

CHURCH ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

Organization

I. Background - biblical covenants (See O.P. Robertson's *The Christ of the Covenants*)

A. Adamic Covenant - Gen. 1:28; 2:15-17; 23,24

-Establishment of the primal organization: the FAMILY, the only association that then existed for collective worship, and still may function as the basic body of organized believers

Note the NT connection of how the church is called the family of God, e.g.,

“For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named” (Eph. 3:14,15)

“For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things *is* God. 5 And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; 6 But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.” (Heb. 3:4-6.)

God is called the Father and His place of worship is called God's house. Cf. Amos 3:1,2; Jer. 31:1,31ff.; Acts 3:25; I Tim. 3:16.

B. Noahic Covenant - Gen. 9:1-17

1. Establishment of the state

- a. The state as a social order with penal power grows out of the new proto-family - 9:9

As B.M. Palmer remarks, “The family may become the state, but it *is* the church” (p. 209). Children born within the state are automatically members of the

commonwealth, while not participating in all the privileges and responsibilities of citizenship. Aliens will have to be naturalized.

b. Civil gov't - 9:5-7

- 1) To mete out recompense. The focus is on punishment, a negative and legalistic function of the state, whereas when the church polices itself, the stress is on correction, an outworking of grace.
- 2) To restrain social chaos and praise those doing good (Romans 13)

2. Progressive Revelation

Avenger of blood - Num. 35:19,24,25

Caesar (magistrates, judges and kings) Mt. 22:21

Limited role of government - Rom. 13:1-7

Authority of gov't - I Pet. 2:13-14 "...submit for the Lord's sake"

NT death penalty - Acts 25:11

C. Abrahamic Covenant - Gen. 12,13,15,17,22,(26,28)

"Noah is treated as the head and representative of our race in the divine covenant after the flood... Yet the covenant with Abraham is referred to at least 10 times as often in later Scriptures. And of all OT names, with perhaps the single exception of that of Moses, Abraham's occurs oftenest in the Gospels, the Acts, and the Epistles. More is made of the brief narrative of his life in the teaching of our Lord and His apostles, than of the [NT] chapters and books devoted to the history of Joshua, Samuel, David, and all the kings of Israel and Judah put together." -- D. Bannerman, p. 3

Also, Paul devotes extensive space in his two theological epistles having to do with the vital doctrines of the Christian faith to what is said of Abraham in Genesis. Bannerman asks, "Why the emphasis on Abraham?"

Not because of his character, for he had his flaws. Nor because of his office as a prophet or his background of exaltation out of obscurity.

Bannerman suggests 3 reasons for Abe's NT significance:

1. He believed the gospel that was preached to him (Gal. 3:8,6; Heb. 4:2).

“Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.

7 Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.

8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.”

(Gal. 3: 6-8)

2. The covenant of grace as outlined to Abraham is the same gracious covenant that believers enter under the “new covenant” (Gal. 3:7,9,14,29).

3. The Abrahamic covenant organizes for the first time a continuing body of believers (in response to God's promises, for the purpose of worship and witness, with admittance under a covenantal initiatory sign, and with threat of judgment for covenant breakers).

1. The OT church (a society of those believing in the true God) was established out of Abraham's family - Rom. 4:11-13,17; Gen. 17.

11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which *he had yet* being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: 12 And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being *yet* uncircumcised. 13 For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. 17 (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were (Rom. 4:11-13,17)

At this point the terms of the promises originally made to mankind are enlarged and also sealed with a covenant sign.

a. Included a spiritual seed: slaves; many nations (Gentiles included)

b. As head of his clan, Abraham had been involved in affairs of state.

2. The three *sina qua non* of the visible church, or, proofs of the OT church beginning in the time of Abraham

See Mt. 28:19,20; 18:15-18 (cf. Belgic Confession 29, ca. 1561; Scots Confession 18, ca. 1560)

a. Preaching of the word - Gal. 3:8; Gen. 17:1,4,7-9; 18:19; Heb. 4:2

2 For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard *it*. (Heb. 4:2)

b. Administration of sacraments - Gen. 17:10-13

- 1) Circumcision - a symbol of a purified heart and initiatory rite into the covenant people - Jer. 4:4,14; Dt. 30:6; Rom. 2:28,29; Phil. 3:3
 - a) Not a national sign - established before the nation founded
 - b) This sacrament replaced by baptism under the new covenant - Col. 2:11,13; Gal. 3:27-29

¹¹ In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, ¹² buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with *Him* through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.¹³ And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses... (Col 2:11-13)

27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Gal 3:27-29)

2) Passover: again, a family observance

- a) Established before the Mosaic covenant
- b) Replaced by the Lord's Supper - I Cor. 5:7; Lk. 22:20,16

c. Discipline, the threat of being "cut off" - Gen. 17:14; Ex. 12:15; Lev. 7:20, 21; 22:3; I Cor. 5:6-13

Suspension and excommunication were practiced to keep the body pure.

3. Sacramental nature of Abraham's name change -Gen. 17:4,5; Rom. 4:17

II. Unity of the church between the dispensations - John 10:16; Rom. 11:17-25; Eph. 2:12-3:6

“And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.” -John 10:16

“That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: 13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. 14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; 15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; 16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: 17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. 18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. 19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;”

“For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, 2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: 3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, 4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) 5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; 6 That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:” (Eph 2:12-3:6)

IMPLICATION: The purpose, nature, and composition of the body will be much the same in essence between the Old and New Testaments.

This approach will have a bearing on church government as well as upon the assumption that children of believers continue as members of the NT church.

A. Terms for OT Church

1. *‘edah* (145X) = “A congregation; a meeting; an assembly” from *ya`ad*, “to appoint, meet, set”

Judges 14:8 - swarm of bees

Numbers 27:16,17 - “congregation of the Lord”

Joshua 22:12,16,17

2. *qahal* (123X) = “a commonwealth; the organized body that meets;” cf. *qoheleth*, the appointed speaker or president of the assembly. *qoheleth* is a noun related to the denominative verb, *qahal*.

Leviticus 4:13-15 - the congregation (קָהָל) is distinguished from the organized representatives (*qahal*) who embody the society

Deut. 23:2,3 - individuals excluded from membership in the commonwealth could live inside the bounds of the community but not participate in ceremonies of the קָהָל

Exodus 12:3,6 - all the members/commonwealth of the gathering (*qahal`edath yisra'el*)

Actually, "edah" and "qahal" are quite interchangeable and are generally considered synonymous; see Num. 10:2,3; cf. 10:7

The shade of difference in meaning is amplified by the singular Greek translations of these two Hebrew words. Only in the later Apostolic church did an antipathy develop between the use of the words - James 2:2; (5:14) ctr. Rev. 2:9.

3. Greek translations in LXX

a. *sunagoge* = "a gathering or meeting," later "a place of meeting"

- used to translate "edah" 130+ times in the LXX

b. *ekklesia* = "a lawful assembly of all those possessed of the rights of citizenship"

- never used to translate "edah," but generally used for "qahal" (70+ times), although *sunagoge* is used 37 times for "qahal," mainly in Exodus and Leviticus.

c. Conclusion: "*sunagoge* ...always means a meeting assembled or congregated, although possibly bound together by no special tie; but *ekklesia* ...denotes a number of persons who form a people, joined together by laws and other bonds, although it may often happen that they are not assembled together, and that it is impossible that they should be so " --D. Bannerman, p. 92.

Scattered believers cease to be a *sunagoge*, or congregation; but separation of distance does not mean the body of believers, the *ekklesia*, is dissolved.

B. The NT Church

1. *ekklesia* (115 times in NT) = "church, assembly"

a. One secular reference - Acts 19:32,39,41

b. Allusions to OT Church/*ekklesia* in the NT

1) Direct references

- Acts 7:38 = "church in the wilderness"
- Heb. 2:12; cf. Ps. 22:22 = *qahal*

10 For it became him, for whom *are* all things, and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

11 For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified *are* all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, 12 Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. (Heb. 2:10-12)

2) Compare NT "Church of God" to LXX
"ekklesia kuriou" (*qahal Yaweh*)

e.g. Acts 20:28; I Cor. 1:2; 15:9; I Tim. 3:15

cf. Dt. 23:3, "assembly of the LORD;"
(Neh. 13:1 in LXX! = "church of God"); I
Chr. 28:8; Num. 16:3

c. Four forms of the Church under the New Covenant

1) Local congregation

Rom. 16:5 - singular

I Cor. 16:1 - plural, in a district

2) Collective singular for many local churches;
= Presbytery

a) City congregations

Jerusalem - Acts 6:9 = Synagogue of
Freedmen; Acts 8:1,3; 12:1; 15:4

Ephesus - Acts 20:17,20 = public
teaching house to house

Antioch - Acts 13:1 cf. 14:27

b) Congregations in a district

Palestinian "church in Samaria and
Galilee" - Acts 9:31 (NASB)

3) Generic use for church at large (visible
church)

I Cor. 10:32; 15:9

4) Entire body of elect through all time
(invisible church)

Eph. 1:22,23; 5:23,25

“...general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in
heaven” Heb. 12:23; cf. chpt. 11

d. English word for “Church”

Not derived from *ekklesia* but “kirika,” the Old
English cognate of the Greek *kuriakon* (Rev.
1:10).

2. Changes in the NT Church

a. Most ceremonial observances abrogated (Col. 2:14-
17,20,21; Eph. 2:15; Heb. 8:5; 10:1)

b. Initiatory rite universalized to include women
(Gal. 3:26-29)

c. Covenant meal focuses on new Passover Lamb (I
Cor. 5:7; Heb. 9:28)

d. Sabbath day changed to the 1st day

e. Gentiles received into church without having to
become Jewish proselytes (Acts 15) = abrogation of
outward ceremonialism and nationalism, although the
hope is still quite Jewish (Rom. 2:28,29; Gal. 6:16)

f. Worship and government shifted from temple to
synagogue system

g. Theocracy not to be realized till return of
Messianic King (Acts 3:19-21)

h. Significantly, the family, and not the
individual, is the basic unit comprising the NT
church. (Acts 2:39; 4:4; 16:15,31-33; Rom.
16:5; I Cor. 7:14; Col 4:15; Philm.

III. Separate functions of church and state in the Old Testament

This separation recognizes a close working relationship between these two spheres (D. Bannerman, pp. 145,6). Even in the NT, church elders ("wise man") were called upon to arbitrate civil disputes (I Cor. 6:5).

Still, division of labors between these two spheres supports the concept of a continuing religious body (i.e., the OT church) even after the state under Mosaic law began to fade away during the intertestamental period.

A. Each institution had different origins

1. Different time

--Church origins - Gen. 17

--significantly, the mighty nations from Ishmael and Esau are not included in the institution established through Abe

--National origins - Ex. 24 - Mosaic Covenant with civil code; Ex. 18:25ff. = machinery of civil government

2. Different covenants of authorization

State = Gen. 9; Exodus 19:5,6; chpt. 24

Church = Gen. 17

B. Different set of laws (Westminster Confession XIX:3,4,5): civil (Ex. 21) vs. ceremonial (Ex. 25ff)

C. Different office bearers

1. Distinct offices (although one person might serve in two kinds of office)

a. Priest vs. judges Deut. 17:12; II Chron. 19:8 >
Levites were not automatically judges

b. Judah vs. Levi

c. Evolution of political offices while church offices static

2. Distinct functions

a. II Chron. 19:8,11 = initial appeal process is separate in civil and in religious matters

b. Samuel vs. Saul in sacrifices (also King Uzziah)

c. Excommunication vs. capital punishment

3. Distinct opinions in judgment

a. Jer. 26:8-16 = religious condemnation of Jeremiah

b. Jehoiada uses Levitical guard vs. Athaliah (II Kgs. 11)

D. Often different membership

1. Proselytes in church but not nation - Acts 2:10,11

2. A new generation at Gilgal which were not in good standing in the church - Josh. 5

E. Different terminations

Sovereign state through 587 B.C., except for interludes, while a church hierarchy (Lk. 22:66) and true worship continued in the synagogue system through Christ's time.

IV. Historic Biblical Church Government

A. Developments

1. Patriarchs to Moses

a. Patriarchal priests

--before Abraham?

--Gen. 12:7,8 - Abram's altars

--Gen. 14:8 - Melchizedek = priest of the Most High God

--Job 1:5 - Job's familial intercession

--Ex. 18:1 - Jethro, priest of Midian

--Ex. 19:22,24 - priests out of Goshen

--Ex. 24:5 - "young men" (not necessarily Levites)

b. Patriarchal elders

--Ex. 3:16; 4:29 (Gen. 50:7)

--Ex. 19:7 - gov't context (vs. 5; Gen. 15:13-18)
Representatives of the people entrusted with
the word of promise

1) Ruling representatives with binding decisions

Adam, Abraham, Joshua (Josh. 24:15)
Joshua 9:18 = vow to Gibeonites

2) Office required wisdom, not necessarily age - Dt.
1:15. Note how similar are the qualifications of the
patriarchal elders to NT elders and deacons:

21 Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating
covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of
fifties, and rulers of tens: 22 And let them judge the people at all seasons: and it shall be, that every
great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge -Ex. 18:21-22

Ex. 18:26 shows appeal upward

3) Plurality

2. Moses to captivity

a. Ceremonial priesthood

1) Aaron's line - ctr. Ex. 19:6 (cf. Rev. 1:6)

2) Levites teach and often judge

--II Chron. 19:8 (cf. I Cor. 6:1-4)

b. Elders and princes continue

--Num. 11:16,17,24,25,29 = elders from among the
people serve as judges and prophets

--Jer. 26:10 = Princes of Judah

3. Captivity to New Covenant

a. Priestly services disrupted by Babylonian captivity

1) Temple burned in 587

2) Sacrifice resumed in 537 - Ezra 3:2

b. Synagogue system develops

1) Probably during captivity

--Ezk. 8:1; 14:1; 20:1; 33:30-33 - services in the house of a priest-prophet

2) "Ezra the priest, the scribe of...God"

--Ezra 7:12,6,10

--Neh. 8:2 = elements of synagogue meeting;
Neh. 8:9

3) Through intertestament period - Acts 15:21

- continuing dispersion
- priesthood secularized

B. The Synagogue

1. Organization

a. Minimum of 10 families to organize and hold services

b. Rule of elders (presbyters)

-- **plurality** (Mk 5:22; Acts 13:15) of at least three for decision making, who were also called "rulers of the synagogue" (cf. I Thess. 5:12,13; Heb. 13:7,17)

-- a "scribe" could give advice, but his decision was non-binding

-- **chosen** from the people by election of the people, or by appointment of regional sanhedrin (cf. apostolic appointments)

-- office **for life**, unless serious breach in conduct or belief

-- **President** (moderator) is equal in power to other elders, but is called the "chief ruler" by virtue of his prominence in leading worship and business - Crispus in Acts 18:8; ctr. Diotrophes in III John 9-11

c. Duties of elders:

"...to receive applicants for admission into the Church; to watch over the people as well in reference to their morals, as their obedience to ceremonial and ecclesiastical order; to administer discipline when necessary; and, in short, as the representatives of the Church or congregation, to act in their name and behalf; to 'bind' and 'loose;' and to see that every thing was 'done decently and in order'"
--Samuel Miller, *The Ruling Elder*, p. 34

- synagogue school; II Tim. 3:15?
 - direct worship
 - administer discipline; scourging in Mt. 10:17; excommunication in John 9; 12:42
 - manage finances; e.g., temple collections
 - care for poor
- d. Scribes = teaching elders whose learned advice was accorded greater weight. Note scribes who loved to sit in Moses' seat (Mt. 23:2). Often distinguished from elders (Lk. 20:1)
- e. "Parnassin" = these officers in charge of collections for the poor were akin to "proto-deacons"

2. Organic unity of believers

- a. Regional sanhedrin - Mt. 10:17; *Antiquities* 14:7:2
- sunedrion* = literally "to sit together"
- gerousia* = session of elders - Acts 5:21; 22:5
- b. Great Sanhedrin = Senate of House of Israel - Lk. 22:66; Acts 22:5 (Greek = "presbuterion"); *Antiquities* 12:3. cf. I Tim. 4:14
- heard appeals from Sanhedrins as well as blasphemy and heresy cases
 - presided over by high priest in Jerusalem
 - consisted of chief priests (which were the heads of the 24 courses of priests) and representative scribes and elders of the sanhedrins
 - sent out authoritative decisions by hands of *apostoloi*

3. Worship

- Recitation of Creed (*Shem`a*)
- Scripture reading
- exposition
- prayer

- praise, exhortations, and collections (D. Bannerman, pp. 132,3); Acts 13:15; 14:27

4. Significance of Synagogue

a. Transition out of sacerdotal worship

- from symbolic to real worship in spirit and truth
- from centralized worship to universal
- lent greater contact with Gentiles to proselytize, Acts 13:42,46; 17:4; 18:66

b. Rights and duties of individual members are stressed

- Return to earlier covenantal emphasis (Exodus 19:5,6) on individual priesthood of believers
- All join in worship (not just the priest/celebrant)
- Members choose own leaders

c. Simple yet strong form of representative gov't introduced into all the world: "a democratic system recognizing the wisdom of the aristocracy"

d. Conclusion: Largely a development of the intertestamental period, the worship and government of the synagogue became the bridge between the priestly structure of the church in the OT and the refined superstructure of the NT church.

