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AUTHOR ABSTRACT

Gerd Theissen opened up important questions concerning the conflict in earliest Christianity between “charismatic” and “community organizer” forms of itinerant leadership. This paper focuses upon the equally significant distinction between itinerant leadership and leadership from resident members of the community, examining evidence for the development from the former to the latter in early Christianity and evidence of the conflicts and difficulties caused by this transformation. It is also suggested that this change may be closely related to the development of more socially conservative patterns of instruction, such as those found in the “household codes.” These forms of instruction are increasingly ideological insofar as they provide (often theological) legitimation and naturalization of the dominant social order. In this particular trajectory — dominant at least within the New Testament itself — the transformation of leadership patterns and the development of increasingly ideological forms of instruction are inextricably interconnected.

On the subject of leadership patterns, as in so many areas of New Testament sociology, Gerd Theissen has drawn our attention to issues of considerable significance. In “Legitimation and Subsistence: An Essay on the Sociology of Early Christian Missionaries,” first published in 1975, Theissen proposed the following thesis:

> there were two types of primitive Christian itinerant preachers, to be distinguished as itinerant charismatics on the one hand and community organizers on the other. The most important difference between them is that each adopts a distinctive attitude to the question of subsistence. The first type arose in the social circumstances of the Palestinian region. The second, represented by Paul and Barnabas, arose in the movement of the mission into Hellenistic territory. Both types work side by side but come into conflict in Corinth (Theissen 1982: 28).

The itinerant charismatics, Theissen argued, followed the synoptic mission instructions requiring missionaries to depend entirely upon the generosity of others for their material support. Paul and his co-workers, on the other hand, insisted on working at their own trade to support themselves. While Theissen's sociological reconstructions of the Jesus movement in Palestine and specifically of the role of the wandering charismatics have not gone uncriticized,(FN1) the essential points of this thesis stand. It is clear from the synoptic mission instructions (Mk 6: 7-13; Mt 10: 5-15; Lk 9: 1-6, 10: 1-12) that Jesus is recorded as commanding his apostles not to take even the minimum of possessions on their travels, not even the bag, staff, and mantle characteristic of the Cynic preacher, and to depend on the support and hospitality offered to them (cf., Mt 10: 40-42; Mk 9: 38-41; Crossan 1993: 117-19; Harvey 1982: 218; Theissen 1978: 14-15; Lucian, Peregrinus 24). It is clear too that Paul knows this instruction of the Lord, even though he himself sets it aside and thereby behaves differently from other itinerant missionaries (Peter and others connected with the Jerusalem church), who were known to the Corinthian congregation (1 Cor 9: 1-23; cf., also, 1 Cor 4: 11-13; 1 Thess 2: 9; 2 Thess 3: 6-13). Moreover, the synoptic evangelists, especially Luke, reveal a tendency to downplay the Lord's command to charismatic poverty and to legitimate the Pauline practice of self-support through manual labor (Mt 10: 8; Lk 22: 35-36; esp. Acts 20: 33-35). Conflict over the issue of material support for itinerant missionaries was evident especially at Corinth, but more widely too (Horrell forthcoming; Horrell 1996, ch 5).

However, while Theissen has drawn our attention to a sociologically significant conflict between patterns of leadership activity, the two types of missionary leader to which he draws attention share one fundamental characteristic in common. They are both, as Theissen recognizes, itinerant forms of leadership. The focus of this paper is the distinction between two forms of leadership which also contrast and conflict in important ways in early Christianity, namely itinerant leadership and resident leadership (that is, leadership from those who are located in a particular community, over which they exercise leadership). I will argue that there are important distinctions to be drawn between these two patterns of leadership, that in general it is legitimate to speak of a development or transformation from itinerant to resident leadership in early Christianity, that there is evidence which reflects the tensions and difficulties which the diverse patterns of leadership caused, and that the transference of power from itinerant to resident leadership is a sociologically significant transformation which may be connected with the development of more socially conservative patterns of ethical instruction (especially the “household codes”).(FN2)

PATTERNS OF LEADERSHIP IN EARLIEST CHRISTIANITY

Although our evidence is scarce, and much of it relates to the Pauline churches, it is clear that the major locus of leadership power and authority in the earliest churches was in itinerant apostolic missionaries such as Peter and Paul. However, this bold statement must be clarified and qualified. Peter, James, and John, for example, were based in the Jerusalem community. They were, Paul says, its “pillars” (Gal 2: 9); yet they and others connected with them or with the Jerusalem community engaged in missionary activity over a wide area. “Certain people from James” arrived in Antioch at a time when Peter (Cephas), Paul, and Barnabas were there already (Gal 2: 11-13). 1 Cor 9:5 refers to the itinerant missionary activity (note periagein) of “the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas.” Jerusalem connections are also evident in the case of those who have come to Corinth and whom Paul denounces as “false apostles” in 2 Cor 11: 12-23. In the early days of their missionary activity, according to Acts, Paul and Barnabas had a specific link with the Antioch community (Acts 11: 25-30, 13: 1-15, 35), although this came to an end, possibly due to the success in Antioch of the Judaizing faction represented by the “people from James” (see Taylor 1992). However in Antioch, as in Corinth, it is clear that the major locus of authority lay with those who were itinerant missionaries. At Corinth Apollos was also influential, such that different people in the congregation claimed allegiance to Paul, to Peter, or to Apollos (1 Cor 1: 10-12).(FN3)

