

spiritual pursuits. To augment this the church used the holy acts or sacraments as we call them later. The most common items were:

Baptism: initiation and testimony

Communion: identification and worship

Chrism: fellowship and duty

As an aid to the better understanding of these functions, the church usually taught a mild sort of asceticism, non-involvement in political affairs, and an abstention from certain ways of life thought not to aid in the spiritual process. As Christianity became popular and as the number of Christians increased, the ideal became increasingly difficult to maintain and/or demonstrate. Hence the growth of bishoprics, parishes, etc., and the creation of special ways of attaining spiritual fulfillment that led to acts such as pilgrimages, special days, etc. More regulatory practices were also developed so that the church, as it increased, became more apparent in being and yet more mysterious in form.

III.4.d. Religious Centers

The Religious Centers

The chief religious centers of the age were:

- Rome: authority and dogma
- Carthage: polemics
- Alexandria: philosophy and academics
- Antioch: exegesis and theological refinement

I understand that nothing is quite this simple but it is generally a good sketch. These centers tended to become increasingly jealous of one another...a sort of disease that spread rapidly after the church became legal.

III.5 Summary of the age

Summary

In summarizing this age I offer both brief notes and questions for further thinking. This material has been previously subjected to thinking in and through the syllabus and I do not offer a lot of new ideas but here are areas where your study should render you competent: