

PEOPLE OF GOD HAVE LEADERS
John the Baptist, Jesus, and Apostles
Saint Paul

March 3, 2021

Biblical Leaders

Biblical leaders function by virtue of a special relationship with God.

They hear and obey the Word of God.

Some leaders present the messages from God to the people and/or lead by example.

Greatest task of leaders is to discern the will of God and inspire followers to know it and do it.

Apostolic Succession

All Catholic bishops are to be part of a lineage that goes back to the time of the apostles.

Role of apostolic succession is said to be illustrated in 2 Timothy 2:2 –

and what you have heard from me through many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will be able to teach others as well.

In this passage the author was said to have referred to the first three generations of apostolic succession – the generation that preceded him (and taught him), his own generation, and the generation he would teach.

Early Church fathers were linked in that chain of succession.

It became a test for who had correct doctrine (Catholics or heretics).

It was necessary at the time because heretics put their own interpretations on Scripture.

Something other than Scripture had to be used as an ultimate test of doctrine.

Identity of the oral tradition (the original revelation) was guaranteed by unbroken succession.

Additional safeguard was supplied by the Holy Spirit (laying on of hands).

Laying on of hands is referred to in the Hebrew Bible to accompany the conferring of a blessing.

Moses ordained Joshua through *semikhah* (by the laying on of hands) in Numbers 27:15-23.

Bible adds that Joshua was thereby *filled with the spirit of wisdom*.

Moses also ordained the seventy elders in Numbers 11:16-25.

Elders later ordained their successors in this way.

Successors in turn ordained others.

Chain of *semikhah* continued through the time of the Second Temple to undetermined time.



In the New Testament the laying on of hands is associated with the receiving of the Holy Spirit. At first the apostles laid hands on new believers by those who already believed.

New Testament also associates the laying on of hands with the conferring of authority or designation of a person to a position of responsibility. Greek word for *ordained* (*χειροτονήθηκε*) may be translated *extended the hand*.



First Council of Nicaea – 325 A.D.

Apostolic succession is much more than one taking an office from a predecessor although that is part of it. To combat the Gnostics St. Irenaeus listed apostolic succession as a way for each *legitimate* bishop to be able to trace his lineage to the apostles.

In the early day of the church, succession and tradition were synonymous with the Greek word *diadochi*. Tradition involved teaching and was linked to the person from whom that teaching derived. Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI wrote that tradition was *linked to a person, is a living word, that had its concrete reality in faith.*

Succession was proclaiming something that had been entrusted to someone by Christ himself. In Apostolic succession the lineage was not mutually exclusive from the teaching.

Both went hand-in-hand.

Throughout the Arian controversy there was this one constant.

Apostolic succession was holding fast to the apostolic word.

Just as tradition meant the continuing existence of authorized witnesses.

Succession is the form of the tradition and the tradition is the content of the succession.

Full Communion with the Episcopal Church – 1997

Full Communion proposal was called the *Concordat of Agreement*.

Churchwide Assembly that convened in 1997 took it to a vote after twenty-eight years of study.

Quote from Concordat that became the church dividing statement –

We agree that the threefold ministry of bishops, presbyters, and deacons in historic succession will be the future pattern of the one ordained ministry.

New bishops were to be installed by bishops who could trace their succession to third century.

If adopted all newly-elected bishops would be installed by three Episcopal bishops.

In addition there would be three Lutheran bishops who would share in the laying on of hands.

But some believed this contradicted what Lutherans had been saying since 16th century.

We did not believe that the historic episcopate was necessary for ordained ministry.

Augsburg Confession states that agreement in Word and Sacrament is only condition for unity.

Requirement of the Concordat was to adopt the hierarchical system of the episcopal structure.

It added a condition for unity which Lutherans had never had before.

The Concordat was defeated by six votes.

A new document went before the 1999 Churchwide Assembly and was adopted.

New document was titled *Called to Common Mission*.

ELCA would start to consecrate its bishops following the ancient tradition.

Tradition dated back to the 4th Century Council of Nicaea.

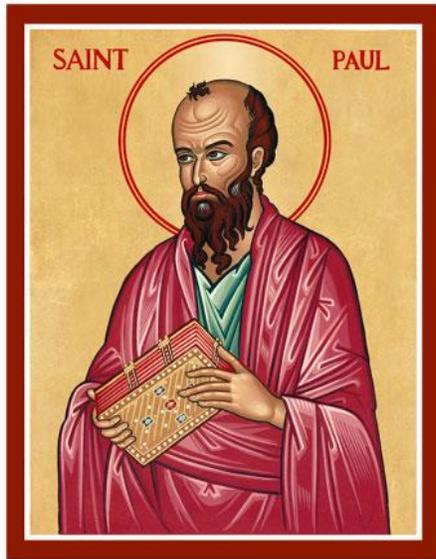
It required the presence of three bishops.

Bishops had to trace their ecclesiastical genealogy to the early days of the church.

First consecrations could include bishops from Lutheran churches in Scandinavia.

Episcopal Church would suspend temporarily its requirement that –
All bishops and parish ministers be ordained by bishops in historic succession.
Reconsecration of bishops and pastors was not required.

FINALLY WE TRANSITION TO SAINT PAUL



Process used to outline the life of Paul –
Use autobiographical materials in his letters
Compare the information with *Book of Acts*
Consider the extra-Biblical sources but not reliable

Example of latter is the stories about his death –
Some documents said he died by execution in Rome
Other stories claim he was set free and went to Spain
Still others say after Spain he was arrested once more
Being sent back to Rome he was then executed

What we do know about Paul –
Paul was his Greek name and Saul was a Jewish name
Having two names was not uncommon for Jews who
lived outside Palestine in Asia Minor

He came from a family of Pharisees of the tribe of Benjamin and was named after King Saul.
His letters show familiarity with the rabbinical interpretation of Scripture.
He was also familiar with popular Hellenistic philosophy which shows a more formal education.
Paul was a vigorous evangelist.
Paul also worked among his non-Palestinian congregations on a major project.
Collection for the poor was intended to reconcile the law-observant Christians with others.
He self-identified himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles.