A considerable number of itinerant missionaries exercised authority and leadership in earliest Christianity. As well as the prominent leading figures, and the nameless others connected with James and the Jerusalem community, we hear also of other co-workers of Paul besides Barnabas. Some of Paul’s prominent co-workers — Silvanus, Timothy, and Titus — are named as partners in initial missionary activity (2 Cor 1: 19), as co-authors of epistles (1 Thess 1:1), or are sent as Paul’s authorized representatives (1 Cor 4: 17, 16: 10-11; 2 Cor 7: 5-8, 24). Paul also refers generally to co-workers and laborers (e.g., 1 Cor 16: 16), though these were not necessarily itinerant (cf., Phlm 1:1).(FN4) Indeed, we should be careful not to draw too sharp a distinction between itinerant and resident leadership. The leaders of the Jerusalem church are clearly both itinerant and community-based. There are also examples in the Pauline circle. Prisca and Aquila, for example, are co-workers who have spent time and hosted house-churches in a number of different cities — Rome (Rom 16: 3-5), Corinth (Acts 18: 2-3), and Ephesus (1 Cor 16:19). Phoebe is a diakonos of the church at Cenchreae, but is traveling to Rome (Rom 16: 1-2), and there are many other examples of people who are based in one Christian community travelling with messages or material support for Paul (e.g., Phil 2:25; 1 Cor 16: 17).

It is also clear that certain forms of resident leadership did exist within the various Christian communities, although here again evidence is scarce. The earliest New Testament letter, 1 Thessalonians, urges the brothers and sisters in Thessalonica "to respect those who labor among you, and have charge of you in the Lord and admonish you" (1 Thess 5:12; cf., also, Gal 6:6). A number of the gifts listed in 1 Cor 12: 4-11 and Rom 12: 6-8 and presumably exercised in the communities imply a certain degree of authority or leadership — prophecy, teaching, leading,(FN5) and so on. Indeed, prophets and teachers are listed second and third in the hierarchy of leading functions Paul outlines in 1 Cor 12:28. Whatever is the precise role or office of the episkopoi and diakonoi Paul addresses in Phil 1:1, these are clearly people in the congregation with some authority of oversight and ministry.

However, these various references give us few clues as to the precise patterns of leadership or the social position of the leaders. A few references do indicate that people of some social standing at least sometimes acquired roles of leadership and influence. Phoebe, for example, a diakonos of the church at Cenchreae, is described as a patron of many (Rom 16: 1-2). Gaius acts as host not only to Paul, but to the whole of the Corinthian church (Rom 16: 23).(FN6) An important piece of evidence is found in 1 Cor 16: 15-18; here Paul instructs the Corinthians to recognize and submit to the household of Stephanus, since they were the first converts in Achaia and have given themselves to the service of the saints. Paul here accepts to a degree the structure of the household; Stephanas is a leading figure and head of a household (cf., also, 1 Cor 1: 16). However, we must be careful to take all the evidence into account; it will not do to refer only to Stephanas as a leading figure and thus to use this evidence to support the view that "the household provided the leadership of the church," as Alastair Campbell does (1994: 126).(FN7) Campbell argues that leadership in the earliest churches was provided by the householders in whose houses the congregation met. These leaders were in fact "the equivalent of elders in all but name." Campbell argues that the term "elder" was essentially "a title of honor, not of office, a title that is imprecise, collective, and representative, and rooted in the ancient family or household" (1994: 246). In the first generation, he suggests, when the local church comprised separate groups focused on single households, the actual name "elders" was inappropriate, but it became inevitable in the second generation, with the expansion of the churches and the linking together of various house-congregations. Concerning the earliest churches he writes:

> The church that met in someone's house met under that person's presidency. The householder was ex hypothesi a person of standing, a patron of others, and the space where the church met was his space, in which he was accustomed to the obedience of slaves and the deference of his wife and children (Campbell 1994: 126).

Despite the male language (and male heads of households were certainly the norm) he points out that "the householder could also be a woman, of course" (1994: 126; cf., Col 4: 15). Certainly the influence of householders within the earliest congregations should not be denied, but neither should their exclusive leadership be assumed. When discussing 1 Cor 16: 15-18 Campbell mentions only Stephanas, the head of the household, as a leading figure (1994: 122-123). However, Paul, referring to "the household of Stephanas," urges submission "to such people (tois toioutois — plural!) and to every co-worker and laborer" (16: 16). In fact in the following verse he names not only Stephanas, but also Fortunatus and Achaicus (16: 17). These last two were most likely members of Stephanas's household, possibly slaves or freedmen (Fee

1987: 3, 829, 831-32). In the absence of substantive evidence it should not be assumed that leading roles — co-workers, prophets, teachers, etc. — were filled only or even primarily by heads of households. Similar comments might be made concerning Philemon, a householder who owns slaves (or at least owns Onesimos) and hosts a church. Yet the letter Paul writes is addressed also to Apphia and Archippus and indeed to the whole congregation (Phlm 1-2).

Although there was therefore some resident leadership within the earliest Christian communities, the primary locus of power and authority was with the itinerant missionaries who traveled between the churches. These included the most prominent apostles such as Peter, James, and Paul, but many others too — other "apostles" from the Jerusalem community and other "co-workers" of Paul's.

PATTERNS OF CONFLICT AND CHANGE

As we have already seen, Theissen drew attention to an early and significant conflict over models of itinerant leadership; should the itinerants support themselves, at least in part, through their own labor, or should they entrust themselves entirely to the generosity of supporters in the communities they visit? One danger of the latter model is that itinerant leaders may abuse and take advantage of those who provide support (note Paul's accusation in 2 Cor 11: 20). This danger is clearly a concern in the Didache, or at least in the second half of this probably composite document. In the context represented by the Didache (Antioch? late first century?), wandering prophets and teachers are still important and influential figures (Theissen 1978: 9; but note Patterson 1995: 324), yet careful instruction is given to congregations to guard against their being taken advantage of by those regarded as less than genuine. Although "the prophets" seem to be allowed some special freedom in their celebration of the Eucharist (Did 10: 7) they are to be judged according to the soundness of their teaching (11: 1-2, 10; cf., 2 John 10). But the main thrust of the instruction to the congregation concerns limitations on the provision of material support. The congregation has a basic duty to receive and support "the apostles and prophets," "according to the ordinance of the Gospel."(FN8) But those who come must only stay for one day, or two at most; if they remain three days they are false prophets (11: 5). Moreover, they must accept only bread for their journey; if they ask for money, they are false prophets (11: 6). There is clearly a danger that prophets will demand precisely these kinds of support: extended board and lodging, and money. The writer of the Didache is not one to be taken in by spiritual or charismatic legitimation: "no prophet who orders a meal in the spirit shall eat of it" (11: 9), and "whosoever shall say in the spirit, 'Give me money, or something else,' you shall not listen to them" (11: 12). The possibility of itinerants settling with the community is also recognized and regulated. "Travellers" who settle must work for their own food (12: 3; cf., 2 Thess 3: 10). But true prophets or teachers who settle in the community are "worthy of their food" (13: 1-2; cf., Mt 10: 10; Lk 10: 7; 1 Tim 5: 17).

Whatever the date of this material in the Didache, other evidence confirms that in at least some contexts or some strands of early Christianity, itinerant preachers remained influential at least into the second century. Lucian's account of the life of Peregrinus, a travelling Cynic who for a time became a Christian preacher and who died around 165 C.E., satirizes not only what Lucian regards as Peregrinus's desire for fame and glory but also the gullibility (again in Lucian's view) of the Christians who supplied his needs over-generously. Peregrinus was supplied with goods or money (polla chremata) by the Christians while in prison (Peregrinus 13). Later, Lucian writes: "He left home, then, for the second time, to roam about, possessing an ample source of funds in the Christians, through whose ministrations he lived in unalloyed prosperity"

(Peregrinus 16). Lucian regards wandering Cynic philosophers with the same suspicion, believing their motives to be self-enrichment at the expense of others (Runaways 17, 26).

While itinerant apostles, prophets, and teachers seem for the Didache to represent still an important locus of leadership and authority, the community is given a vital role in discriminating the true from the false. Moreover, significantly, the Didache takes some steps to encourage and promote resident leadership.(FN9) The congregations are urged to “appoint for themselves” worthy men (andras) as bishops and deacons (15: 1). These people, the writer insists, perform the same service (leitourgian) as the prophets and teachers, and should therefore be honored (15: 2).

Conflict over the treatment of travelling Christian preachers is also evident in 3 John. Here the writer, describing himself simply as the presbyter (3 Jn 1; Campbell 1994: 207-28), urges the recipient of the letter, Gaius, faithfully to support the brothers “even though they are strangers to you;” “to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God, for they began their journey for the name [of Christ], accepting no support from nonbelievers” (vv. 5-8). The verb used in verse 6, propempo, as Holmberg (1978: 89) points out, often conveyed the meaning “to equip someone with provisions for their journey.” Diotrephes is criticized precisely because he refuses to welcome the brothers and prevents others from doing so too, expelling them from the church (vv. 9-10).

In other New Testament letters, primarily in the deuteropauline corpus, there is considerable evidence that reveals the increasing prominence and power of resident leadership. However, our assessment of this evidence and our understanding of the process and pace of change are obviously dependent upon hypotheses concerning the date and authorship of these letters. The following analysis is based on the view that Colossians and Ephesians are pseudonymous letters which claim Paul’s authority in order to present teaching to churches now living in Paul’s permanent absence (cf., Wedderburn and Lincoln 1993). The Pastoral Epistles are also pseudonymous, but are to be dated somewhat later than Colossians and Ephesians, towards the end of the first century. Thus a process of development spanning some decades may be traced through these epistles (MacDonald 1988). The view that these later Pauline letters are pseudonymous will also affect our interpretation of the purpose of their ascribed authorship and implied recipients.

Colossians and Ephesians reveal little directly about structures of leadership in the churches of their time.(FN10) In Colossians a number of Pauline co-workers are mentioned, most of whom are mentioned in Paul’s short letter to Philemon. These leading figures are described using typically Pauline appellations — deacon, servant of Christ, fellow worker, etc. (see Col 1: 7; 4: 7-17)(FN11) — though without much being revealed about their precise roles and functions. If their mention in the letter is a pseudonymous device, adding a sense of authenticity by mentioning Pauline companions known from Paul’s Letter to Philemon, then we can attach even less significance to any evidence we might glean from these references. Some evidence of the household basis of the congregations is glimpsed in the reference to Nympha, a woman in whose home a congregation meets (Col 4: 15).

Personal references to leaders are almost entirely absent from Ephesians, the exception being the mention of Tychicus in 6: 21-22, though this reference is lifted verbatim from Colossians 4: 7-8 (a sign of the pseudonymity of Ephesians, if not of Colossians, assuming the priority of the latter).(FN12) The writer of Ephesians clearly regards the “apostles and prophets” as the foundational leaders of the church, along with “evangelists, pastors, and teachers” (3: 5; 4: 11-12) though we learn nothing from the letter about who is regarded as legitimately fulfilling such ministries.

In the Pastoral Epistles, however, we find considerable attention given to appropriate structures of leadership and to the qualities and behavior required from leaders. Here it is clear that the leaders of the churches are resident members of the communities, specifically male heads of households. The leaders are referred to as episkopoi, diakonoi, and presbyteroi, although little is said about their roles and responsibilities that would enable any clear distinctions to be drawn between the functions of the different "offices." More attention is given to describing the qualities which must characterize such leaders. As has often been pointed out, these are essentially the stock characteristics of decent and respectable well-to-do persons in Greco-Roman society (Verner 1983: 147-60; Towner 1989: 241; Hanson 1982: 35; Onosander De imperatoris officio 1: 1). The bishop or episkopos, among other things, "must mange his own household well, keeping his children submissive and respectful in every way — for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how can he take care of God's church?" (1 Tim 3: 4-5). Deacons likewise must "manage their children and their households well" (1 Tim 3: 12); this wording is surely an indication also that such households often included slaves as well as wife and children.

