a Preliminary Study of the Jewish Community at Sardis, Lydia" (Th.D. diss., Harvard University, 1968), and "Paganism and Judaism: The Sardis Evidence," in Paganisme, Judaisme, Christianisme: Influences et affrontements dans le monde antique, eds. A. Benoit et al (Paris: Boccard, 1978), 13-33.

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¹⁰⁷Frend, The Early Church, 46, 48, said that the main problem facing the church in the sixty years after the fall of Jerusalem was its relationship to Judaism, a point true for Asia Minor too. See, too, Martinus C. de Boer, "Images of Paul in the Post-Apostolic Period," Catholic Biblical Quarterly 42 (1980):377, n. 65.

¹⁰⁸See Jacob Jervell, "The Mighty Minority," Studia Theologica 34 (1980):13-38.

¹⁰⁹Robert L Wilken, "The Christians as the Romans (and Greeks) Saw Them," in Jewish and Christian Self-Definition, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 123, said that the church was involved in dialogue with Judaism until the fifth century. William G. Braude, "The Church Fathers and the Synagogue," Judaism 9 (1960):113, called attention to the problems faced by Jerome and Chrysostom. Some Christians seem to have regarded the synagogue as more holy than the church, and Jewish birth could be an asset for selection to high office in the church.

¹¹⁰In particular, the groups in Magnesia and Philadelphia opposed by Ignatius (see appendix 7). The Pastoral epistles (Titus 1:10-15) may face a similar problem, and the author of the Revelation condemns something that he calls "the Synagogue of Satan" (Rev 2.9; 3.9).

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BAUER'S RECONSTRUCTION

¹Walter Bauer, Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity, eds. Robert A. Kraft and Gerhard Krodel. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971). In this work, Bauer concerned himself with those interpretations of the Christian message that were excluded from the developing orthodoxy. His work does not deal with the entire spectrum of diversity within early Christianity, for the diversity that is incorporated into the catholic movement becomes, in Bauer's work, merely part of a monolithic orthodoxy. Bauer's work, then, is not so much a reconstruction of earliest Christianity as it is a reconstruction of a particular aspect of earliest Christianity--the heretical or the non-catholic aspect. Some of Bauer's followers have focused on the diversity within the catholic movement. I consider that issue in chapter four.

²Forty-three pages (or forty percent) of the total pages

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given to a discussion of specific centres are devoted to Edessa; sixteen pages (or fifteen percent) to Egypt.

³Bauer himself admitted that perhaps Christianity did not exist in Egypt in the early 70s (90/ET:86). The beginning of Christianity in Edessa is at least as difficult to date. Bauer's work (chapters one and two) provides a good survey of the materials available for these areas, but it should be read along with the criticisms provided by H.E.W. Turner, The Pattern of Christian Truth: A Study in the Relations between Orthodoxy and Heresy in the Early Church, The Bampton Lectures 1954 (London: A. R. Mowbray, 1954), 40-59. Note, too, Helmut Koester's support for the basic thrust of Bauer's theory concerning Edessa in "GNOMAI DIAPHOROI. The Origin and Nature of Diversification in the History of Early Christianity," Harvard Theological Review 58 (1965):290-306. Walter Volker commented on Bauer's work: "'no less than everything is unsure' about the early situation at Edessa, 'the chapter on Egypt...is riddled with the argument from silence'" (quoted in Bauer, p. 291).

⁴Georg Strecker, who edited the second German edition of Bauer's work, was surprised by Bauer's failure to address Jewish Christianity and found it necessary to provide the appendix, "On the Problem of Jewish Christianity," to make up for the omission in Bauer's work. Although that appendix addresses the Jewish-Christian movement more broadly, Strecker obviously thought that interpretation of Christianity had credible roots in the church in Jerusalem (Bauer, 245/ET:241).

⁵Bauer's discussion of Antioch is tied to his discussion of Ignatius. The main passages are found on pages 67-71/ET:63-67, a mere five percent of his discussion of the Christian centres.

⁶There are two factors to which Bauer assigns too little weight in the development of his thesis on the role of the Roman community: (1) the attestation of the presence of heretics in Rome, and (2) the evidence of the movement towards catholicism among the churches of western Asia Minor. Moreover, Bauer attaches a significance to the letter from the church at Rome to the church in Corinth (1 Clement) that goes beyond what the evidence bears, putting that letter forward as evidence of the attempt by the Roman church to extend its authority and its particular interpretation of Christianity as widely as possible. Turner, 67-79, assessed Bauer's discussion of the church at Rome, as did James Moffatt, in a review of Bauer's work in The Expository Times 45 (1933/4):475-6, and Arnold Ehrhardt, "Christianity Before the Apostles' Creed," Harvard Theological Review 55 (1962):108-119.

⁷Chapter three, "Ignatius of Antioch and Polycarp of

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Smyrna; Macedonia and Crete"; and chapter four, "Asia Minor Prior to Ignatius." Chapter three includes a treatment of Antioch, Macedonia and Crete, but the most significant material deals with western Asia Minor.

⁸Bauer spoke of the founding of the church in Ephesus by Paul, and though he did not address the early tensions within the Pauline churches, he did give considerable attention to the Apocalypse and to the twenty-year period prior to the Apocalypse--a period he thought was marked by an alignment of an anti-gnostic Pauline element with Jewish-Christian immigrants against a gnosticizing Pauline element (91/ET:87).

⁹These matters become the focus for the remainder of this chapter. Of particular importance is Bauer's theory explaining the rise of the monarchical office.

¹⁰Koester, "Gnomai Diaphoroi," 306-318. Meeks observes in a review of Koester's two volume Introduction to the New Testament that "It is apparent that Koester is still working to reformulate the legacy of Walter Bauer": Journal of Biblical Literature 103 (1984):446 .

¹¹Koester, "Gnomai Diaphoroi," 283-4.

¹²Hans Dieter Betz, "Orthodoxy and Heresy in Primitive Christianity: Some critical remarks on Georg Strecker's republication of Walter Bauer's Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum," Interpretation 19 (1965):303-311.

¹³This is a stage that Bauer did not mention in great detail (86/ET:82). Repeatedly, however, Bauer argued that the memory of Paul as the founder of the church is lost by the late first century (87/ET:83-4; 88-9/ET:84-5; 91/ET:87). His arguments are suspect. For example, Bauer argued that the author of the Apocalypse, by emphasizing the twelve Apostles as the foundations of the new Jerusalem and by not mentioning Paul in the letter to the church at Ephesus, either deliberately suppressed or had no recollection of Paul's connection to western Asia Minor (87/ET:83). Two points call Bauer's conclusions into question. First, the "either/or" options are so starkly contrasting that it is doubtful that they came to mind as a result of a careful analysis of the situation. If the writer is suppressing the historical connection of Paul with Ephesus, the context is one where that connection is widely known and, from the perspective of the seer, at least, in need of some measure of discrediting. If, on the other hand, the seer has no recollection of Paul's connection with Ephesus, the context is one where Paul's connection with Ephesus is not even faintly known. If an examination of the material cannot direct us

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to one or the other of the options, the material is too mute a witness to be of any use, and should beckon us to silence rather than to conjecture. But is the witness quite so mute? Bauer himself noted that the seer recalls an earlier time when the community in Ephesus had been better off (87/ET:83). Bauer was referring to the statement in Rev 2.4, where the loss of the "first love" by the Ephesian church is mentioned. This statement certainly would make sense on the background of historical memory that associates Paul with that church. That there could have been such a memory is suggested by the growth of the post-Pauline literature, such as the Pastorals, by the Acts material, and by the presence in the church of people who might themselves have become believers when Paul was in Ephesus. That would require no more than a forty year period. Admittedly, Bauer did offer some evidence for the hypothesis that there was a considerable loss of Pauline influence in the area in the late first and early second centuries (88-9/ET:84-5).

As for the date of Paul's mission in Ephesus, the years from 52-55 C.E. are generally accepted. This date is arrived at by placing the ministry of Paul in Ephesus just after his ministry in Corinth. Paul's ministry in Corinth is the only part of Paul's chronology that can be fixed to a definite date. A passage in Acts mentions a Gallio in Corinth when Paul was there (Acts 18.12-17). An inscription from Delphi placed Gallio in Corinth in 51 or 52 C.E. According to Acts 19:1, Paul left Corinth for Ephesus. That tradition is credible on two grounds. For one thing, it corresponds to the note in one of Paul's letters to the Corinthians (1 Cor 16.7-9), which places the ministry in Ephesus after the ministry in Corinth. For another thing, it is not the expected order. Ephesus lies closer than Corinth to the base of Paul's missionary activity from Antioch, and an inventive historian would have placed the mission in Ephesus before that in Corinth. This says something about the sources used by the author of the Acts. He knows the ministry in Corinth took place prior to that in Ephesus; further, he recognizes that the order is unusual and attempts to explain it by saying that Paul was specifically directed by the Spirit from the province of Asia (and Bithynia) to Macedonia (Acts 16.6-10).

¹⁴Cf. Jean Daniélou, The Christian Centuries, vol. 1: The First Six Hundred Years, (with Henri Marrou), trans. Vincent Cronin (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1964), 41-42.

¹⁵Koester, "Gnomai Diaphoroi," 311.

¹⁶Paul credits Apollos with watering the plant of the church (1 Cor 3.6). Possibly by saying in the same context that he was the one who planted what Apollos had watered, Paul intended to place himself above Apollos, but such a reading of the passage does some injustice to the dialectic Paul sets up. For Paul, it is not

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the ministry of Paul contrasted to that of Apollos, but the ministry of the human agent contrasted to that of the divine agent. Further, Paul presents Apollos and himself as examples from whom the Corinthians could learn how to live (1 Cor 4.6), and the particular point that concerns Paul is competition among Christians--one Christian being puffed up against another (1 Cor 4.6-7). Competition between Paul and Apollos would have made them unlikely candidates for role models for a group itself torn by competition. Finally, Paul indicates at the close of the letter that he had wanted Apollos to return to Corinth--an unlikely wish had Paul been attempting to reduce the influence of Apollos. That, of course, does not mean that groups had not formed around the teachings or personalities of particular leaders. It does mean, however, that if such groups were formed in Corinth, it is unlikely that Apollos can be charged as instigator of, or participant in, a movement in competition against Paul.

¹⁷Bauer was not perfectly clear here. He did not say what led some of the Paulinists in the direction of gnosticism, and he did not indicate how large the gnosticizing group was, except to say that in a number of areas it was the majority view in the 90s (82/ET:78). Some scholars have argued that Paul's churches almost as a whole went into gnosticism after Paul's death: for example, Ernst Haenchen, The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary, trans. Bernard Noble and Gerald Shinn (Philadelphia: Westminster/Oxford: Blackwell, 1971), 596-7. But this is not what Bauer had argued. Bauer thought that at least an element in the Pauline movement rejected the trend towards gnosticism and worked to defeat it (91-3/ET:87-9).

¹⁸Bauer did not bother to explain in what way the destruction of the temple would have "forever erased" the demand for circumcision and the observance of the ceremonial law for gentile Christians of the diaspora (91/ET:87). Such new toleration cannot be allowed into our reconstruction without convincing grounds--it is certainly far from obvious that the destruction of the temple would have removed these demands. I admit, though, that if Judaism became centred on the synagogue rather than on the temple, the uncircumcised might possibly then participate more fully in the Jewish religion. The temple, of course, was forbidden to the uncircumcised.

But it is another matter to say that the destruction of the temple would have made circumcision and the food laws less important. For one thing, we have no evidence that any new toleration occurred within Judaism; that it happened within a liberal Jewish Christianity is certainly possible, but there is no reason to relate this particularly to the destruction of the temple. It was a matter worked out by one element in Jewish Christianity during Paul's ministry, and nothing suggests that a group of Jewish-

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Christians who disagreed with the freedom promoted by Paul suddenly had a change of heart on the matter after the temple had been destroyed.

Further, the destruction of the temple would have carried weight in terminating the old order of things only if the destruction was viewed as permanent. With the strong apocalyptic tone within Judaism and within the church at the time (the Jewish War is, itself, evidence of this emphasis), no permanent loss of the temple would have been considered. According to Bauer, the Apocalypse itself is supposed to reflect the views of this Jewish element which gave up the requirement of circumcision and features of the ceremonial law (88/ET:84). But this group does not depreciate the temple and exalt the synagogue; it does the very opposite. The synagogue is the synagogue of Satan (Rev 2.9; 3.9). True, the temple is gone, but only because God and the Lamb have become the temple (Rev 21.22). In light of these observations, it is unlikely that the destruction of the temple produced the kinds of changes in Jewish Christianity that Bauer proposed.

¹⁹Koester, "Gnomai Diaphoroi," 315-6.

²⁰Separate assemblies seem to have been formed in at least Magnesia and Philadelphia, and likely in Smyrna (see extensive discussion on pp. 97-113, and Appendix 6). Bauer generally spoke simply of minorities and majorities struggling for control of the same assembly (81-4/ET:77-80), though for Smyrna, at least, he was prepared to admit a counter-bishop (73/ET:69). Exactly in what way this counter-bishop was related to Polycarp's assembly is not made clear by Bauer, but then, it is not made clear in the Ignatian material either (see discussion on pp. 111-3).

²¹Bauer did not say this explicitly. In fact, he said that Ignatius portrays, not the actual situation, but the ideal (65/ET:61). Yet, it would seem to be an ideal situation that can be brought quite quickly to actuality because the orthodox's candidate for the office of bishop has some special aura that gives him credibility in the eyes of the heretical majority (66/ET:62), and because the heretics are disunited (67/ET:63). (See pp. 86-8 for a detailed discussion.) Given that a separate assembly probably exists in Smyrna (even on Bauer's own admission), the move of the orthodox to institute and control the monarchical office in the area seems well under way. Once the orthodox control the assembly through their bishop, Bauer thought the orthodox would either bring the heretics to heel or, given a failure at that, force them out of the community (66/ET:62).

²²Bauer, 311, 316 (only in the English edition). Note Bauer's statement at the beginning of his work (2/ET:xxii):

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"Perhaps--I repeat, perhaps--certain manifestations of Christian life that the authors of the church renounce as "heresies" originally had not been such at all..." At the same time, however, the charge can be laid against Bauer that he did not allow the "perhaps" of his introduction to be reflected clearly enough in the body of the work.

²³Bauer did not explain what issues were at stake other than to indicate that what is at the heart of the issue is a trend towards gnosticism (91/ET:87; 93/ET:89).

²⁴See n. 20 for qualifications.

²⁵The theory of an increased Jewish colouring in the anti-gnostic alignment in western Asia Minor fails to do justice to the increased Jewish colouring throughout the spectrum of Christianity in the area. It is not just the catholic element that reflects a Jewish colouring; it is the gnostic element as well. Bauer himself recognized this and dismissed it--but without reasonable grounds. For the Apocalypse, Bauer simply noted the Jewish colouring (88/ET:84) but made no mention of the sharply critical attitude of the Apocalypticist towards Judaism (Rev 2.9; 3.9). For the Ignatian material, Bauer admitted that Ignatius did charge the heretics with the practice of Judaism, but Bauer dismissed the substance of this charge by claiming it was merely a reflection of Ignatius's own "complex personality" and not of the nature of the heresy opposed (92/ET:88). For the Pastorals, we find again the admission by Bauer that the writer does charge his opponents with some aspect of Judaism, but this admission is coupled with Bauer's refusal to accept the substance of that charge as valid. According to Bauer, the peculiar heresy described in the Pastorals stems from "the perspective of the mentality of the pseudonymous letter-writer--as Paul he must deal with the 'teachers of the law' (1 Tim 1.7) and the 'circumcision party' (Titus 1.10), but as a second century churchman, he opposes gnosticism" (92-3/ET:89). In other words, the real heresy opposed by the author of the Pastorals has no Jewish colouring.

Bauer believed he had grounds to dismiss the Jewish element in the heresy confronted in 1 Timothy. His reason was that the same admixture could be found in the letter to Titus as well (92/ET:88-9). In other words, the admixture is simply a creation of the confused perspective of the pseudonymous letter writer. But the charge of a Jewish tendency in the heresies must be given some weight--it is a charge laid in literature from a wide spectrum of the writings of the period, not just in the Pastoral letters (I have already mentioned, as Bauer himself did, the Apocalypse and the Ignatian materials in this regard). But Bauer could not allow for such widespread Jewish influence in the Christianity of the area. His reconstruction played a Jewish-Christian/anti-gnostic alliance

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against a purely gentile gnosticizing tendency. Bauer's strained handling of the Jewish element in the heresies appears suspicious in light of the purely gentile heresy Bauer had proposed for his reconstruction. If a clear Jewish element is found in the heresy, then a Jewish alliance against the heresy would be only half the story. It would leave unaccounted for the Jewish element in the gnosticizing group--a group Bauer thought was totally gentile. Further, Bauer's attempt to dismiss the Jewish element in the heresies does not have widespread support among scholars who have recently attempted to wrestle with the nature of gnosticism (see Appendix 5 for a brief discussion related to this question).

²⁶See chapter four, below, for a discussion of the various movements in early Christianity, especially the section on the gnostic and docetic movements (pp. 137-141). Also note pp. 67-8 of this chapter.

²⁷Frend, The Early Church, 46, said that "The years that followed the fall of Jerusalem are among the most obscure in the life of the primitive church." Helmut Koester, Introduction to the New Testament, 2:279, said that we do not know the name of a single Christian from 60-90. Koester's remark is merely an exaggerated rephrasing of Frend's observation. Koester's comment does not take sufficient account of the post-Pauline literature, in which various names appear. Nor does it adequately recognize that those younger co-workers of Paul would have outlived Paul.

²⁸That is not to say that the precise nature of the heresy has been agreed upon, or that the relationship of this group to earlier and later groups has been settled. See standard commentaries and the scattered discussions throughout chapters three and four for suggestions about the relationship of the Nicolaitans to other groups.

²⁹G. B. Caird, A Commentary on the Revelation of St. John the Divine, Harper's New Testament Commentaries (New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, 1966), 31.

³⁰Bauer did not clearly state when the alliance was formed, but it seems that he related the alliance to the time of the immigration of Jewish-Christians to the area about the time of the destruction of Jerusalem (89-91/ET:85-7) and not to some later period.

³¹Whether we want to argue for a Pauline school or for something less concrete, we must recognize a period after the death of Paul of continued Pauline influence through his co-workers. The long lists of co-workers and trusted friends in responsible church positions repeatedly reflected in the Pauline corpus make it

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improbable that the death of Paul was the end of the Pauline movement.

³²James D. G. Dunn, Unity and Diversity in the New Testament (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977), 279, argued that Paul tolerated gnosticism.

³³There are really two questions here. The first is whether gnosticism in some form or other was pre-Christian. Wayne A. Meeks, The Writings of St. Paul (New York and London: W.W. Norton, 1972), 185, said that a growing number of scholars believe gnosticism is pre-Christian. The chief work against that trend is Edwin Yamauchi, Pre-Christian Gnosticism (London: Tyndale Press, 1973). The second question, assuming that there was a pre-Christian (or a first-century) gnosticism, is to what degree that gnosticism affected the church in its early period. See pp. 137-141 for a fuller discussion.

³⁴See pp. 159-60 for a brief note about the common opponents in the various documents of the late first and early second centuries.

³⁵See pp. 141-2 for a brief discussion of the post-Pauline movement.

³⁶Bauer had little sympathy for the position of the Apocalypticist (88/ET:84) or of Ignatius (81-2/ET:77-8), and there is a long list of scholars who have held Ignatius in low esteem. Christine Trevett, who wrote her dissertation on Ignatius (Sheffield, 1980), and continues to publish frequently on that subject, noted that "there is almost universal agreement concerning the existence in Ignatius' work of aberrant and even abhorrent elements" Trevett, "The Much-maligned Ignatius," The Expository Times 93 (1982):299.

³⁷The church at Ephesus has apparently rejected the Nicolaitans (Rev 2.6), while the church at Pergamun (Rev 2.15) and, if there is a common heresy, the church at Thyatira (Rev 2.20-6) are tainted by the Nicolaitan teaching, though the charge is not precisely for holding Nicolaitan doctrine but for tolerating Nicolaitan teachers. The seer may have been trying to make the best of a bad situation; he may have been pulling his punches. But if he is, it is one of the rare times that he exercises that moderation. The kinds of things he says to the other churches (and to the churches at Pergamun and Thyatira) give the impression that the seer could be quite blunt. The seer does address the congregations at Pergamun and Thyatira; he does call on them to take a specific course of action, and we would not normally question the seer's right to do that unless we had made some prior judgment that the

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seer would be willing to address churches outside his sphere of influence in order to fill his seven-part structure. Admittedly, Ignatius does not address either Pergamum or Tyratira some fifteen or twenty years later, which Bauer took to indicate a significant increase in the growth of heresy in these churches (83/ET:79). But see n. 47 for a discussion concerning whether it is fair to expect Ignatius to have addressed a letter to these churches.

³⁸Koester, "Gnomai Diaphoroi," 310.

³⁹We know of churches at Colossae, Hierapolis and Troas (2 Cor 2.12) at the time of Paul. But whether these churches were particularly impressive at the time of the Apocalypse is difficult to say. Sherman E. Johnson, "Laodicea and its Neighbors," The Biblical Archaeologist 13 (1950):7, pointed out that though Colossae later had a bishopric, we know the name of only one of its bishops. The importance of Colossae that some scholars assume may be a false impression from the canonical status of the letter to that church. Colossae may have experienced an earthquake around this time [Reicke, "The Inauguration of Catholic Martyrdom according to St. John the Divine," Augustinianum 20 (1980):281], and thus would not have offered the seer a credible assembly to address. As for Troas, it never strikes one as particularly impressive, and as for Hierapolis, Johnson, 13, argued that the city was destroyed sometime between 60-110 C.E., so it is possible that Hierapolis was uninhabited at the time the Apocalypse was written.

⁴⁰W. M. Ramsay, The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1904), 171-96. Ramsay's observations are still worthy of note. Although his theory may be forced, that does not improve the probability of Bauer's contrary view. If anything, Ramsay's theory could be criticized because it slighted the importance of some of the cities addressed, not, as Bauer apparently thought, because it exaggerated the importance. See Reicke's explanation of the seer's selection of the seven churches, "Catholic Martyrdom," 282.

⁴¹Although Roman Asia Minor had numerous important cities, in the small circle of western Asia Minor addressed by the Apocalypticist, no other city can seriously challenge the prominence of the cities that the seer called "The seven churches of Asia."

⁴²J. Massyngberde Ford, Revelation, Anchor Bible 38 (Garden City, N.J.: Doubleday, 1975), 382.

⁴³Kirsopp Lake, ed. Eusebius: The Ecclesiastical History, The Loeb Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard/London: William Heinemann, 1926), 1:332. Note also A. H. M. Jones, The Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces (Oxford: Clarendon, 1937), 61, who

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pointed out that the governor held his court in twelve of the cities of western Asia Minor. Five of the cities are addressed by the Apocalypticist; four by Ignatius.

⁴⁴ Josephus, Jewish Antiquities XIV. 223-64, records a series of Roman decrees addressed to cities in Asia Minor commanding the protection of Jewish rights. Decrees are sent to Ephesus, Laodicea, Pergamum and Sardis.

⁴⁵ See note 39. None of the three churches appears to be important in the late first century, though it should be noted that we have little evidence that churches like that of Philadelphia, Thyatira, Pergamum or Sardis were important either, other than that they were selected by the seer as members of his "seven churches of Asia."

⁴⁶ A day's journey is not an exact distance. W. M. Ramsay, "Roads and Travels," in A Dictionary of the Bible, ed. James Hastings, 5:386, thought a day's journey was between sixteen and twenty Roman miles.

⁴⁷ Bauer (84-5/ET:80-1) made much of Ignatius's failure to address the churches in Laodicea, Hierapolis and Colossae. Two observations should be made. First, Colossae and Hierapolis may not have had churches at this time (see note 39 above). Second, if Ignatius had taken an overland route, it is possible that he would have by-passed all three of these cities. According to the map supplied with Ramsay's article (between pp. 400-01), the old overland road took a northern route from Julia to Philadelphia.

We must also recognize that the Ignatian seven-letter corpus we now have does not contain the entire epistolary corpus that stemmed from Ignatius's journey, and any argument assuming it does is misleading. Ignatius asked Polycarp to write to a number of churches (ISmyr 8.1); assuming that Polycarp did fulfill Ignatius's request, a number of these letters are missing: only Polycarp's letter to the church at Philippi has survived. If some of Polycarp's letters were lost (or simply not preserved), that should caution against concluding that all of Ignatius's letters have survived. In fact, the survival of the letters we do have may result from a quirk in the history of the church at Smyrna. All but one of the seven letters can be tied directly to that church: four were written from Smyrna; two were addressed to Smyrna. The only letter lacking this kind of connection is that to the church at Philadelphia, a letter written by Burrhus for Ignatius (IPhil 11.2). Burrhus was a deacon of the church at Ephesus and was supplied to Ignatius at the expense of the churches at Ephesus and Smyrna (IEph

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2.1; IPhil 11.2). Whether Burrhus returned to Ephesus when Ignatius sailed from Troas is not known (he may have accompanied Ignatius all the way to Rome). If he did return, he would most likely have gone by way of Smyrna and delivered the letters to the church there and to Polycarp. Undoubtedly, he would have carried the letter to the church at Philadelphia at least as far as Smyrna. If Burrhus continued with Ignatius, the letter-carrier sent from Troas with the letters written there would probably have passed through Smyrna on his way to Philadelphia, so it is not difficult to see how the letter to the church at Philadelphia might have come to be known (and preserved) by the church at Smyrna. We do know that the church at Smyrna made a collection of the letters, apparently as the letters were written or received, for the church possessed such a collection even before they had received word on the execution of Ignatius (PolPhil 13.2). All seven letters are, then, closely connected to Smyrna, a fact which should caution against the assumption that the corpus we now have represents the complete literary production of Ignatius from Antioch to Rome.