When early Christians could no longer safely resort to the temple as a meeting place and "house of prayer," the synagogues continued to provide, not only a preaching point, but a place of meeting for the people of God (Acts 17:1,2,4).

Since little is said in the NT about the framework of the NT church apart from the description of church officers, it is logical to assume that the basic synagogue government was maintained in the apostolic church. This is confirmed by NT references to the already familiar titles of elder (Acts 11:30) and presbytery (I Tim. 4:14), not to mention synagogue (James 2:2; ctr. 5:14).

Jesus also affirmed that the temple system of worship would soon be replaced permanently by a more universal and spiritual worship (Jn. 4:21-24).

C. The New Covenant established

1. Abrogation of temple services for spiritual priesthood

a. Christ - the abiding high priest

Heb. 6:20; 7:24-28

b. Individual priesthood of believers

Rev. 1:6; cf Ex. 19:5,6

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." -I Peter 2:9

c. Spiritual sacrifices - not for atonement, but thanksgiving: Heb. 13:15,16

"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." --I Pet. 2:5

2. Continuing elements of synagogue

3. Know six requisites of church government with Scripture proofs from Thomas Witherow's *The Apostolic Church: Which Is It?*

a. Officers chosen by the people

--Acts 6:3,5

--Acts 14:23 (Greek *xeirotoneantes* = "showing of hands;" "elect by raising of hands" is a primary definition in *BAG* (p. 889) which cites several early church documents to show this was the early understanding of congregations' choosing leaders and delegates, although *BAG* translates the word in Acts 14:23 as "appoint" since the apostles are the subject of the verb. Cf. II Cor. 8:19 and the noun form in Is. 58:9, LXX.

TDNT IX.437 defines it by contemporary usage as "Raising the hand to express agreement in a vote...." The term also means to "nominate," the meaning *TDNT* applies to the usage in Acts 14:23: "The presbyters are nominated by Paul and Barnabas...and then they are instituted into their offices...."

b. Bishop = elder (and an elder = a bishop)

Phil. 1:1; Tit. 1:5,7; Acts 20:17,28

c. Plurality of elders

Phil. 1:1; I Pet. 5:1; Acts 14:23; 20:17,28; Titus 1:5,7

“Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons” -Phil. 1:1

“And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church. 28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers...” -Acts 20:17,28

“For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: 6 If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. 7 For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; 8 But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; 9 Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught” -Titus 1:5,7

d. Ordination is by a plurality of elders

Acts 6:6; 13:1-3; I Tim. 4:14

“Whom (the deacons) they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.” -Acts 6:6

“Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. 3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.” -Acts 13:1-3

“Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.” -I Timothy 4:14

Exception for ordination at the hands of an apostle must be recognized: 2Tim 1:6, Tit 1:5, 1Tim 5:22

e. Church government is in the hands of the corporate representatives (I Thess. 5:12; Heb. 13:17; I Pet. 5:1-3) to whom there is a right of appeal, Acts 15:2,4,22 (note variant in 15:23); Acts 16:4.

“And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; 13 And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake.” -I Thess. 5:12,13

“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief.” -Heb. 13:17

f. Christ is the only Head of the Church, I Pet. 5:4

(see D.1 below)

“Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.” -I Peter 5:3,4

D. Authority in the Church

1. Source: Christ the Head of the Church

I Pet. 5:2,4; Mt. 16:18; Eph. 2:20; Mt. 28:18

2. Vested in the official representatives collectively

Hebr. 13:17; I Pet. 5:2,3; I Thess. 5:12; Mt. 18:17 (cf. Deut 19:15-17); 24 elders of Rev. 4

3. Nature of it is judicial and declarative, not penal or legislative

Mt. 18:18 (Greek here is a future perfect)

“Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be (“shall have been”) bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be (“shall have been”) loosed in heaven.” -Mt. 18.18

Cf. verb tense of Matt. 16:19

Nature of the great commission, Matt. 28:18-20

Acts 8:20-23 = Simon Magus is shut out yet given terms for admittance