1 Tim 5: 17 is an important and revealing reference. The elders who rule well (the verb proistemi is used as in Rom 12: 8 and 1 Thess 5: 12), especially those who labor in word and teaching, are to be considered worthy of "double honor," which should most probably be taken as a reference to a level of financial support (Hanson 1982: 101; Campbell 1994: 200-204). The legitimation then given in verse 18 for the support of elders — resident leaders in the community — is particularly noteworthy, for it uses two citations, both of which had been used in earlier times to legitimate the material support of itinerant leaders. The citation from Deut 25: 4, "you shall not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain," is used by Paul in 1 Cor 9: 9 to underscore the right of the travelling apostles to support. The second citation, apparently referred to by the author of 1 Timothy as "Scripture" (graphe), along with Deut 25: 4, is the proverb of Jesus from the synoptic mission discourse which explains why the itinerant apostles can expect their support from others: "the worker is worthy of his wage" (Lk 10: 7; cf., Mt 10: 20). These scriptural and dominical legitimations for the material support of itinerant missionaries have here become legitimations for the support of resident elders.

Assuming that the Pastoral Epistles are pseudonymous, it is most likely that their implied recipients, Timothy and Titus, are indeed implied, fictional, rather than real. The entire literary framework is a pseudonymous device to convey a sense of authenticity and apostolic authority. The letters present themselves as the instruction of Paul to two of his trusted and prominent co-workers. This adds a further kind of legitimation to the appointment and position of the resident leaders. The whole literary context of 1 Timothy, for example, is one in which Paul urges Timothy to remain in Ephesus (1 Tim 1: 3) so that he can ensure that sound teaching is followed, so that he can "teach and urge the duties" which the letter details (6:2b), faithfully guarding what has been entrusted to him (6: 20). If the reference to "laying on of hands" in 5:22 is to a form of "ordination" — designating certain people as those in a position of leadership — as many commentators think (Hanson 1982: 103; Knight 1992: 239; NRSV: "Do not ordain anyone hastily ...."), then Timothy has a special charge to appoint leaders carefully. This responsibility is clearer still in the letter formally addressed to Titus, who, according to the letter, has been left in Crete in order to "appoint elders in every town" (Titus 1:5). This appointment of leaders is presented as Paul's explicit instruction — "as I directed you." There follows a list of the qualities required of elders and of the bishop (Titus 1: 5-9). Thus the appointment and authority of resident leaders is legitimated as something commanded by Paul and enacted through his most prominent delegates.

Thus the author of the Pastoral Epistles supports and strengthens the position of the resident leaders in the churches of his time; he seeks to ensure that positions of leadership are filled by those of an appropriate social standing — male heads of households. The Pastoral Epistles are also fiercely polemical letters that expend considerable energy in labelling the opponents as “despicable deviants”(FN13) (e.g., 1 Tim 1: 4-7, 4: 1-3, 6: 3-10; 2 Tim 2: 14-26, 3: 1-9; Titus 1: 10-14.). The conventional nature of the polemic (see Karris 1973) means that it is hard to “mirror read” from the Pastorals much reliable information concerning the beliefs, ethos, and practices of the opponents.(FN14) On the specific subject of leadership among the so-called false teachers, little is revealed. However, it seems clear that the “false” forms of the faith allow women to take leading roles, or at least, that women regard themselves as legitimate teachers and propagators of this faith. Why else would the author of 1 Timothy need to make the stern declaration: “I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she is to keep silent” (1 Tim 2: 12), a declaration which is then undergirded with legitimation drawn from the Genesis creation narratives (2: 13-14)? The young widows are a particular threat; apparently, “some have already turned away to follow Satan” (1 Tim 5: 15). The author fears that, outside the structure of the household (5: 14), they will roam from house to house, “saying what they should not say” (5: 13). This can hardly with confidence be described as an itinerant form of missionary activity (though it may be that), but at the very least what we seem to encounter is a form of the faith, branded by the author of the Pastorals as false and Satanic, to which women are attracted and which they spread as they move from house to house (MacDonald 1988: 187-89). For the author of the letters, who sees an intimate connection between the structure of the household, leadership in the churches, and socially respectable behavior, such younger widows should “marry, bear children, and manage their households” (5: 14). Forms of the faith which operate outside of, or present a challenge to, the structure of the household are a threat.

Within the canonical Pauline corpus, then, a clear trajectory can be seen in which the locus of power and authority shifts from the itinerant apostles, Paul and his co-workers, to the male heads of households resident in the Christian communities, though this resident leadership is still legitimated in Paul’s name. Certainly it is true that a number of householders had significant power and influence in the Pauline communities during Paul’s own lifetime. It is also true that the pattern of community life and structure which the author of the Pastoral epistles urges is not uncontroversially established; it is presented in the context of a harsh and vituperative polemic against those who see things differently. The extent of the transformation should not therefore be exaggerated, but neither should it be downplayed.

Evidence from other early Christian epistles from the late first and early second century may also be drawn into this picture. 1 Peter, written from Rome sometime between 75 and 90 C.E., though it deals little with structures of leadership in the communities, addresses the elders of the communities to which the letter is sent (1 Pet 5: 1-4). These figures, who as Campbell (1994: 206-207 and passim) suggests are probably resident leaders of seniority in both faith, age, and social position, are urged to exercise their pastoral role and “oversight,” episkopountes,(FN15) willingly. And those who are younger are instructed to accept the authority of the elders (5: 5).