As for churches addressed by the Apocalyptist but not by Ignatius, only Sardis is a problem. (Pergamum and Thyatira lay to the north, off of the route taken by Ignatius.) Ignatius would have certainly passed through Sardis, but there is no indication that he was able to meet with the church there, or that, if he had, he felt any need to write to it. His letter to Philadelphia seems to be prompted by new information about the situation in Antioch (IPhil X), which, admittedly, would have been of no less interest to the church at Sardis, but the letter to Philadelphia reflects, as well, Ignatius's concern for the situation in that church, brought to his attention particularly by the arrival of Philo and Rheus Agathopous (IPhil 11.1); this may go far in explaining why that church was addressed, and others not. Note that Ignatius makes it plain that he wanted to write other letters but did not have the time (IPoly 8.1). (This passage should not be used to argue that Ignatius was interested in addressing only those churches he would pass through on his way to Rome. The passage reflects only what Ignatius feels is most pressing; it does not reflect the full scope of his interests or the complete list of churches to which he might have written had he the time.)

⁴⁸Lightfoot, II,1:33-4.

⁴⁹See qualifications in n. 47.

⁵⁰Lightfoot, II,2:34; Schoedel, "Theological Norms," 43.

⁵¹They assume, at any rate, that they are likely to be able to meet with Ignatius and came to see him with a fairly large company of ten church officers from the three churches [five from Ephesus (2.1); four from Magnesia (2.1); and one from Tralles

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(1.1)].

⁵²IRom 5.1. Bauer did not always pay adequate attention to Ignatius's status as a prisoner under guard. Bauer sometimes spoke as though Ignatius was free to come and go as he pleased (84-5/ET:80-1), assuming that if Ignatius did not meet with a particular church along the route, that choice would have been one he himself made, and one he made solely on the grounds of whether he thought there would be sufficient support for his position in that assembly. Even if we had a complete record of what churches Ignatius visited and what churches he did not, we would have no basis for saying that those he visited had a credible orthodox element and those he bypassed had none. Surely, the plans of the guards would account in part for the selection.

⁵³ISmyr 9.2; 10.2; 13.1-2; IPoly 1.1; 8.2-3. Apparently, Ignatius's stay was extended, and a number of people in Smyrna became quite well-known to him.

⁵⁴This is the theme of the entire letter. Some have questioned whether Ignatius's life was really in serious jeopardy in light of the obvious possibility that the church at Rome could have, in some way, had the sentence of death revoked.

⁵⁵But note the qualification in n. 47.

⁵⁶See Appendix 3 and Appendix 4.

⁵⁷Many scholars today think in terms of separate theological communities side-by-side within the same cities but, nonetheless, lacking significant fellowship. See chapter four for fuller discussion.

⁵⁸The discussion in chapter four provides some basis for thinking that, on this point, Bauer may be correct.

⁵⁹W. M. Ramsay, The Church in the Roman Empire before A.D. 170, Mansfield College Lectures (New York/London: G.P. Putman's Sons, 1912), 370-1, described Ignatius as not "a historian, describing facts" but "a preacher, giving advice on what ought to be." Ramsay continued: "[Ignatius] insists, then, that the bishop should guide the community; but he says that this principle is a special revelation, and his reiteration seems a proof that urgency was necessary. I can find in Ignatius no proof that the bishops were regarded as ex officio supreme in Asia....The really striking development implied by Ignatius is, that a much deeper distinction between bishop and presbyter had now become generally recognized. This distinction was ready to become [emphasis mine] a difference of rank and order; and he first recognized that this was so. Others

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looked at the bishops under prepossessions derived from the past; he estimated them in view of what they might become in the future." Schoedel, "Theological Norms," 33-4, holds a similar position. He said: "We need not believe with Walter Bauer that Ignatius virtually invented the monarchical episcopate to feel that he invested it with unusual importance. For his views on the subject stand out strikingly from the literature of the period, and the letters are too emphatic on the point to reflect what everyone took for granted." C. P. Hammond Bammel, "Ignatian Problems," Journal of Theological Studies, n.s. 33 (1982):77, agreed that, at least for Antioch, Ignatius is leader of a minority element. Robert Joly, Le Dossier d'Ignace d'Antioche (Brussels: Editions de l'Université de Brussels, 1979) recognized that the figure of bishop in the letters is an impressive one, but Joly was able to dismiss the significance of that by arguing that the figure is an anachronism of the mid-second century forger. But Frend, The Early Church, 52, thought that the office of monarchical bishop was established before Ignatius's travel through Asia, and Leonhard Goppelt said: "The tendency which appeared in Ignatius bearing his own personal stamp had already existed in the Church prior to and contemporary with him, since it was conditioned by the particular situation of that age; for example, Ignatius found the monarchical episcopate already at hand in Asia Minor" Goppelt, Apostolic and Post-Apostolic Times, trans. Robert A. Guelich (London: A. and C. Black, 1970), 144. James F. McCue, "Bishops, Presbyters, and Priests in Ignatius of Antioch," Theological Studies, n.s. 28 (1967):828-34, argued that, though the offices of bishop and presbyter were regarded as permanent, there was not a permanent subepiscopal eucharistic ministry.

⁶⁰As noted by Frederick W. Norris, "Ignatius, Polycarp, and I Clement: Walter Bauer Reconsidered," Vigiliae Christianae 30 (1976):35.

⁶¹This is clear not only from Ignatius's repeated praise for the bishops in his letters and from his calling the church to submission to the bishop, but also from the specific point of contention Ignatius has with the schismatics (see Appendix 6).

⁶²As Bauer thought (65/ET:61); so, too, B. H. Streeter, The Primitive Church (London: Macmillan, 1929), 163, 165, 259, who emphasized the neurotic disposition of Ignatius. See, too, the comments of Ramsay and Bammel (n. 59).

⁶³For a recent review of the issue, see William R. Schoedel, "Are the Letters of Ignatius Authentic?" Religious Studies Review 6 (1980):196-201. Schoedel concludes that the recent attack on the authenticity of the seven-letter corpus does not succeed. That leaves us with the work of T. Zahn, Ignatius von Antiochien

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(Gotha: Perthe, 1873) and J. B. Lightfoot, The Apostolic Fathers, basically intact.

⁶⁴Bammel, 84; Donahue, 81; Corwin, 3. But note the caution of L. W. Barnard, "The Background of St. Ignatius of Antioch," Vigiliae Christianae 17 (1963):194-8, who criticized Corwin for her use of the Ignatian material in reconstructing the nature of the church in Antioch. Barnard's comments are particularly noteworthy because he himself saw Ignatius against a Syrian background (pp. 194-5).

⁶⁵See pp. 100-111 for a discussion of the concrete situation in the churches at Magnesia and Philadelphia.

⁶⁶Bauer used the Ignatian letters for his brief discussion of Antioch (67-71/ET:63-7), but the more serious use was in the discussion of western Asia Minor (81-88/ET:77-83), and though Bauer thought Ignatius did not always reflect the real situation, he did believe that Ignatius faced a real opposition in western Asia Minor and that the concerns expressed in his letters relate to this opposition. Schoedel, "Theological Norms," took the Ignatian material to provide some insight into the western Asia Minor situation, and Peter Meinhold, Studien zu Ignatius von Antiochien (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1979), 19-36, used the letters to provide a detailed picture of the situation in each of the five western Asia Minor cities addressed.

⁶⁷See pp. 100-113 for an illustration of how closely the letters to Magnesia, Philadelphia and Smyrna are tied to the concrete situation of these churches.

⁶⁸The church at Antioch is constantly on Ignatius's mind, and this stands out all the more sharply when it is noted that he had other serious things to think about--his execution was only weeks away. But Ignatius's concern for the church at Antioch has often been taken to indicate that Ignatius was responsible for the situation of the church there (Schoedel, "Theological Norms," pp. 36-44), and some have even argued that Ignatius's appointment as bishop was what caused the problem--the internal strife over the appointment is supposed to have become so intense that the local civil government intervened. This reconstruction of the situation does not seem to do justice to the probability that persecution of the church in Antioch was the chief problem (see Appendix 7).

⁶⁹See pp. 100-113.

⁷⁰Meinhold, 19-36.

⁷¹There is a question of the intended meaning here. See

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pp. 100-101.

⁷²The comment in IEph 5.2 may hint at a separate eucharist, and depending on the extent to which ecclesiastical activity was conducted in separation from the bishop at Magnesia (IMag 4), perhaps separate eucharists, baptisms and agapes were conducted there. The situation in Tralles may have developed into a separate eucharist (ITral 7.2), as in Philadelphia, where a schism had clearly occurred (IPhil 3-4). The most explicit reference to a separate eucharist is the comment in ISmyr 8.1 (but note the qualification in 7.1). It is most likely that Ignatius's charge that some abstain from the eucharist is a polemical charge and means simply that the eucharist was not under the control of the bishop (Schoedel, "Theological Norms," 33).

⁷³See Appendix 5.

⁷⁴If the minority already had control, they would not have needed to restructure the power base. Bauer recognized this and actually used the orthodox's concern for the monarchical office as evidence that the orthodox were a minority (66/ET:62).

⁷⁵Apart from Christine Trevett's attempt to identify three heresies opposed by Ignatius, scholars have been divided regarding whether there was one heresy or two [Trevett, "Prophecy and Anti-Episcopal Activity: a third Error Combated by Ignatius?" Journal of Ecclesiastical History 34 (1983):1-18]. The question of whether there is one or two heresies cannot be resolved until it is first resolved whether there can be a heresy with both Jewish elements and gnostic elements, for it seems that Ignatius is forced to fight against both. For a discussion of the problem, See appendix 5.

⁷⁶One might say that Bauer evoked the division within the gnostic group "out of thin air." It comes as a surprise to discover that the gnostic group of Bauer's reconstruction is itself splintered. Bauer offered nothing to support his theory of a fractured gnostic movement at the time of Ignatius. The gnostic movement must, however, be fractured for Bauer to be able to explain the success of the orthodox minority in introducing the monarchical office, and as it is precisely at this point that Bauer informed us that the gnostic movement was splintered, it comes at too convenient a place not to carry with it some suspicion.

⁷⁷One must agree with Bauer that it is impossible to imagine an alliance of Marcionites, Montanists, Valentinians and Jewish Christians (233/ET:231), but that argument, at best, might explain the success of Roman orthodoxy. It has nothing to do, however, with the rise of the monarchical bishop in western Asia Minor, and it is for this period that Bauer needed to provide some

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evidence of a splintered gnostic movement. But he offered nothing. Bauer apparently expected his readers to assume without question that the gnosticizing Paulinists were already hopelessly fractured by 110 C.E. That seems too much to ask.

⁷⁸IMag 3.1 The same concern is expressed by the author of the Pastorals. Timothy, who holds the chief position in the church, is young, and his youth is, to some extent, a mark against him (1 Tim 4.12). Polycarp himself may have been only thirty-five or forty at the time of Ignatius (given his death at age eighty-six sometime around 155 or 160 C.E.). It is difficult to determine precisely what the concrete situation is. Normally, one would have expected the bishops to be older, and that must have been generally so, since in those churches where the leader was young, their youth became a matter of contention and possible grounds for disregard. If the monarchical office developed out of the presbytery, and if the presbytery generally consisted of older men in the community, a young man holding the supreme office is surprising. Perhaps where the appointment was made from some "word of the Lord," a young man might be appointed to the position. Another possibility is that the previous leader exercised some direction in the appointment of his replacement, allowing for the appointment of a young assistant. The latter option would seem to require that the appointment be made by someone of outstanding authority (perhaps a figure with apostolic connections)--one can imagine Paul or John with this kind of authority. But if not a man of apostolic authority, then the man who directs the appointment of a young assistant as his replacement must be viewed as a man of bishop-like powers himself, and this, in either the case of Damas or the situation of the Pastorals, would place a powerful bishop-like figure into the last decade of the first century, if not earlier.

⁷⁹IEph 6.1; ITral 3.2; IPhil 1.1.

⁸⁰See Appendix 6.

⁸¹F. F. Bruce, New Testament History, (Garden City, N.J.: Doubleday, 1972), 418.

⁸²See n. 59.

⁸³See Appendix 5 for a discussion of this question.

⁸⁴Even in those churches in which separate assemblies had been formed, Ignatius found no opposition to the bishop in the presbytery. It is not the presbyters who oppose the young Damas in Magnesia (IMag 3.1). In Philadelphia, Ignatius called the church to unity under the bishop and the presbytery (IPhil. intro).

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⁸⁵Bauer thought the orthodox were generally in the minority, and that they pressed for the monarchical office in order to control the assembly (66/ET:62). Power would normally have been in the hands of the presbytery, and both the minority status of the orthodox and their desire to establish the monarchical office would, given Bauer's reconstruction, indicate the orthodox were outnumbered in the presbytery.

