

Chart suggesting the development of authority and power structures in the early church. That small band of followers quickly became an institutional reality. You have to read this one up..if, indeed, you can read it at all.

District Bishop

District Bishop

(supervising presbyters generally appointed to a local congregation by the monarchical bishop and serving also as electors for the succeeding monarchical bishop)

MONARCHIAL BISHOP

A developed office in which the designated person is seen as the authority figure following the pattern of the Apostles. As a rule an elected post.

Deacons
Appointed by the Apostles
(Acts 6)

Elders
Expected leaders in the
Apostolic ideal (Acts 20)

THE APOSTLES: Fundamental Authority in the Church until the completion of the Canon. Both what they did and said, apostolic tradition, very basic to early Christian life.

The structures develop as the church grows and expresses a need for some sort of continuing oversight. The unique nature of the church in the first centuries is an integral piece of this structure...remembering that in any one place the church was one although the meeting places where many. The bishopric office just "evolves" and the many smaller offices of district bishop (our terms) are necessary for the oversight of the smaller places where Christians met. You may decry it but you will find that some sort of oversight is always needed and one is happy if one finds one that really works and seems to be close to the biblical pattern.