Resident leadership is also the pattern revealed in 1 Clement, also written from Rome and sent to Corinth around the end of the first century (perhaps 95-96 C.E.). The occasion for the whole letter is the removal of the established presbyters due to a certain rebellion in the Corinthian congregation. The writer of 1 Clement regards this as an unholy sedition, urges the community to reinstate its rightful leaders, and exhorts the troublemakers to depart (1 Clem 44: 3ff, 47-57; further Horrell 1996 §6.2). His aim is that the “flock of Christ” should “be at peace with the appointed presbyters” (1 Clem 54: 2). There has been considerable discussion of the forms of ecclesiastical office in 1 Clement, much of it conducted in terms of the later Protestant-Catholic agenda (see esp. Fuellenbach 1980). 1 Clement does not seem to draw a distinction between the role of presbyter and the responsibility for episkope (see 44: 4-5), and therefore, despite his mention of the “strife for the title bishop” (44: 1), a monespicopal structure does not yet seem to be in view.(FN16) He uses various terms for the leadership of the congregation, though presbyteroi is the most common (cf., 1: 3, 21: 6, 44: 5, 47: 6, 54: 2, etc.) It is interesting that 1 Clement legitimates the ecclesiastical structures of leadership by claiming for them an apostolic basis (cf., comments on 1 Timothy and Titus above). “They [the apostles] preached from district to district, and from city to city, and they appointed their first converts, testing them by the Spirit, to be bishops and deacons of the future believers (42: 4). Even this, 1 Clement asserts, was “no new method,” for scripture itself had written of the appointment of bishops and deacons (42: 5). 1 Clement here quotes Isaiah 60: 17, which, unsurprisingly, does nothing of the sort.(FN17) Scriptural and apostolic resources are thus used to legitimate the position and office of resident leaders in the community.

Somewhat later than 1 Clement, the structure of monepiscopacy does develop and is evidenced most clearly in the writings of Ignatius, bishop of Antioch in the late first and early second century (see Eusebius HE 3: 22, 3: 36). Also at around this time, and also from Asia Minor, we have an epistle of Polycarp, who was bishop of Smyrna. Ignatius’s epistles are particularly interesting in the extent to which they reveal a clear concern to strengthen the position of the established leadership: bishop, presbyters, and deacons.(FN18) For example, in his letter to the Philadelphians, Ignatius restates his teaching, which he uttered “in a great voice, with the voice of God, ‘Give heed to the bishop, and to the presbyteri and deacons’” (Philad 7: 1; see Ephes 2: 2, 4: 1, Magn 2: 1-4: 1, 7: 1, 13: 2; Trall 2: 1-3: 1, etc.). Ephesians 6: 1 states, “Therefore it is clear that we must regard the bishop as the Lord himself.” The theological legitimation of the position of the established leaders is more fully set out in Trallians 3: 1: “Likewise let all respect the deacons as Jesus Christ, even as the bishop is also a type of the Father, and the presbyters as the council of God and the college of Apostles.”

The pattern seen most clearly in deuteropauline epistles, then, in which a resident structure of leadership develops, based upon the structure of the household and with prominent men as the overseers at the top of the ecclesiastical as well as domestic hierarchy, becomes established broadly as the dominant pattern of leadership in what emerges as “orthodox” Christianity. Just as the polemic in the Pastoral Epistles reveals that the “canonical” pattern of teaching was hardly uncontroversial, so also Ignatius’s strenuous appeals to strengthen the authority of the established leadership surely suggest that such leadership was not at the time unquestioned. The establishment of this particular pattern of leadership clearly involved power struggles, in which this “orthodox” pattern had to be legitimated. Such legitimation, I suggest, is also found in the so-called “household codes,” or Haustafeln, though in these codes the focus is not upon the forms of leadership as such, but is often upon the appropriate submission expected of subordinate social groups. The following section therefore seeks to explore the possible links between the emergence of resident leadership and the socially conservative forms of ethical teaching found in these household codes.

HOUSEHOLD CODES AND RESIDENT LEADERSHIP

The form, function, and origin of the various Haustafeln in the New Testament epistles have been much discussed (Verner 1983; Balch 1981; Yoder 1972: 163-92).

Though there are both Greco-Roman and Jewish parallels to this pattern of instruction which may be traced back to Plato and Aristotle (Balch 1981: 23-62, 1986: 81; Aristotle's Politics 1.2.1-2 [1253b. 1-14]), the earliest written form of Christian Haustafel is found in Colossians, closely paralleled in Ephesians (assuming the priority of Colossians). The Colossian Haustafel is compact and formalized, which has suggested to many that it represents a traditional form of Christian instruction significantly earlier than the epistle itself (e.g., Carrington 1940; Ellis 1986: 484-85, 492). This may or may not be the case, but we must insist that we have no evidence for an earlier Christian form of the code. 1 Corinthians 7 and 11 cannot be said to reflect elements of a household code, nor do we find such elements elsewhere in the undisputed Paulines (contra Ellis 1986: 492). Indeed, as Peter O'Brien rightly points out, if Paul had known of or approved a form of household code it is most surprising that he did not use it in 1 Corinthians (or 1 Thessalonians) where it might have been expected (O'Brien 1982: 218).

The Colossian and Ephesian Haustafeln address the same social groups in the same order: wives, husbands, children, fathers, slaves, masters (Col 3: 18-4: 1; Eph 5: 22-6:9). Women, children, and slaves are instructed to be submissive, the husbands, fathers, and masters are urged to be loving and just in their actions towards those under their care. While these codes do indeed add theological legitimation to the established patterns of domestic domination, providing an ideology for the household, the demand for subordination on the part of the socially inferior is balanced by the demand for justice and consideration on the part of the powerful (see Horrell 1995: 230-33). The ethos of the instruction may indeed be appropriately labelled "love-patriarchalism," not merely patriarchalism (Theissen 1982: 107; MacDonald 1988: 102-22).