⁸⁶Ignatius described the relationship of the presbytery to the bishop in Ephesus as "attuned...as the strings to a harp" (IEph 4.1). There is no indication that he had a less positive opinion of the presbyters in the other churches.

⁸⁷Separate assemblies of some kind have been formed at least in Magnesia and Philadelphia (IMag 4; IPhil 7), but Ignatius's criticism of activities that are "outside of the sanctuary" is found throughout his correspondence (see discussion in Appendix 6).

⁸⁸See Appendix 6.

⁸⁹As I have argued, we repeatedly hear positive comments from Ignatius concerning the relationship between the presbytery and the bishop (pp. 88-90).

⁹⁰Walter Bauer, Die Briefe des Ignatius von Antiochia und der Polykarpbrief, Handbuch zum Neuen Testament, ed. H. Lietzmann (Tübingen: Mohr, 1920).

⁹¹Polycarp wrote to the church at Philippi before he had news concerning Ignatius's execution (PolPhil XIII.2). That allows for a few weeks, at the most, from the time of the composition of Ignatius's letters to Polycarp and to the church at Smyrna and Polycarp's own writing.

⁹²If ISmyr 5.2 refers to people Ignatius met while in Smyrna, we have, then, an instance where Ignatius exercises sharp judgment, recognizing dangerous stances of those who praise him.

⁹³See n. 87.

⁹⁴See Appendix 6 for a detailed discussion of the nature of the opposition to the bishop in the churches of western Asia Minor.

⁹⁵Norris, "Ignatius, Polycarp and I Clement," 34-5.

⁹⁶The schismatics are described as "haughty" (IEph 5.3),

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"ravens dogs" (IEph 7.1), "unbelievers" (ITral 10.1), "wicked offshoots which bear deadly fruit" (ITral 11.1), "evil growths" (IPhil 3.1), "tombstones and sepulchres" (IPhil 6.1), "beasts in the form of men" (ISmyr 4.1)--a list to which a number of other terms could be added.

⁹⁷Corwin, 52, 64.

⁹⁸Schoedel, "Theological Norms," 32.

⁹⁹The obedience is hypocritical (implied in IMag 3.2); the recognition of the bishop is not in good conscience (IMag 4).

¹⁰⁰It is difficult to determine to what extent the separate assembly was seen as a rival assembly. It is possible that the schismatics joined with the bishop's church for some of their activities (if Ignatius is exaggerating in IMag 4), but a certain range of ecclesiastical activity would seem, nonetheless, to have been conducted outside of the main assembly.

¹⁰¹Lightfoot, II.2:115.

¹⁰²Lake, Apostolic Fathers, 1:201.

¹⁰³IMag 3-4; 6.2; 7.

¹⁰⁴IEph 10 and especially Ignatius's instructions to Polycarp in 1.2-2.2.

¹⁰⁵This word is a cognate of one of the words used to describe the situation in Magnesia (kryphia: IMag 3.2).

¹⁰⁶Lightfoot, II.2:266.

¹⁰⁷The passage does not indicate clearly that the schismatics were in the assembly. They may not have attended but simply heard from others what Ignatius had said. Yet, the probability that they were in the meeting is reasonable enough, especially in light of evidence that a radical break had not already occurred (as discussed in this section).

¹⁰⁸Schoedel, "Theological Norms," 34, allows for the possibility of a presbyter heading the docetists but thinks the leader could hardly have been a bishop, for, as Schoedel says (p. 221, n. 10), "Ignatius would have had more to explain than he does."

¹⁰⁹The closing of both the letter to Polycarp and that to the church at Smyrna carry greetings to several people whom Ignatius had come to know. In ISmyr 13, a whole house is saluted--perhaps

Notes to Chapters Three and Four

the house in which he was a guest while in Smyrna.

¹¹⁰Schoedel, "Theological Norms," 32.

¹¹¹See Appendix 6 for Ignatius's analysis of the situation.

¹¹²See n. 87 and Appendix 6.

¹¹³See Appendix 4.

¹¹⁴See n. 85.

Notes to Chapter Four
THE NATURE AND SIGNIFICANCE
OF EARLY DIVERSITY

¹A detailed survey of the diversity in the primitive church is found in James D. G. Dunn, Unity and Diversity in the New Testament (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977).

²Werner Georg Kümmel, The Theology of the New Testament, trans. John E. Steely (Nashville: Abingdon, 1974).

³Helmut Koester, "GNOMAI DIAPHOROI. The Origin and Nature of Diversification in the History of Early Christianity," Harvard Theological Review 58 (1965):281.

⁴Ernst Käsemann, "Paul and Early Catholicism," trans. Wilfred F. Bunge, in New Testament Questions of Today (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969), 236-51, where a case is made for the validity of Paul's Gospel against the development towards early catholicism.

⁵See chapter 2, pp. 29-31.

⁶See chapter 2, pp. 35-6.

⁷See Ernst Käsemann, "Unity and Multiplicity in the New Testament Doctrine of the Church," trans. W. J. Montague, in New Testament Questions of Today, 255.

⁸Dunn, Unity and Diversity in the New Testament (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977).

⁹Ibid., 5.

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¹⁰See C. P. Hammond Bammel, "Ignatian Problems," Journal of Theological Studies, n.s. 33 (1982):80-1; 87-97; see, too, the classic work by Heinrich Schlier, Religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zu den Ignatiusbriefen (Giessen, 1929).

¹¹See pp. 130-154.

¹²See Appendix 5 for a discussion of the heretics reflected in the Ignatian materials.

¹³Some scholars look for a common core to which all diverse expressions bear witness. The problem is that each "common core" presented is rendered suspect by the variety of common cores offered by others who have attempted to approach diversity from this perspective. Dunn, Unity and Diversity, 371, presents his common core, and this serves as a good example of one particular perspective from which an attempt is made to resolve the diversity in the New Testament.

¹⁴Some scholars freely admit sharp diversity in the New Testament materials. This diversity is brought under control by selecting one element to which all others are to be subordinated. The problem with this method is that each scholar selects his own favourite "controlling canon," and each controlling canon offered is discredited by the number of other controlling canons promoted by other scholars who attempt to resolve the problem of diversity from this perspective. An example of a "controlling canon" is Käsemann's selection of Paul and of justification by faith within Paul (see n. 4).

¹⁵The least critical approach to the diversity of the New Testament is that of harmonization, and at its heart, it is little more than a denial of diversity. The problem with this approach is that significant differences are often overlooked, and the resulting harmonized message frequently reflects an unstated "controlling canon" or the reduction of everything to a common core. For one of the better-reasoned defenses of this method, see D. A. Carson, "Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: The Possibility of Systematic Theology," in Scripture and Truth, eds. D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983), 65-95.

¹⁶Bernard J. F. Lonergan, Method in Theology (New York: Seabury, 1979), 236-7.

¹⁷Brice L. Martin, "Some Reflections on the unity of the New Testament," Sciences Religieuses/Studies in Religion 8 (1979):149-151. Note, too, the pointed statement of C. F. D. Moule, The Birth of the New Testament, 3d.

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ed., Harper's New Testament Commentaries (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1982), 216: "it is of real importance to ask to what extent the writings ultimately held within the New Testament canon show a consistent controlling conviction which both includes complementary tendencies and excludes really incompatible elements in such a way as to produce coherence." See also I. Howard Marshall, "Orthodoxy and Heresy in earlier Christianity," Themelios 2 (1976):7.

¹⁸Walter Bauer, Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 87-8/ET:83-4.

¹⁹See commentaries and introductions. Specific works are discussed later in this chapter.

²⁰See Raymond E. Brown, The Churches the Apostles Left Behind (New York/Ramsey: Paulist, 1984), 22-3.

²¹Ibid., 29-30.

²²I point out here Brown's own recognition that the simple reconstruction is probably better than the complex. In a discussion of the opponents reflected in the Johannine letters, Brown says: "It seems an appropriate occasion to apply 'Ockham's razor': Postulated entities should not be multiplied without necessity." The Epistles of John, Anchor Bible 30 (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1982/London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1983), 50. One wonders whether another occasion for the application of 'Ockham's razor' is not in the reconstruction of various theological communities from an analysis of theologically distinct documents.

²³Galatians 2.11-13. See Helmut Koester, Introduction to the New Testament (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), 2:106-7.

²⁴See John P. Meier, "The Antiochene Church of the First Christian Generation," in Raymond E. Brown and John P. Meier, Antioch and Rome: New Testament Cradles of Catholic Christianity (New York/Ramsey: Paulist, 1983), 39-44.

²⁵See Koester, Introduction, 2:198-207.

²⁶Acts 21.20-25. The Zealot movement, with the open revolt against Rome in 66 C.E., points to weighty forces on the Jewish-Christians of Palestine to remain loyal to the Law.

²⁷Bauer, 89/ET:85.

²⁸Koester, Introduction, 2:199.

²⁹Ibid., 203. Contra Dunn Unity and Diversity, 244, 245.

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Dunn says: "The heretical Jewish Christianity of the second and third centuries apparently has no closer parallel than the earliest Christian community in Jerusalem. Indeed, on the basis of this evidence, the heretical Jewish Christianity of the later centuries could quite properly claim to be more truly the heir of earliest Christianity than any other expression of Christianity." And a page later: "Heretical Jewish Christianity could claim a direct line of continuity with the most primitive form of Christianity. It could certainly claim to be more in accord with the most primitive faith than Paul, say."

³⁰Leonhard Goppelt, Apostolic and Post-Apostolic Times, trans. Robert A. Guelich (London: A. and C. Black, 1970), 77-81. Goppelt sees one church, in which both Jews and Gentiles worship together.

³¹E. P. Sanders, Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People (Philadelphia, Fortress, 1983), 188.

³²*Ibid.*, 179, 190.

³³For discussion, see Sanders, Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People, 179-92.

³⁴F. F. Bruce, New Testament History (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1972), 394.

³⁵Jean Daniélou, The Christian Centuries (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1964), vol. 1., Jean Daniélou and Henri Marrou, The First Six Hundred Years, trans. Vincent Cronin, pp. 39-44.

³⁶Brown, Community, 71-88.

³⁷The Petrine group is part of Brown's Group VI, "The Christians of Apostolic Churches" (Community, 81-8). Brown states (p. 86, n. 162) that he excludes the Pauline churches from "Apostolic Christians" because "Peter and the Twelve would not have served the Pauline churches as primary apostolic models."

³⁸Brown, Churches, 20-4; 76.

³⁹Alf Thomas Kraabel, "The Disappearance of the 'God-Fearers'" Numen 28 (1981):113-26. Also see Max Wilcox, "The 'God-Fearers' in Acts--A Reconsideration," Journal for the Study of the New Testament 13 (1981): 102-22.

⁴⁰See p. 51.

⁴¹Brown does not discuss the largely gentile Pauline

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mission in his Community of the Beloved Disciple. In that work, Brown is interested only in identifying groups reflected in some way in the Johannine material. But in a later work, The Churches the Apostles Left Behind, Brown discusses a broader Christianity. Of the seven groups Brown identifies, only the Johannine and Pauline groups are to be found in western Asia Minor (the Petrine group is in Rome and northern Asia Minor, pp. 75-6; the Matthean group in Syria, p. 129). The Johannine groups would undoubtedly have had more of the Jewish-Christians of western Asia Minor than the various Pauline groups would have had.

⁴²See Kümmel, Introduction, 272-5.

⁴³In Brown's Community, Peter is the leader of the "apostolic" group, though the other apostles are included, as well, in that group (p. 81). In Brown's Churches, the apostolic group of which Peter is the leader is more distinctly Petrine and is separate from the Matthean group (pp. 75-83; 124-45).

⁴⁴The story of the keys of the kingdom being given to Peter is found, however, only in Matthew's Gospel (16. 17-19). Compare this tradition to the Johannine tradition of Peter's role as leader (John 21).

⁴⁵Peter is the prominent apostle in the first five chapters of Acts and plays a significant role in taking the gospel to the gentiles (chs. 10 and 11).

⁴⁶Paul went to Jerusalem the first time especially to meet Peter (Gal 1.18), and he views Peter as filling the parallel role in the world mission as he, himself, fills: Paul goes to the gentiles; Peter to the Jews (Gal 2.7).

⁴⁷1 Cor 1.12; 3.21. Peter has either been active in the area, or he is well-known as one of the leaders in the broader church. Whatever the case, he is a figure of some stature in the eyes of the Corinthians.

⁴⁸1 Peter 1.1. This area could include most of Asia Minor (even that of western Asia Minor, where John and Paul are known to have been active). Brown, Churches, 76, suggested that this area was actually more northerly, and that it was, indeed, an area of Peter's mission.

⁴⁹C. K. Barrett, "Pauline Controversies in the Post-Pauline Period," New Testament Studies 20 (1973-74):230-231, noted that 1 Peter is "broadly Pauline in outlook" but finds the ascription of this writing to Paul's rival in Antioch significant. Dunn, Unity and Diversity, 116, thinks 1 Peter is Pauline.