Theology of Paul – Righteousness of God

Meaning of the phrase has been open to debate but term is the center of his theology.
Is it that faith becomes the condition by which individuals are made right before God?
Is righteousness a way of referring to the saving activity of God?
We jump ahead in the debate to better define what Paul meant by the term.

During the time from the apostolic fathers until the Reformation there were two interpretations.
Predominant explanation was it was the impartiality of God to enact judgment.
For Augustine the mercy of God and his righteousness could not be separated.
Luther argued that humanity acquired righteousness from God as pure gift.
It was a work from God on our behalf that was filled with grace and redemption.

Paul used the term to explain that for most Jews righteousness was a matter of hope.
For Paul it was a present reality.
We are righteous to the extent that we are acknowledged to be innocent before God.

Future hope of Judaism was directly related to the law.
Possible present reality which Paul proclaimed came solely from grace.
It is the faithfulness of God that overcomes our faithlessness.

2 Corinthians 5:11-21

Love of Christ is what keeps us together as a faith community.
His love is stronger than death so we are free to live for the very justice and mercy of God.
All that comes from God does not give us a special status or an immunity to suffering.
We become ambassadors for Christ like Paul.
Christ is the Righteous One who knew no sin.
He took on our death so that we might become the very righteousness of God.

Paul puts justification (the same root word as *righteousness*) alongside reconciliation.
To be reconciled to God is to be justified or made righteous.
Paul celebrates that in Christ the believers have been made right with God by God's doing.
It is the only way it can happen.

Philippians 3:2-11

Scripture passage starts with autobiographical data about the apostle.
He mentions his status and achievements within the Jewish tradition.
In many cultures of the ancient world, one's social status was determined by one's honor.
Honor could be due to the reputation of family and ancestry (who they were by birth).
In that sense people could do little to improve their ascribed honor.
Honor would also be acquired when one improved one's status through certain achievements.

Paul was the real thing in terms of his Jewish background.
He also took pride in gaining righteousness but not of his own doing.
He no longer strived for gain as his only gain was Christ.
In this passage he rejected righteousness that came from the law (self-earned).
He was made righteous through faith in Christ.
New goal was to know Christ and the power of his resurrection.
Important to recognize that Paul was still a Jew who was hoping to bring a new vision to others.
He wanted to reform the understanding of righteousness and obedience to the Torah.

Paul envisioned an inclusive society that was open to Jews and Greeks.
He endorsed a society that celebrated differences.
Result was a passionate invitation to love and embrace all people.

Key to Paul's Christology

Two aspects of his thought and teaching about Christ was the sending of His Son and his death.
In Hellenistic Judaism God sends *Torah* or *Wisdom* or the *Logos* for the salvation of humanity.
For Paul the sending was not merely a prophetic proclamation or divine illumination.
Sending of the Son of God was a concrete act that achieved salvation for all.
It was the good news in human form.
For Paul it was not the sending alone that resulted in the salvation of the world.
What mattered to Paul was the whole scheme of the Christ-event.

Sending resulted in one very specific occurrence that was key to the whole meaning.
In the mind of Paul the death of Jesus (the cross of Christ) was the heart of the Christ-event.
Cross and resurrection were joined inseparably.
One without the other was meaningless.
Without the resurrection the cross was the tragic end of an apparently good man.
And without the cross the resurrection does not hold its Christian meaning.
One who was raised remains the One who was crucified and the One whom we confess as Lord.

Paul spoke of the death of Jesus Christ as obedience.
It followed the pattern of thought in Hellenistic Judaism of humiliation that leads to exaltation.
We hear the same message in Isaiah and with the early Church fathers.
It is expressed through the terms *Suffering Servant*, *Son of Man*, *Logos*, *Righteous One*.
In each of these texts the chief figure is humbled and then exalted.
Saving humiliation-exaltation is proclaimed through a specific historical figure, Jesus Christ.
Paul is clear that God established the salvation of humanity in the crucifixion-resurrected Jesus.

Paul also spoke of the death of Jesus in relation to sacrifice.
He never called the death a sacrifice directly.
However he employed various sacrificial images from the Hebrew Bible.
In Romans, the word *mercy-seat* spoke of the notion that the death of Christ covered our sins.
Death of Christ ended the bondage of humanity to sin.
Paul also referred to the death of Christ as the seal of the new covenant.
Old covenant was that of the law with its promise of forgiveness upon the basis of repentance.
New covenant is that of the delivery of humanity and freedom from the power of sin.
God acted to establish a new covenant through the death of Christ for all time.

Paul also used the idea of the Passover lamb to interpret the death of Jesus.
1 Corinthians 5:7 – *Christ our paschal lamb has been sacrificed*.
Israelite homes were marked with the blood of the Passover lamb.
It made the passing of death possible.
It brought about the exodus of Israel from Egypt to Canaan.

One more way that Paul spoke of the death of Christ was as redemption.
1 Corinthians 6:20 – *For you were purchased at a price*.
Thought process came from his background in the Greco-Roman world.
Slaves were occasionally bought free (often in the name of a god).
Notion is taken as a metaphor that communicates that death of Jesus produces liberation.
Price was paid by God.
Purpose of the redemption was to bring to realization the promises of God.
For Paul the promises of God are the gift of the Spirit as listed in Galatians.

Next Class on March 10

We continue our study of Paul