These Haustafeln relate to the domestic structure of the Greco-Roman household and display no explicit connection with church leadership or structure. Nevertheless, as MacDonald points out, "The Colossian and Ephesian Haustafeln represent a placing of power more firmly in the hands of the rulers of the households (husbands, fathers, masters), ensuring that leadership positions fall to members of this group" (1988: 121-22). The significance of this is something to which we shall return.

In view of the evidence for the emergence of resident leadership surveyed briefly above, it is significant that forms of household code instruction appear in the Pastoral Epistles (1 Tim 2: 8-6;2; Titus 2: 2-10), in 1 Peter (2: 18-3:7); in 1 Clement (1: 3; 21: 6-8), in Polycarp (Phil 4: 1-6:3), and in Barnabas (19: 7). There are a number of features which are notable in the ways in which this material is used and developed. First, the reciprocality evident in Colossians and Ephesians all but disappears. In 1 Peter, for example, there is an extended admonition to slaves (2: 18-25) but no instruction to masters, an extended address to wives (3: 1-6) but only a short instruction to husbands (3: 7). In 1 Clement the focus is upon the honor and respect to be paid to those who are leaders, instruction of the young in the fear of God, and the quiet submission expected from women. In 1 Tim 6: 1-2 and Titus 2: 9-10 slaves are instructed to be submissive and to please their masters, especially Christian masters, with no reciprocal instruction addressed to these Christian masters. A second observation may help to explain this first one. In these letters it becomes clear that the "household" pattern of instruction informs the pattern for the whole church and for the behavior of its subordinate members in relation to the church's leadership. In 1 Clement it is the men of the community who are addressed and given the responsibility for ensuring that the others, women and children, behave appropriately (Jeffers 1991: 123; Bowe 1988: 102; Lindemann 1992: 29; Horrell 1996 §6.4). As Campbell has argued, here (and in 1 Peter) the "elders" seem to comprise a group of men who are senior in faith and prominent in social position (1 Peter 5: 5; Campbell 1994: 210-16; cf., Maier 1991: 93, 100). The prominent (male) heads of households have their responsibility qua leaders of the community. This is most clear in the Pastoral Epistles, especially 1 Timothy, where the main duties mentioned for the bishop and the deacon are their responsibilities for respectable citizenship and good household management (1 Tim 3: 1-13; Titus 1: 5-9). This is where the instruction to the socially prominent men of the community is found. The corollary of these requirements is the instructions in the Pastorals that women and slaves must be submissive and appropriately obedient. Women are forbidden to teach or be in authority over men; they must learn in silent submission (1 Tim 2: 11-15). The church community is shaped according to the household model; indeed, it is described as the “household of God” (1 Tim 3: 15), and so the ecclesiastical hierarchy mirrors the domestic and social hierarchy. “The role of leaders as relatively well-to-do householders who act as masters of their wives, children, and slaves is inseparably linked with their authority in the church” (MacDonald 1988: 214).

It is not hard to see that there may be some connection between the development of resident leadership and the use of household code instruction. As the dominant pattern of leadership (at least in the Pauline churches) shifts from itinerant to resident, so forms of household code instruction become prominent. As the resources of scriptural, dominical, and apostolic tradition are used to legitimate the pattern of resident leadership (as we have seen in 1 Timothy, 1 Clement, and Ignatius) so at the same time the resources of the household code are used to insist that the subordinate members of the household, women and slaves, must for the Lord’s sake be obedient and submissive. The power struggle to establish such a pattern of leadership is one in which the Haustafeln play a part, conferring power upon the male heads of household and providing theological legitimation for the subordination of those who are to be excluded from positions of power and leadership.

IDEOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT AND LEADERSHIP PATTERNS: POSSIBLE CONNECTIONS

Can more be said about the nature of the connection between the development of resident leadership and the introduction and use of the household codes in early Christianity? This essay has devoted most attention to tracing a trajectory of developing leadership patterns, a trajectory in which an important shift takes place after the death of Paul, when power and authority are increasingly transferred to the resident leaders in each community. I have elsewhere outlined briefly a trajectory of “ideological development” in Pauline Christianity (Horrell 1995; also 1996), using “ideology” in a critical sense to refer to the ways in which language and symbols are used to sustain or legitimate social relations of domination,(FN19) and focusing therefore upon the ways in which the symbolic resources of Pauline Christianity are increasingly used, especially in the household code material, to add theological legitimation to the established social and domestic hierarchy. These diachronic perspectives have been inspired by a theoretical framework drawn from Anthony Giddens’ “structuration theory,” a theory at the heart of which lies a concern to grasp the ways in which social life is structured through an essentially ongoing process of reproduction and transformation (Horrell 1995: 224-27, 1996 §2.4).

In earliest Christianity, as far as we can tell, power and authority were exercised primarily by itinerant leaders, especially the apostolic figures Peter, James, Paul, and so forth, though resident leaders and prominent householders also enjoyed a level of power and influence. As much of the evidence for subsequent development is found in the deuteropauline and later letters, it is difficult to ascertain the extent to which the pattern of change is essentially one which characterizes the Pauline churches, though if this is the case then certainly the pattern of resident leadership becomes more widespread towards the end of the first century and beyond.