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⁵⁰A brief review of some of this material is provided in Wayne E. Meeks, "Paul as Satan's Apostle: Jewish-Christian Opponents," in The Writings of Paul (New York/London: W. W. Norton, 1972), 176-184.

⁵¹Koester, Introduction, 2:290.

⁵²Unless Brown is correct that 1 Peter reflects Peter's particular theology, we have no idea what a distinctive Petrine theology would be. Koester, Introduction, 2:160-4, discussed Petrine tradition, but, unlike Brown, he thought the letter of 1 Peter is not essentially Petrine, but rather Pauline--put in Peter's name as a polemical device to deflect the use of Peter as an authority in the anti-Pauline Jewish-Christian communities (p. 164). Koester may be correct in regard to 2 Peter (note 3.15-16), but, in regard to 1 Peter, the matter is not nearly so clear. There is, admittedly, a reference to Silas and Mark (5.12-13), both of whom were co-workers of Paul, but that does not compare to the nature of the association made between Peter and Paul in 2 Peter 3.15-16.

⁵³Some independent groups have been formed at the time of Ignatius, but we have no clear evidence that these groups survived the attack of Ignatius, though it is generally assumed that they did, and that they grew into strong gnostic groups of the latter half of the second century. That assumption may deserve some reexamination. By the time of Celsus (last quarter of the second century), numerous gnostic groups exist, and are sufficiently independent of one another for an outsider to recognize this (Contra Celsus 5.61-2). See Appendix 1 for further discussion of this passage.

⁵⁴Irenaeus, Adversus haereses, confronts one gnostic teacher "and his followers," then another, and another, even though he intends his work to be primarily against the disciples who follow Ptolemaeus, who was himself a follower of Valentinus (A.H. preface. 2).

⁵⁵Jacques E. Ménard, "Normative Self-Definition in Gnosticism," in Jewish and Christian Self-Definition, vol 1, The Shaping of Christianity in the Second and Third Centuries, ed. E. P. Sanders (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 142.

⁵⁶See Elaine H. Pagels, "Visions, Appearances and Apostolic Authority," in Gnosis. Festschrift für Hans Jonas, eds. Barbara Aland et al. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978) 415-30.. See, too, Gérard Vallée, "Theological and Non-Theological Motives in Irenaeus's Refutation of the Gnostics, in Jewish and Christian Self-Definition, vol 1, 261, n. 63.

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⁵⁷Norbert Brox, Offenbarung, Gnosis und gnostischer Mythos bei Irenäus von Lyon (Salzburg/München: 1966), 34, cited by Gerard Vallée, "Theological and Non-Theological Motives," 261, n. 63.

⁵⁸Gérard Vallée, A Study in Anti-Gnostic Polemics: Irenaeus, Hippolytus, and Epiphanius, Studies in Christianity and Judaism I (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University, 1981), 93.

⁵⁹Koester, Introduction, 2:207.

⁶⁰Pagels, "Visions, Appearances and Apostolic Authority," 429. So, too, Brox, Offenbarung, 33-5.

⁶¹Pagels, "Visions, Appearances and Apostolic Authority," 417.

⁶²Consider the conclusions regarding the Valentinians reached by James F. McCue, "Orthodoxy and Heresy: Walter Bauer and the Valentinians," Vigilae Christianae 33 (1979): 118-130.

⁶³See Brown, Community, 104-6, and for a somewhat different conclusion, another work by Brown, Epistles, 104-6.

⁶⁴This is the date generally assumed for the writing of the Apocalypse. The Nicolaitans appear to be at home in some of the churches to which this writing was addressed.

⁶⁵See pp. 100-111, where I argue that the deference shown to Ignatius and the bishops by the schismatics suggests the schism is recent.

⁶⁶See standard commentaries. Koester, Introduction, 2:264-6, argued that the opponents in Colossae are not gnostic, though those mentioned in the letter to the Ephesians are (2:267-72). For the opponents of the Pastorals, Koester recognized the lack of a satisfactory identification (2:303) but thought that it would not be a bad guess to describe them as "Jewish-Christian gnostics" (2:304).

⁶⁷The post-Pauline movement has been generally considered to be part of the trend towards early catholicism, of which Ignatius is the earliest clear representative. Ignatius believes that the church in Ephesus with which he has contact is none other than the one of which Paul speaks (IEph 12.2). The churches addressed by the Apocalypticist are almost certainly the same as those addressed later by Ignatius, even though the opponents might not be identical. See the standard commentaries.

⁶⁸W. H. C. Frend, The Rise of Christianity (Philadelphia:

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Fortress, 1984), 195-6, mentioned Simon Magnus, his disciple Menander, and his disciple Saturninus, all of whom were active in the time of Ignatius or prior to that time. Cerinthus was another early teacher, though the nature of his beliefs is not completely clear. See Brown, Epistles, 766-71.

⁶⁹Frend, The Rise of Christianity, 195-6.

⁷⁰Brown, Churches, 76.

⁷¹As Bauer had argued, 91-2/ET:87-8.

⁷²The combination of Pauline and catholic elements is most clearly reflected in Ignatius and Polycarp. Both are leaders of the catholic movement, and both are heavily influenced by Pauline thought, though the case for Ignatius is less clear (see pp. 147-9).

⁷³A review of Cullman's contributions to Johannine studies is given in Brown, Community, 176-8.

⁷⁴Oscar Cullmann, The Johannine Circle (London: SCM, 1976), ix.

⁷⁵D. Moody Smith, "Johannine Christianity: Some Reflections on its Character and Delineation," New Testament Studies 21 (1974-5):230.

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, 235.

⁷⁷Raymond E. Brown, The Gospel according to John, Anchor Bible 29 (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966/London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1971), xcii-xcvii.

⁷⁸Brown originally held this view but later changed his mind (Churches, 84, n. 120). See discussion in Robinson, Redating the New Testament (London: SCM, 1976), 298-311.

⁷⁹See Brown, Community, 31-3, "The Role of the Beloved Disciple."

⁸⁰Although Peter is a prominent figure in all of the Gospels, he is not set up as the guarantor of the tradition as the Beloved Disciple seems to be, unless the account of the keys of the kingdom is comparable--an account limited, however, to the Gospel of Matthew (16.17-19).

⁸¹See my quote of Brown on p. 130.

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⁸²Irenaeus mentions John in an attempt to bring a straying friend back to the orthodox fold (E.H. 5.20). Papias considers John to stand in the same group and to bear witness to the same tradition as do the other apostles (E.H. 3.39).

⁸³Irenaeus is, perhaps, the orthodox spokesman par excellence in the second century. Papias's orthodoxy is not quite so above suspicion, but Irenaeus associates him with John and Polycarp, and Eusebius notes that he is the source of some of the earliest (questionable?) information about Gospels accepted by the catholic community (E.H. 3.39).

⁸⁴Eusebius (E.H. 5.20.6) provides an excerpt from a letter from Irenaeus to Florinus, in which Irenaeus recalls Polycarp speaking of his association with John.

⁸⁵If John lived in Ephesus in the last decade of the first century, Polycarp, as a Christian from an early age and as one who was given leadership in a major church at a fairly early age (bishop of Smyrna), would undoubtedly have had close ties with John. The only way to escape this conclusion is to deny that John was in the area so late, and to do this, one must dismiss a quite credible tradition. See Appendix 2.

⁸⁶For a recent defense of the thesis that Ignatian was influenced by Johannine thought, see C. P. Hammond Bammel, "Ignatian Problems," 87-97; also Brown, Community, 156-8, Epistles, 57-9, 113, and Gospel, lxxx; and Robert M. Grant, "Scripture and Tradition in Ignatius of Antioch," 47, in After the New Testament (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967), 43, 47. But note the conclusion of James M. Robinson, "The Johannine Trajectory," 232-3, in J. M. Robinson and H. Koester, Trajectories through Early Christianity (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971) and C. C. Richardson, "Ignatius and John," 68-75, in The Christianity of Ignatius of Antioch (New York: Columbia University Press, 1935).

⁸⁷Elizabeth S. Fiorenza, "The Quest for the Johannine School: The Apocalypse and the Fourth Gospel," New Testament Studies 23 (1976-77): 402-27.

⁸⁸Kümmel, Introduction, 442-5.

⁸⁹The relationship is generally thought to be that the author of the epistles was reacting to an improper interpretation of the Gospel. See Brown, Community, 171-82, "Recent Reconstructions of Johannine Community History," for a review of several recent theories.

⁹⁰See Appendix 6.

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⁹¹See Brown, Epistles, 113.

⁹²Ibid., 103.

⁹³Brown, Gospel, lxxxv.

⁹⁴The only period for an independent Johannine community is that from its break with the synagogue in the late 80s to sometime before Ignatius passed through the area c. 110 C.E., as I have just argued.

⁹⁵The use of the Johannine material in the second-century catholic community is problematic. It does not seem to have been used extensively until the time of Irenaeus. But the same seems to be true for most of the New Testament. See n. 86 in regard to whether Ignatius was influenced by Johannine thought. For a fuller discussion, see Brown, Community, 147-50.

⁹⁶For example, Brown, Epistles, 108-12, and in Community, 161-2, and Koester, Introduction, 2:193-6.

⁹⁷Chapter 21 of the Fourth Gospel is the key to that reconstruction.

⁹⁸Dunn, Unity and Diversity, 118. Brown and Koester both tried to demonstrate a catholic emphasis in 1 John. Koester, Introduction, 2:195, listed elements in 1 John that he thought do not have a foundation in the Fourth Gospel but do reflect emphases in the catholic tradition. One could, however, question whether these elements are not found in the Fourth Gospel, or, if they are absent from the Fourth Gospel, that they should therefore be considered foreign to the thought of the community who might appreciate the Fourth Gospel. See, too, Brown, Epistles, 108-12, and Community, 159-62. Brown, however, qualifies the ecclesiastical element in 1 John (Epistles, 108) and can be used against Koester to some extent.

⁹⁹1 John 2.20, 27; 3.19-20; 4.13; 5.20. See Dunn, Unity and Diversity, 119.

¹⁰⁰1 Tim 1.3; 3.2; 5.17; 2 Tim 1, 11, 13; 2.2, 24; Titus 1.9; 2.1.

¹⁰¹Consider the various stories in which Peter figures as the central character. There is the changing of Peter's name (John 1.40-42). Why would the Johannine community be particularly interested in that? Andrew is referred to as Simon Peter's brother (6.8). This suggests that the Johannine community was well

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acquainted with Peter. Peter is credited with insight and faithfulness when so many followers desert (6.68). Peter is not rebuked for not wanting his feet washed. His commitment is wholehearted (13.6-10). Peter and the Beloved Disciple are considered close friends (20.2; 21.7).

¹⁰²Brown, Community, 84, and Churches 91-2, showed how Peter is subordinated to the Beloved Disciple. But it must be noted that of all the disciples, it is Peter who stands in a special relationship with the Beloved Disciple (see n. 101).

¹⁰³Compare how Philip (1.43-8; 6.5-7; 12.21-2; 14.8-9) and Thomas (11.16; 14.5; 20.24-9; 21.2) figure in the Fourth Gospel compared to Peter.

¹⁰⁴Bauer, 89-90/ET:85-6.

¹⁰⁵Koester, Introduction, 2:193-6; unlike Bauer, Koester holds the modern theory that there was a separate Johannine community, but he recognizes that one element of this Johannine group did align itself with the catholic community.

¹⁰⁶Daniélou, The First Six Hundred Years, 39-44, argues for a heavy Johannine influence in Asiatic Christianity.

¹⁰⁷Smith, "Johannine Christianity," 237-8, 240.

¹⁰⁸Bammel, "Ignatian Problems," 87.

¹⁰⁹Brown, Epistles, 103-7.

¹¹⁰Robinson, Redating the New Testament, 258-9; 291-2.

¹¹¹Brown, Community, 15.

¹¹²See pp. 147-9.

¹¹³See n. 98.

¹¹⁴See p. 151.

¹¹⁵Brown, Churches, 147.

¹¹⁶The exact character of the various opponents is difficult to establish. One need not establish that all these various opponents belong to the same movement. In fact, a sharper sense of adequate and suspect beliefs might be demonstrated if the various censored groups were not part of the same movement, for then the grounds for the rejection of these groups would seem to lie, not

Notes to Chapters Four and Five

in the particular definable social or religious group to which they belong, but in the theological assumptions and declarations they make. It seems that for the early church, Jewish (or Judaizing) elements and docetic/gnostic trends met with rejection or serious qualification from a wide spectrum of the Christian movement. That is not to deny that some of the writings accepted by the catholic community reflect Jewish or gnostic-like strains, but these are always strains that are checked, and that is the significant observation for gaining some sense of the pool of acceptable diversity.

¹¹⁷The main problem would be to determine whether these groups had much more in common than common enemies. Then there is the lack of precision in defining the various opponents. It could be that a sharply anti-gnostic work would have included in its attack a position like that of the Fourth Gospel, which might itself have criticized a more blatantly-gnostic position.

Notes to Chapter Five THE DETECTION OF HERESY

¹See chapter 1, pp. 3-6.