After Paul's removal from the scene, something effected perhaps initially and partially by periods of imprisonment but then completely by his death, the power and influence of resident leaders increased. It is still in Paul's name, however, and with Paul's "authority" therefore, that the position of these leaders is legitimated. Colossians and Ephesians are written in Paul's name, and crucially they contain the first written formulations of the Christian household codes which focus power in the male heads of households. The increasing power and prominence of these well-to-do male leaders may be inextricably linked with the formulation of teaching which reinforces their position, regulates their "office" (elucidating their responsibilities and the necessary qualifications of respectability and social position), makes the household model increasingly dominant,(FN20) and marginalizes and deviantizes those who have a different view of the faith and its consequent social embodiment. These "deviants," whose perspective and interpretations we can but glimpse and guess at, include women, whom the author of the Pastoral epistles is at pains to exclude from positions of authority and leadership (1 Tim 2: 11-15). Younger widows are clearly regarded as an especially dangerous group; they are particularly prone to be attracted to what the author regards as false teaching — perhaps a form of teaching that encouraged them to remain unmarried and to engage in teaching or missionary activity free from the structure of subservience into which marriage and household placed them (1 Tim 5: 11-16). The author advises incorporation into a household structure (5: 14). Hence the epistle to Titus urges an important teaching responsibility upon older women: they are to instruct and encourage the younger women to love their children and their husbands, to work well in the home, and to be submissive to their husbands (Titus 2: 3-5). 1 Clement similarly places the responsibility for leadership upon the men of the community and requires from women the virtue of quietness (1 Clem 1: 3, 21: 6-8). 1 Timothy 6: 1-2 also hints that some slaves expected the fact that they and their Christian masters were now "brothers and sisters" to make a difference to the character of their relationship. In view of this, the author urges slaves with Christian owners not to use the fact that they are all brothers and sisters as a reason to serve their owners less; on the contrary, they should serve a Christian master "all the more." Ignatius is clearly aware of slaves who think that the church should use its money to purchase their freedom. He insists that they should "endure slavery to the glory of God;" the desire to be set free at the church's expense shows that they are in danger of becoming "slaves to desire" (Pol 4: 3).

The emergence of patterns of resident leadership, the marginalizing of opposing viewpoints, and the development of theological ideology, especially in the household code material, therefore, are all apparently connected. They are tied together as part of an ongoing process in which certain people use their position of power to formulate teaching which, at the same time, reinforces and sustains that power. The polemical arguments, and the force with which certain things "need" to be said, permit glimpses of alternative viewpoints that remind us that power and position were not attained or sustained without a struggle — an ideological battle. Resident leaders needed legitimation to sustain their position, and various forms are used in the early Christian epistles we have surveyed: scriptural (1 Tim 5: 18; 1 Clem 42: 5); dominical (1 Tim 5: 18); apostolic (1 Clem 42: 2-4; Ign Trall 2: 2; pseudonmyity of the post-Paulines), and theological (Ign Trall 3: 1, etc.).(FN21) Similar forms of legitimation are used ideologically to undergird the subordination of others (1 Tim 2: 11-14, etc.), and here the theological ideology of the household codes plays a major part: it is the Christian duty of wives, children, and slaves to submit in fear to their male superiors, who are to be served and revered “as the Lord” (cf., Col 3: 23-24; Eph 5: 22-24, 6: 5-8; further Horrell 1995: 231-32).

CONCLUSION

As I reiterate the thesis of this essay and draw together the threads of its argument, I begin with some qualifications. Although I have sought to illuminate a pattern of change and transformation, it cannot be suggested that what we discover in this process is a sharp disjunction or a complete change. Householders and resident leadership were present and influential within the very earliest Christian (at least in the Pauline) communities. Moreover, a sharp and clear distinction between itinerant and resident leadership cannot be sustained. Some itinerant apostles were also connected with a particular community; some resident leaders travelled between various Christian communities. From the beginning the leaders of the church at Jerusalem were of major importance; the “pillars” of the community there were itinerant apostles with influence over a wide area. There are clear similarities here with the pattern of later years, when power and influence became concentrated in certain geographical centers: Antioch and especially Rome (Brown and Maier 1983), with leading figures who came to be known as bishops having an influence over a wide area. A further qualification is that, while I have tried to cast the net of the investigation somewhat more widely, the evidence for the pattern of change and for the emergence of resident leadership is concentrated in the Pauline epistles. One may of course question how unique and specific this evidence is to the Pauline churches, though in the absence of much other early evidence it is difficult to do much more than speculate on this.(FN22) It may be, nevertheless, that the contrast between Paul himself and the later pattern of resident leadership is most strong — stronger, perhaps, than that between the other apostles and later resident leaders. Paul, after the link with the Antioch community ended, had no particular community as his base (unlike Peter and James, etc.); he remained unmarried (contrast the practice of the other apostles noted in 1 Cor 9: 5); he unmarried (contrast the practice of the other apostles noted in 1 Cor 9: 5); he insisted upon self support through his own manual labor (again in contrast to Peter and “the other apostles” — 1 Cor 4: 12, 9: 4-18; 1 Thess 2: 9), and he embodied and taught a radical social ethos which was often opposed to the position and interests of the socially strong (see Horrell 1996).

However, while it would be inappropriate therefore to mount a thesis arguing for a radical or disjunctional change at a point in the development of early Christianity, it is vitally important for historians of early Christianity to attend to and seek to explain the patterns of transformation which are revealed even in our limited sources. Those who wish to root later developments strongly in earliest tradition (thus conferring upon them the legitimation of primitive authenticity) are often unwilling to do this.(FN23) Giddens’s structuration theory, by contrast, is built on the following premise: “Unser Leben geht hin mit Verwandlung, Rilke says; Our life passes in transformation. This is what I seek to grasp in the theory of structuration” (Giddens 1979: 3).