²The only framework that Bauer seemed to allow is the moral framework; doctrinal issues do not play a role until the second century. See chapter 10, especially p. 235/ET:237 of Bauer, Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971).

³It is Rome that is the driving force behind this obsession, and the first indication of this concern is reflected in 1 Clement (c. 95), according to Bauer. See the summary of Bauer's position in chapter 10 of Orthodoxy and Heresy.

⁴See Hans Dieter Betz, "Orthodoxy and Heresy in Primitive Christianity: Some critical remarks on Georg Strecker's republication of Walter Bauer's Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum," Interpretation 19 (1965): 303, 305-8.

⁵Two sound articles on the subject are Leonhard Goppelt, "The Plurality of New Testament Theologies and the Unity of the Gospel as an Ecumenical Problem," in The Gospel and Unity, ed. Vilmos Vajta (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1971), (hereafter "Plurality"); and I. Howard Marshall, "Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earlier

Notes to Chapter Five

Christianity," Themelios 2 (1976): 5-14.

⁶Note the numerous documents in the collections of The Nag Hammadi Library in English, translated by members of the Coptic Gnostic Library Project of the Institute for Antiquity and Christianity (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1977), and New Testament Apocrypha, 2 vols., eds. Edgar Hennecke and Wilhelm Schneemelcher, trans. R. McL. Wilson (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963, 1965). Most of the documents are attributed to an apostle, though in the Coptic material, some of the documents are attributed to others from the first century (e.g. Silvanus, though he may have been considered an apostle) or from the ancient past (e.g., Adam and Seth).

⁷Jewish and gnostic ideas seem to receive a colder reception in the catholic church of the second century. The matter is complicated by the developments and modifications that would have occurred in any system of beliefs first expressed in rudimentary form (this applies particularly to gnostic ideas).

⁸Rev 2.15 (Pergamun) and 2.20 (Thyatira).

⁹See William R. Schoedel, "Theological Norms and Social Perspectives in Ignatius of Antioch," in Jewish and Christian Self-Definition, vol. 1., The Shaping of Christianity in the Second and Third Centuries, ed. E. P. Sanders (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 32.

¹⁰As is pointed out by Elaine H. Pagels, "'The Demiurge and his Archons'--A Gnostic View of the Bishop and Presbyters?" Harvard Theological Review 69 (1976): 301.

¹¹See n. 3.

¹²Pagels, "Demiurge," 301.

¹³Ibid., 303.

¹⁴James D. G. Dunn, Unity and Diversity in the New Testament (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977), 279.

¹⁵Ibid., 281.

¹⁶Ibid., 282.

¹⁷Ibid., 283.

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¹⁸Maurice Goguel, The Birth of Christianity, trans. H. C. Snape (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1953), 425.

¹⁹Ibid., 411

²⁰Ibid., 404-5. Goguel had a theory that the letter to the Ephesians was the work of an interpolator using a framework of genuine Pauline material. Goguel's comments relate to the interpolator.

²¹Schoedel, "Theological Norms," 32.

²²Ibid., 35.

²³Howard Clark Kee, Franklin W. Young and Karlfried Froehlich, Understanding the New Testament, 3d. ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1973), 249.

²⁴In particular, see Leonhard Goppelt, "The Plurality of New Testament Theologies and the Unity of the Gospel as an Ecumenical Problem," in The Gospel and Unity, ed. Vilmos Vajta (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1971), 106-30.

²⁵See nn. 4 and 5 above.

²⁶Helmut Koester, "Gnomai Diaphoroi. The Origin and Nature of Diversification in the History of Early Christianity," Harvard Theological Review 58 (1965): 284.

²⁷See Pagels, "Demiurge," 301.

²⁸As Irenaeus explains in the preface of his work against heresies: "[The heretics] also overthrow the faith of many, by drawing them away, under the pressure of [superior] knowledge,...By means of specious and plausible words, they cunningly allure the simple-minded to inquire into their system;...[T]hese simple ones are unable, even in such a matter, to distinguish falsehood from truth. Error, indeed, is never set forth in its naked deformity, lest, being thus exposed, it should at once be detected" (A.H. Preface 1-2). Irenaeus then goes on to offer a full treatment by which the errors of the gnostics are brought to light.

²⁹A number of questions have yet to be resolved about the conflict reflected in Paul's letter to the Galatians; see Hans Dieter Betz, Galatians, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 6-7. The situation in Galatia will serve to illustrate my point, provided that the Galatian opponents presented circumcision as a means by which additional blessings (particularly, the promises made to Abraham) could be received by gentile converts.

Notes to Chapter Five and the Conclusion

³⁰See the larger discussion of this issue in: William Hornbury, "The Benediction of the Minim and Early Jewish-Christian Controversy," Journal of Theological Studies, n.s. 33 (1982):19-61.

³¹Bauer, 237/ET:235; Goguel, 400, 431.

³²Rev 2.14-15. Sexual immorality is included, too. It is unclear what the relationship is between the Nicolaitans and those who hold the teachings of Baalam, but most scholars believe the reference to Baalam is a polemical slur against the Nicolaitan group. Cf. C. B. Caird, A Commentary on the Revelation of St. John the Divine, Harper's New Testament Commentaries (New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, 1966), 38-9. The same applies to the reference to Jezebel (Rev 2.20-22).

³³From 1 Corinthians alone, the list of moral and community failure is long: incest (5.1); lawsuits in the civil courts (6.1-8); relations with prostitutes (6.15-16); complicated marriage issues (ch. 7); insensitivity in eating foods offered to idols (ch. 8); idolatry (10.14-22); drunkenness at the eucharist (11.18-22); and disorderly worship (11.1-15; 14.1-24). But Paul could make an issue out of points of doctrine, too. His words concerning the resurrection of the dead show how much importance he could place on correct belief (15.12-18).

³⁴See Appendix 6.

³⁵The author of 1 John is prepared to make an issue of doctrine the dividing line between true believers and false believers (1 John 2.22-23; 4.1-3).

Notes to the CONCLUSION

¹A number of scholars have called attention to the character of self-definition as process. Ben F. Meyer, "Self-Definition in Early Christianity," Colloquy 37 (1980). Meyer calls special attention to self-definition as the terminus of a process (p. 1). R. A. Markus, New Blackfriars 54 (1973): 283-4, speaks of self-definition as a "crystallizing self-awareness." Here, too, a process is implied. George W. MacRae, "Why the Church Rejection Gnosticism," in Jewish and Christian Self-Definition, 127 says: "It is now as much a dogma of scholarship as its opposite used to be: orthodoxy is not the presupposition of the early church but the result of a process of growth and development." But, as I have argued throughout this dissertation, that "dogma of scholarship"

Notes to the Conclusion

must be modified. It is not "orthodoxy" that is the result of a process of growth and development; rather, it is the self-understanding or self-definition of the orthodox community that is the result of growth and development. Failure to understand that distinction has made scholars hesitant to use the terminology of orthodoxy and heresy for the first-century church, and has generally led to negative assessments of early diversity when positive assessments would have reflected a greater sensitivity to the way in which the self-definition of a group comes about. My attention to self-definition as process differs from the others in that I attempt to deal more concretely with the phenomenon. I have done that by dealing only with the factors by which a heretical viewpoint comes to be "detected." This approach has made it possible to demonstrate not just that self-definition is a process, but that the character of self-definition as process is a necessary feature of self-understanding and definition. The limitation of my approach is that I have dealt only with the negative side of self-definition (determining what is not part of orthodoxy); I have not dealt with the positive side, in which the orthodox community experiences growth and refinement of the traditions they hold. It is to this side of the issue that works like Meyer's calls our attention.

²H. E. W. Turner, The Pattern of Christian Truth: A Study of the Relation Between Orthodoxy and Heresy in the Early Church, The Bampton Lectures, 1954 (London: A. R. Mowbray & Co., 1954). And notice should be given, as well, to Frederick W. Norris, "Ignatius, Polycarp, and I Clement: Walter Bauer Reconsidered," Vigiliae Christianae 30 (1976): 23-44. Norris calls attention to "Bauer's inability to grasp the differences between the beginning of a process and its fullest developments."

³A number of short articles have criticized Bauer's position (see chapter 1, n. 32). One dissertation has been presented: Jerry R. Flora, "A Critical Analysis of Walter Bauer's Theory of Early Christian Orthodoxy and Heresy," Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1972. But Flora's work does not concentrate on the historical issues, though it does provide insights into elements in Bauer's own life that brought the kind of work to shape that we find in Orthodoxy and Heresy in Early Christianity.

Notes to Appendix 1

ORIGEN'S VIEW OF PRIMITIVE DIVERSITY:
AN EXCEPTION?

¹Marcel Simon, "From Greek Hairesis to Christian Heresy," in Early Christian Literature and the Classical Intellectual Tradition (Paris: Beauchesne, 1979), 107, said: Origen only abandons to his adversaries sects such as the Ophites and the Cainites who "do not share with us even the name of Jesus." R. A. Markus, "The Problem of Self-Definition: From Sect to Church," in Jewish and Christian Self-Definition, vol. 1, ed. E. P. Sanders (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 8, said that Origen alone was aware of the complexities of the primitive Christian community. See, too, Norbert Brox, "Haresie," in Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum, eds. Theodor Klauser et al (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1984), 13:267-8.

²The citations of Origen are from Origen: Contra Celsum, translated with an introduction by Henry Chadwick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965).

³See Walter Bauer, Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity, 134-49/ET:130-46, a chapter titled, "The Confrontation Between Orthodoxy and Heresy: General Characteristics and Operating Procedures."

⁴Not all churchmen saw orthodoxy and heresy in completely black and white terms. Irenaeus (A.H. 2.31.1) spoke of "the more moderate and reasonable" among the heretics, who were likely to be converted to orthodoxy. And Justin (Dia. Try. 35), though rejecting many who were part of the Christian movement, was prepared to accept circumcised, Judaizing gentiles, in spite of other orthodox Christians having a less tolerant view of such people.

⁵See Bauer, 134-49/ET:130-146. As early as the late first century, words like "liar" and "anti-Christ" were being used by certain Christians against others who confessed Christ in some way (1 John 2.4; 18-19; 22). A decade later, Ignatius reflects a even more colourful stock of polemical terms for use against certain Christians (see pp. 287-8, n. 98).

⁶Celsus apparently reported that Christians had used such terms of one another. See Clement of Alexandria, Strom. 7.95.1 for a comparable polemic.

⁷Origen was not without a category "heretic" (Contra Celsum 5.61-4).

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⁸Origen used the term "Great Church" (or simply, "Church") for that ecclesiastical element that can be characterized by the last quarter of the second century as: (1) having the allegiance of the majority of Christians (Contra Celsum 5.61); and (2) standing apart from the Gnostics, Valentianians, Marcionites, Jewish-Christian sects and a variety of other groups apparently claiming the name "Christian" (5.61-2). Origen clearly identified himself with the Great Church (5.61).

⁹Although Marcionites were specifically mentioned by Celsus in a later place (5.62), Celsus seemed to have the Marcionites in mind when he, without naming the group, spoke of those who "think there is another God to whom [the God of the Jews] is opposed, and that the Son came from the latter" (5.61). Although this could have been simply a general report of gnostic groups and not specifically of the Marcionites, it is more likely a reference to the Marcionites for the following reasons. (1) Celsus seemed to have intended to list major sects within Christianity. He noted that a "third kind" existed [i.e., the Valentinians (5.61)], and it is reasonable to expect that the first two groups, discussed immediately before the Valentinians, referred to major distinctive groups. Origen considered one of these groups to be the Great Church. The only other group of comparable importance would have been the Marcionites. (2) The specific point that distinguished the second group from the Great Church was the view that the God of the Christians and the God of the Jews were not the same God (5.61). This is clearly the marked point of contrast between the Great Church and the Marcionites. (3) Although the Marcionites were mentioned by name at a later point (5.62), this was in the context of a list of numerous groups that followed particular leaders, several of which bore their leader's name. In this context, it would not be surprising to find the Marcionites mentioned, even if they had been singled out earlier as one of the main groups. The only point against the identification of this group as Marcionites is that Origen did not clearly make that connection, though he did provide specific identification for the other groups mentioned [i.e., Valentinians and Ebionites (5.61)].

¹⁰Origen provided the term "Valentinians" for what was unnamed by Celsus. Whether Celsus intended the Valentinians specifically, or gnostics more generally, is relatively unimportant. Irenaeus, writing about the same time as Celsus, clearly considered the Valentinians to be the major gnostic group (his work against heretics is mainly directed against the Valentinians). That Celsus knew them as the major gnostic sect is certainly possible; that they continued to be the main gnostic group up to the time of Origen seems likely, since that was the name that came to Origen's mind for this unnamed group with gnostic characteristics.

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¹¹See n. 10.

¹²This is a summary statement regarding those who "hold opinions other than those" that the Great Church accepted (5.63). It would seem that Origen included in his remarks all groups, large and small, which existed apart from the Great Church--that is to say: the Marcionites, the Valentinians, the Ebionites, and a host of smaller and less well-known gnostic and Jewish-Christian sects.

¹³It is difficult to determine exactly what this means, especially if these various heretical groups had been without close contact with the Great Church.

¹⁴₁ Tim 4.1-3.

¹⁵In the first passage, Celsus attempted to discredit Christianity because it had spawned numerous sects; in the second passage, Celsus pointed out the variety of sharply-contradictory opinions among the various groups. In the third passage, however, Celsus was not discussing diversity, but a particular christological point.

¹⁶See n. 9. The charge here, as in the passage discussed earlier, was particularly relevant to the Marcionite sect.

¹⁷Contra Celsum 8.15. Origen had himself made extensive study of the various Christian sects. But fifty years separate Origen from Celsus, and a sect that had existed in Celsus' day might have ceased to exist by Origen's time. Also, a sect could have been geographically confined. Too, as an outsider, Celsus could have misunderstood some detail of one of the many groups that promoted some kind of Christian teaching. But the possibility does remain, as Origen suggested, that Celsus created imaginary groups, though, given the variety of Christian groups in the society, Celsus would certainly not have been under any pressure to do so.

¹⁸In Contra Celsum, preface 1, Origen noted that the work at hand had been requested by Ambrose. In preface 2-3, Origen expressed some reservation about the whole exercise, but nonetheless attempted to do justice to Ambrose's request (preface 3).

¹⁹Origen said that it was not possible for people to be Christians if they "introduce strange new ideas which do not harmonize with the traditional doctrines received from Jesus" (5.61).

²⁰Origen said: "If the heretics are not won over, we observe the word which directed that they should be treated as

Notes to Appedices 1 and 2

follows: 'A man that is a heretic after the first and second admonition refuse.'" (5.63)

²¹For Origen, heretics are "perverted" and "self-condemned" (5.63); "branded in their consciences" (5.64); "they go astray in evil ways and wander about in great darkness of ignorance" (5.63).

²²The clearest passages are 2 Tim 2.18 and 2 Thess 2.2. In the first passage, the terms "ungodly" (2.16); "gangrene" (2.17); "wandering from the truth" and "destroying the faith of many" (2.18) are used to describe those who hold a strange view of the resurrection. In the second passage, the false belief about the day of the Lord is described in terms of "deception" (2 Thess 2.3). It is difficult to imagine that Origen would have held a positive view of this kind of diversity, which is so harshly judged by Paul.

²³1 Tim 6.20-21 and 1.19.

²⁴Eusebius gave an extensive account of Origen's life (most of Book 6 of the Ecclesiastical History). Note especially Origen's role in the confrontation with the heretic Beryllus (E.H. 6.33).

Notes to Appendix 2

JOHN'S RESIDENCE IN EPHEBUS

¹Raymond Brown, The Gospel according to John, Anchor Bible 29, 29A (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966, 1970; London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1971), 1:lxix, spoke of the "impressive evidence that John the son of Zebedee was in Ephesus," and he listed some of the second century evidence. Also, Werner Georg Kümmel, Introduction to the New Testament, rev. ed., trans. Howard Clark Kee (Nashville/New York: Abingdon, 1975), 239-46; Stephen S. Smalley, John: Evangelist and Interpreter (Exeter: Paternoster, 1978), 70-2; and C. P. Hammond Bammel, "Ignatian Problems," Journal of Theological Studies, n.s. 33 (1982):90-7.

²See J. J. Gunther, "Early Identifications of Authorship of the Johannine Writings," Journal of Ecclesiastical History 31 (1980):407-427.

³Ignatius's failure to mention John is noted by Brown, 1:lxix; Smalley, 71; and Bammel, 93-4, though Bammel has a novel explanation for Ignatius's omission of John (p. 96).

Notes to Appendices 2 and 3

⁴Delegates from three churches (Ephesus, Magnesia and Tralles) visited with Ignatius in Smyrna. The cities were all close together and in contact with another, as the various greetings in the Ignatian letters show. The only other city addressed by Ignatius was Philadelphia, and, according to the Apocalypse, this city seems to have been within the circle of churches for which Ephesus served as a centre.

⁵If John died in the late first century, then his death would have occurred within ten or fifteen years of Ignatius's visit. See n. 1 above.

⁶Smalley, 71.

⁷I do not mean to exclude oral traditions about Paul. It does need to be emphasized, however, that any Christian of the second century would have known Paul mainly through his writings.

⁸Ignatius's knowledge of the various texts of the New Testament is discussed by R. M. Grant, "Scripture and Tradition in Ignatius of Antioch, in After the New Testament (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967), 37-54.

⁹See Appendix 7, section II.

¹⁰See Grant, 37-54.

¹¹Ignatius did name Peter and Paul in the letter to the Romans (4.3). But the context is not one in which Ignatius was attempting to give greater authority to his position by appeal to particular apostles. And Peter was mentioned in ISmyr 3.2. But, here again, the reference to Peter does not reflect an attempt on the part of Ignatius to use the special authority of Peter. Peter appears in Ignatius's comment simply because Peter appears in the story that Ignatius wished to use in his argument, and Ignatius made no effort to gain mileage from the fact that it is Peter, and not some other apostle, who is mentioned there.

¹²IMag 6.1; 7.1; 13.1; ITral 2.2; 3.1; 12.2; IPhil 5.1; 9.1; ISmyr 8.1.

Notes to Appendix 3
POPULATION FIGURES FOR THE
EARLY CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT

¹According to Victor Tcherikover, Hellenistic Civilization

Notes to Appendix 3

and the Jews, trans. S. Applebaum (New York: Atheneum, 1970), 293, the average family had five members. Supposing that slaves often became Christians when their masters converted, the conversion of three families each year in Ephesus would have easily resulted in fifteen hundred converts during the period from the founding of the church to the turn of the century fifty years later. Allowing that one-third of this number would have been dead by the year 100 (which seems generous enough), there would yet be at least one thousand Christians in Ephesus shortly after the Apocalypse was written. And this is likely to be a low estimate.

²See Appendix 4. If we allow for a membership of about thirty people in each house church unit, then over thirty house churches would have existed in Ephesus when the Apocalypse was written, given even the most minimal success of the Christian mission. If we were to allow for the possibility of the conversion of ten families each year, well over one hundred house churches would have existed in Ephesus at the turn of the century.

³Robert M. Grant, Early Christianity and Society (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1977), 5.

⁴Ibid. 1-12, for general discussion.

⁵J. B. Lightfoot, The Apostolic Fathers, 5 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), part two, Ignatius & Polycarp, 1:458.

⁶Bo Reicke, The New Testament Era: The World of the Bible from 500 B.C. to A.D. 100, trans. David. E. Green (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968), 302-3.

⁷Reicke, 302, stated his assumption: "On psychological grounds we may assume that Christians and those connected with them were outnumbered by Jews and proselytes no more than fifty to one, for a smaller sect would have gone almost unnoticed." Reicke's assumption might be questioned as providing a figure either too high or too low. We really have no way to determine what figure is reasonable, though it seems we must admit that some assumption along the line of the one Reicke put forward could be useful. But see n. 12.

⁸Ibid. 304.

⁹Grant, Early Christianity, 4.

¹⁰ Robert M. Grant, "The Social Setting of Second-Century Christianity," in Jewish and Christian Self-Definition, vol. 1. The Shaping of Christianity in the Second and Third Centuries, ed. E. P.

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Sanders (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 18.

¹¹The figure of one million is an estimate, but several of the provinces must have had a considerable number of Christians (Asia, Phrygia, Pontus, Achaia, Syria, Egypt, Palestine and even Rome).

¹²Those figures are calculated by taking the population of the empire to be between fifty and eighty millions. One cannot rule out a group of this size having some visibility in a large society. The Salvation Army, the Seventh Day Adventists, and the Jehovah's Witnesses each constitute about the same percentage of the population of the United States as the Christians did in the Roman Empire, according to Grant's figure. But it is difficult to determine whether the comparison is useful. The early Christians may not have had the means or the desire to be a visible element in the society. Data for the groups mentioned above was taken from Carmody and Carmody, Western Ways to the Center: An Introduction to Western Religions (Belmont, California: Wadsworth, 1983), 221.

¹³See Grant, Early Christianity, 3-4.

¹⁴Lightfoot, Apostolic Fathers, II,2:458. Walter Bauer, Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 176/ET:173, criticized Ramsay and Harnack's interpretation of Pliny's statements.

¹⁵W. H. C. Frend, The Early Church (Philadelphia and New York: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1966), 56.

¹⁶Pliny wrote: "For it seemed to me a subject worthy of consultation, especially on account of the number of those in peril. For many of all ages, of every rank, and even of both sexes are and will be called into danger." The above translation is from Leon Hardy Canfield, The Early Persecutions of the Christians, Columbia University Studies in the Social Sciences 136 (New York: AMS, 1968), 184-5.

¹⁷W. H. C. Frend, "Early Christianity and Society: A Jewish Legacy in the Pre-Constantinian Era," Harvard Theological Review 76 (1983):61.

Notes to Appendix 4

THE HOUSE CHURCH

¹Abraham J. Malherbe, Social Aspects of Early Christianity, 2d. ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983); Hans-Josef Klauck, Hausgemeinde und Hauskirche in frühen Christentum (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk GmbH, 1981); Robert Banks, Paul's Idea of Community: The Early House Churches in their Historical Setting (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980); Peter Stuhlmacher, Der Brief an Philemon (Zürich: Einsiedeln, 1975), 70-5; N. Afanasiëff, "L'assemblée eucharistique unique dans l'église ancienne," Kleronomia 6 (1974):1-36; Wayne Meeks, The First Urban Christians (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1983), chapter 3, "The Formation of the Ekklesia"; Stanley Kent Stowers, "Social Status, Public Speaking and Private Teaching: The Circumstances of Paul's Preaching Activity," Novum Testamentum 26 (1984):59-82; Joan M. Petersen, "House-Churches in Rome," Vigiliae Christianae 23 (1969):264-272. Two older works are: E. A. Judge, The Social Pattern of Christian Groups in the First Century (London: Tyndale, 1960) and Floyd Filson, "The Significance of the Early House Churches," Journal of Biblical Literature 58 (1939):109-12.

²Meeks, 75, said that, though the house church was the regular place of meeting, sometimes the whole church would assemble together. Meeks did not indicate how frequently this larger meeting may have taken place. James D. G. Dunn, Unity and Diversity in the New Testament (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977), 129, referred to the house church and to a larger meeting of the whole church. He was unsure whether this larger meeting would have been weekly.

³Judge, 30-39.

⁴Malherbe, 97-100.

⁵Stuhlmacher, 71.

⁶Acts 2.46; 3.1; 5.12. There are no clear statements of Christian activity in the synagogues, but the involvement of members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen in the death of Stephen (6.9) and Paul's repression of Christians (9.1-2) suggest that Christians continued to retain their links to the synagogue.

⁷See Raymond E. Brown, The Community of the Beloved Disciple (New York: Paulist, 1979), 71-3.

⁸The possibly cool reception afforded Paul in Jerusalem and the apparent lack of support for his cause by the Christians of

Notes to Appendix 4

Jerusalem after he was jailed point to a continued loyalty to Jewish traditions on the part of a significant element in the church, as is reported by James in 21.20-21. The anti-temple strain is most clearly reflected in Stephen's speech (7.44-50).

⁹Acts 2.46; see Stuhlmacher, 70-1.

¹⁰Both the synoptic and the Johannine story of Jesus reports a group of disciples who were with Jesus on countless occasions. The importance attached to this closeness is reflected in the choice of a replacement of Judas (Acts 1.21-22).

¹¹See n. 9.

¹²C. F. D. Moule, The Birth of the New Testament, 3d. ed. (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1982), 179-80.

¹³Rom 16.5; 1 Cor 16.19; Col 4.15; Phm 2.

¹⁴See Meeks, 221, n. 7, for his objection to the position of Afanassieff.

¹⁵Moule, 180.

¹⁶Ibid., 180.

¹⁷Meeks, 75.

¹⁸Ibid., 221, n. 7.

¹⁹Koester, Introduction to the New Testament (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), 2:286.

²⁰Virginia Corwin, St. Ignatius and Christianity in Antioch, Yale University Publications in Religion 1 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960), 85. Ignatius told Polycarp to know each Christian by name. It is difficult to see in what way this statement could throw light on the structure of the regular assemblies. The problem would seem to relate simply to the size of the group for which Polycarp has responsibility, not to the size of the regular meetings.

²¹The Christians in Rome had recently come under pressure from the government. Justin was responding to what he judged to be unfair attacks, and it would have probably been to the advantage of the Christians in Rome for Justin not to have revealed much about the actual place of meeting of the various groups of Christians.

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²²See Meeks, 51. For a description of these kinds of dwellings, see Jérôme Carcopino, Daily Life in Ancient Rome, trans. E. O. Lormier (New York: Penguin Books, 1956), 33-64; see, too, Petersen, 264, 270-1.

²³Robert M. Grant, Early Christianity and Society (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1977), 149.

²⁴Moule, 189.