My thesis may therefore be restated. I have attempted to draw attention to the important but neglected distinction between itinerant and resident leadership in earliest Christianity, though with the qualifications noted above. It is hardly new to study the emerging pattern of what may be termed ecclesiastical offices, the development of the threefold structure of bishops, presbyters, and deacons. Yet due attention has perhaps not been given to the importance of the shift from itinerant to resident leadership, nor to the relationship between the latter and the emergent forms of ethical instruction that support the household structures upon which the resident pattern of leadership is based. As a broad trajectory it is legitimate to speak of a development or transformation from itinerant to resident leadership in earliest Christianity, and there is evidence that reveals the tensions and difficulties that the diverse patterns of leadership and the patterns of change caused. Moreover, the transference of power from itinerant to resident leadership is a sociologically significant transformation that is inextricably connected with the development of more socially conservative patterns of ethical instruction (especially the “household codes”). The emergence of patterns of resident leadership, the marginalizing of opposing viewpoints, and the development of theological ideology, especially in the household code material, therefore, are all apparently connected — connected in the ideological battle to sustain and legitimate the power and position of the resident male leaders and the household structure upon which their leadership was based.

Added material

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FOOTNOTES

1 See esp. Horsley (1989: 43-50); also Stegemann (1984). Horsley’s criticisms, while often valuable, focus primarily on Theissen’s popular book (1978) and hardly deal adequately with the detailed essays Theissen published on the subject (see now Theissen 1988 and 1993), nor do his criticisms of the wandering charismatics thesis seem convincing to me.

2 Although Harnack’s argument that an early Christian leadership pattern of itinerant apostles, prophets, and teachers was replaced by episcopal leadership in local communities (cf., Draper, 1995: 298-99; Harnack 1904: 398-461, 1905: 46-114) has been influential, I suggest that insufficient attention has been given to this pattern of change. Previous studies have tended to focus either (from a theological perspective) upon the development from charismatic freedom to ecclesiastical structure (Campenhausen 1969) or (from a sociological perspective) upon the process of institutionalization (MacDonald 1988).

3 Whether there was a “Christ party,” and, if there was, what the declaration of allegiance to Christ meant in contrast to the other slogans of allegiance, remains unclear and much disputed.

4 On the role of the ergates, “ein Terminus technicus für den urchristlichen Missionar,” see Haraguchi (1993).

5 Rom 12:8 uses the same verb found in 1 Thess 5:12 to describe leadership.

6 On these people and their social standing, and more generally on the social level of the Corinthian Christians, see Theissen (1982:69-119) and Horrell (1996 §3.7).

7 Clarke (1993) also focuses upon the influential well-to-do members of the Corinthian congregation, and assumes without argument that they may be referred to as the “leaders” in the church.

8 Lake (1912:327, n. 1) states, “It is unknown to what ordinance the writer refers.” It is surely likely that the reference is to the command of the Lord to the apostles to “live from the gospel,” i.e., to depend upon the communities for support (1 Cor 9:14; and the synoptic mission instructions). Thus the congregation has a responsibility.

9 Draper (1995) argues that local resident leadership is being threatened by an increase in the influence of itinerant missionaries. However, the trajectory of change is generally argued to be in the opposite direction (Patterson 1995).

10 See MacDonald (1988: 123-38), with particular attention to the implications of the apostle Paul's absence and of the household codes in these letters.

11 The term sundoulos (1:7, 4:7) is not found in other Pauline or deuteropauline letters, though it occurs in Matthew and Revelations.

12 In all, thirty-two words from Colossians 4: 7-8 are repeated in the same order in Ephesians 6: 21-22, though with one addition and one omission in the Ephesians text compared with Colossians.

13 A short phrase from the title of Lloyd Pietersen's paper, contained in this issue.

14 There have, of course, been many attempts; see Roloff (1988: 228-39) and Schlarb (1990).

15 This participle is absent from some texts, though the evidence for its originality is strong; see Michaels (1988:276).

16 Contra Campbell (1994: 211-16, 245); see argument in Horrell (1996 §6.2). Note that the noun used in 44:1 is not episkopos but episkope: hoti eris estai epi tou onomatos tes episkopes.

17 The Greek Old Testament generally quoted by 1 Clement reads literally, "I will give your rulers in peace and your overseers (episkopous) in righteousness."

18 Lake (1912: 167) summarizes thus: "Ignatius is exceedingly anxious in each community to strengthen respect for the bishop and presbyters. He ascribes the fullest kind of divine authority to their organization, and recognizes as valid no church, institution, or worship without their sanction." See further Maier (1991).

19 This notion of ideology is outlined more fully in Horrell (1996: 50-53; 1993: 87), drawing on the work of Anthony Giddens, John Thompson, and Terry Eagleton.

20 Balch (1986: 98-100) points out that the household context — and therefore the household codes also — becomes less prominent and less relevant as the church develops and grows as an institution. This is surely right, up to a point, but the household code does not perhaps become as irrelevant to the Church of the second century and beyond as Balch suggests. Such forms of instruction are still found in the Apostolic Fathers; moreover, as the Pauline corpus becomes "recognized," "authorized," accepted as orthodox and eventually canonical, so the household code and its social ethos are there encapsulated and preserved as a basis for Christian social relations (cf., also Campbell 1994: 228-35).

21 Other viewpoints also, of course, required and attempted their own legitimations; for example, the legacy and memory of Paul is used in the Acts of Paul and Thecla, used (probably) as a legitimation for women's leadership for some time after it was written (see Tertullian, De baptismo 17).

22 I have not paid much attention to the (limited) evidence form Acts on patterns of leadership in the early churches; see Campbell (1994: 141-75).

23 See, e.g., Ellis (1986), Hauke (1988: 389), on 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, argues that this command to women to be silent stems from a word of Jesus on this subject (the ultimate Christian legitimation?!).

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