²⁵Quotations are from Origen: Contra Celsum, translated with an introduction by Henry Chadwick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965).

²⁶Grant, Augustus to Constantine: The Thrust of the Christian Movement into the Roman World (London: Collins, 1971), 204.

²⁷Grant, Early Christianity and Society, 149.

²⁸Judge, 30-39; Klauck, 83-5.

²⁹See discussion in Judge, 30-9.

³⁰Judge, 37. I find some difficulty with Judge's use of the Corinthian evidence (see n. 51 below). Also, I disagree with Judge that the households worshipped in the common meeting. It is more likely that they worshipped in a common meeting, which consisted of a few other households, and which would have been but one of dozens of similar church units in a city.

³¹1 Peter 2.18.

³²1 Peter 3.1.

³³This is especially clear in the situation at Corinth (1 Cor 7.13-16). Tension is reflected in the Gospel traditions, too (Matt 11.34-37).

³⁴See n. 13.

³⁵See Judge, 40-8; Klauck, 86-7; Meeks, 32; A. N. Sherwin-White, "The Early Persecutions and Roman Law Again," Journal of Theological Studies, n.s. 3 (1952):205-6.

³⁶See discussion in Sherwin-White, 205-6.

³⁷Tertullian, Ap. 38-9. See Sherwin-White, 206.

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³⁸Banks, 17, 30; Richard Duncan-Jones, The Economy of the Roman Empire: Quantitative Studies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 281-2, estimated that clubs averaged sixty members, with the rare upper range of 1200-1500 (p. 283). Meeks, 31, estimated the number at twelve to thirty or forty, and rarely more than one hundred.

³⁹Sherwin-White, 206, noted that the ban on associations ordered by Pliny was not the law under which Christians were judged by Pliny. This may be. Pliny seems to have been more concerned about the effect the Christians were having on the pagan religion and about the refusal of Christians to bow in the face of death. But, as Sherwin-White himself had to admit, the Christians claimed to have obeyed the ban on private assemblies. This makes it difficult to dismiss entirely the theory that Christian groups were restricted by the controls exercised over associations.

⁴⁰W. H. C. Frend, Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church (Oxford: Blackwell, 1965), 111.

⁴¹F. De Robertis, Il Diritto associativo Romano (Bari, 1938); cited by Sherwin-White, 206.

⁴²Tertullian, Ap. 38-9.

⁴³Pliny called Christianity a vicious and extravagant superstition (Letters 10.96.8); Tacitus called it a pernicious superstition (Annals 15.44).

⁴⁴George M. A. Hanfmann and Hans Buchwald, "Christianity: Churches and Cemeteries," in Sardis from Prehistoric to Roman Times (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1983), 188.

⁴⁵J. Jeremias, Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969), 37.

⁴⁶F. F. Bruce, New Testament History (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1972), 119, 145 contrasted the Christian quorum (two or three) to the Jewish quorum (ten).

⁴⁷Victor Tcherikover, Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews, trans. S. Applebaum (New York: Atheneum, 1970), 293.

⁴⁸J. G. Davies, The Early Christian Church (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1965), 207.

⁴⁹Hanfmann and Buchwald, 203.

Notes to Appendices 4 and 5

⁵⁰Davies, 149.

⁵¹Klauck, 30-41; so, too, Banks, 37-9; Judge, 37. When Meeks, 75, argued that there were large common assemblies to which the various house churches sometimes came together, he appealed to two passages from 1 Corinthians and one passage from Romans. It is doubtful, however, that any of these references tell us much about the structure of the church from the late first century until the mid-third century.

⁵²The synagogue in Corinth was next to the house of Titius Justus, who may have been a wealthy contributor to the building of the synagogue. He became one of the first believers (Acts 18.7), and Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, became a believer shortly thereafter (18.8). Those who reject Acts as of little worth for reconstructing concrete historical details in the life of the primitive church should note that the author has managed some consistency in his account at this point. The conversion of prominent men to the Christian movement goes far to explain how Gallio could have taken the side of this movement against the Jews (18.12-17).

⁵³According to the author of Acts, Christians were identified as a distinct group in Antioch (11.25). By the time of the writing of 1 Peter, the Christian community knew what it meant to suffer as "Christians" (1 Peter 4.16).

⁵⁴See Banks, 37-9; Klauck, 30-41; Judge, 37.

⁵⁵Cf. Raymond E. Brown, The Churches the Apostles Left Behind (New York and Ramsey: Paulist, 1984), 23.

⁵⁶Meeks, 76; Filson, 110.

⁵⁷See pp. 147-9, where I discuss the lack of distinctively Johannine leaders.

Notes to Appendix 5

THE HERETICS IN THE IGNATIAN LETTERS

¹C. P. Hammond Bammel, "Ignatian Problems," Journal of Theological Studies, n.s. 33 (1982):81-84; C. K. Barrett, "Jews and Judaizers in the Epistles of Ignatius," in Jews, Greeks and

Notes to Appendices 5 and 6

Christians: Studies in Honour of W. D. Davies, eds. Hamerton-Kelly and Scroggs (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976); L. W. Barnard, "The Background of St. Ignatius of Antioch," Vigiliae Christianae 17 (1963):193-206; Paul J. Donahue, "Jewish Christianity in the Letters of Ignatius of Antioch," Vigiliae Christianae 32 (1978):81-93; Einar Molland, "The Heretics Combated by Ignatius of Antioch," Journal of Ecclesiastical History 5 (1954):1-6; J. Rius-Camps, The Four Authentic Letters of Ignatius, the Martyr (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1979), 40-51; William R. Schoedel, "Theological Norms and Social Perspectives in Ignatius of Antioch," in Jewish and Christian Self-Definition, vol. 1. The Shaping of Christianity in the Second and Third Centuries, ed. E. P. Sanders (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 31-6; Christine Trevett, "Prophecy and Anti-Episcopal Activity: A Third Error Combated by Ignatius?" Journal of Ecclesiastical History 34 (1983):1-18.

²IMag 5.2; 9.1; 11.1; IPhil 3.3; 6.1; 8.2; 9.2.

³Schoedel, "Theological Norms," 102, thought IMag 9.1 and 11 were clearly docetic; Bammel, "Ignatian Problems," 83, thought that the two views might not have been entirely separate; and Donahue, "Jewish Christianity," 81, admitted that conclusive proof was not possible.

⁴IMag 4.1; IPhil 7.1-2.

⁵See Appendix 6, n. 1.

Notes to Appendix 6

IGNATIUS'S PRIMARY OBJECTION TO
THE SCHISMATICS' POSITION

¹IEph 5.2-3; 20.2; IMag 4.1; 6.1-2; 8.1-2; ITral 2.1-3.3; 7.1-2; IPhil 2.1; 4.1; 7:1-2; 8.1-2; ISmyr 8.1-2; 9.1.

²See chapter three, section H, pp. 97-113..

³Bishops are by the will of Jesus Christ (IEph 3.2); the bishop must be regarded as the Lord himself (IEph 6.1); the bishop presides in the place of God (IMag 6.1); the bishop is a type of the Father (ITral 3.1); the church is to follow the bishop as Jesus Christ follows the Father (ISmyr 8.1).

⁴The main passages are found in ISmyr 2-7, but see too ITral 9-10.

⁵See R. M. Grant, Gnosticism and Early Christianity, 2d.

Notes to Appendices 6 and 7

ed. (New York and London: Columbia U. P., 1966), 177-81; and Frederick W. Norris, "Ignatius, Polycarp, and I Clement: Walter Bauer Reconsidered," Vigiliae Christianae 30 (1976):35, n. 44.

⁶We learn nothing about the character and activities of the schismatics from charges that they are not the planting of the Father, or that they mix deadly poison with honeyed wine.

⁷IEph 7.2; 18.2; 19.1; 20.1; IMag 11; ITral 9.1-2; 10; ISmyr 2-7.

⁸See n. 6.

⁹Luke is the only synoptic Gospel with an account of Jesus eating food after the resurrection (24.40-42). In Acts, it is assumed that Jesus ate with the disciples over the forty-day period after the resurrection (1.3-4). The Fourth Gospel seems to reflect a similar tradition (21.12-15). Whether Ignatius knew the Fourth Gospel or the Luke-Acts narrative is not the point; the tradition seems widely enough known to suggest that when Ignatius used a similar tradition, he was not inventing the account.

¹⁰IEph 1.2; 3.1; 12.2; IMag 1.1; 5.2; ITral 4.2; 5.2; 10.1; 12.2; IRom 4.1; 5.1-3; 6.3; IPhil 5.1; ISmyr 4.2. See Frend, Persecution and Martyrdom, 199-200.

¹¹See nn. 4 and 10 above.

¹²According to Pliny, many people exposed as Christians denied that they were still Christians, claiming to have recanted some twenty years before. Pliny was prepared to allow an accused to go free if he would offer a sacrifice to the emperor and would curse Christ.

¹³Especially pp. 60-115.

¹⁴See chapter four, "The Passion of Christ and the Persecution of Christians," of Elaine Pagels, The Gnostic Gospels (New York: Random House, 1979), 70-101.

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¹P. N. Harrison, Polycarp's Two Epistles to the Philippians (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1936), 79-106.

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²Burnett Hillman Streeter, The Primitive Church, Hewett Lectures, 1928 (London: Macmillian and Co., 1929), 175-6.

³William R. Schoedel, "Theological Norms and Social Perspectives in Ignatius of Antioch," in Jewish and Christian Self-Definition, vol. 1., The Shaping of Christianity in the Second and Third Centuries, ed. E. P. Sanders (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 36-44. C. P. Hammond Bammel, "Ignatian Problems," Journal of Theological Studies, n.s. 33 (1982):78-9. W. M. Swartley, "The Imitatio Christi in the Ignatian Letters," Vigiliae Christianae 27 (1973) : 81-103. Fredric W. Schlatter, "The Restoration of Peace in Ignatius' Antioch," Journal of Theological Studies, n.s. 35 (1984):465-9.

⁴Schoedel, 40-1.

⁵J. B. Lightfoot, The Apostolic Fathers (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), part II, Ignatius and Polycarp, 1:2-22; 31-7; 50-69.

⁶W. H. C. Frend, "Early Christianity and Society: A Jewish Legacy in the Pre-Constantinian Era," Harvard Theological Review 76 (1983):60, notes that Pliny thinks Christianity can be treated mildly; A. N. Sherwin-White, Journal of Theological Studies, n.s. (1952):201, also notes "the extreme insignificance of the Christian communities in the vast framework of the empire," and concludes: "Hence there arises a general improbability either that the Christians seemed important enough to the government of Nero and Domitian to require a measure of universal suppression, or that any action taken was more than local and temporary."

⁷The Apocalypse and 1 Peter seem to be set in a context of persecution, as does 1 Clement. Numerous martyrs were leaders associated with Antioch or western Asia Minor: Peter, Paul, Antipas, Ignatius, Polycarp, Justin, and John, who though not a martyr, was the object of imperial persecution. See Bo Reicke, "The Inauguration of Catholic Martyrdom according to St. John the Divine," Augustinianum 20 (1980):275-83; also, Leon Hardy Canfield, The Early Persecutions of the Christians, Columbia University Studies in the Social Sciences 136 (New York: AMS, 1968).

⁸Tacitus, Annals 15.44, and Pliny's Letter to Trajan, both written in the first quarter of the second century, describe the Christians as objects of disgust. The relevant passages can be found in Canfield, 144-5; 183-5. Frend, Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church (Oxford: Blackwell, 1965), 197, notes that Christians always expected persecution.

⁹Accounts of riots and beatings are frequent in Acts and, if not in detail, certainly in general must reflect the atmosphere

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in which the early church sensed itself.

¹⁰Harrison, 97.

¹¹Bammel, "Ignatian Problems," 79.

¹²Ibid., 70; 70, n.2; 78, n.2. Although Bammel recognized that others may have been martyred, she did not consider this information when she attempted to determine whether the troubles in the church were internal ones or ones caused by persecution (p. 78).

¹³Harrison, 87.

¹⁴Bammel, "Ignatian Problems," 79.

¹⁵I am not convinced that the primary conflict in Antioch was between charisma and office. A comparison to the situation in the Didache must not be pressed; cf. Peter Meinhold, Studien zu Ignatius von Antiochien (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1979), 33. If there was tension between bishop and prophet in western Asia Minor, it was a situation in which the bishop seems to have gained the upper hand (unlike the situation in the Didache). See chapter 3, pp. 60-115, for detailed argument.

¹⁶Ignatius pleaded with the church at Rome not to prevent his martyrdom. Passages are found throughout his letter to the Romans (e.g. 4.1).

¹⁷Harrison, 102.

¹⁸Ibid., 102-3.

¹⁹See pp. 235-9.

²⁰See pp. 236-8.

²¹Most of the objections raised by Harrison and others are countered simply by admitting that an internal church struggle did take place in Antioch, and that it was this, in particular, that Ignatius had in mind when he spoke of the restoration of peace. But to admit this without also admitting external persecution prior to the internal conflict (which is what Harrison did) leaves too many questions unanswered.

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