

Is Church Important (2)? By Victor Beshir

Second: There Are Certain People Entrusted With Ordinations

Reading the New Testament, you cannot escape the fact that the church gave only certain people the right to perform specific actions in the church. The first of these is the right to ordain. The apostles did not give the right to ordinations of others to all the members of the church, but to the contrary, it was given only to the bishops. In the first epistles to Timothy, St. Paul clearly stated the characters of the bishops and the deacons, and then said to Timothy,

“I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim 2:15).

“Do not lay your hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people’s sins. Keep yourself pure” (1 Tim 2:22).

It is obvious from the previous verses that St. Paul first described to Timothy, the bishop, the characters of ordained people, then asked him to be in charge of choosing these ordained people, and finally asked him not to haste to ordain anyone but rather to examine people carefully, lest he shares people’s sins. .

Third: The Succession of the Apostolic Orders:

I started explaining how the apostles only had the right to ordain someone else in the church, namely bishops, priests (elders), and deacons. However, if it stops there, then the church may die out after all the apostles die. But, this was not the will of God to have a dead church after a few decades. This is why a divine order was in place, given by Christ Himself and practiced by the apostles, which established the bishop as a successor of the apostles.

The bishop acts as the visible head of the church and has the right to ordain other bishops, priests, and deacons. This established what is known in the church as the “Apostolic Succession,” which means a bishop must be ordained by another bishop, or by a group of bishops, who had been ordained directly by one of the apostles or through unbroken chain of ordained bishops started by the apostles and continued until it reached our contemporary time.

To explain the rule, keep in mind that the apostles say *there is no bishop may be ordained outside the One Church*. All the ordinations inside this one church done first by the apostles themselves, then later by the bishops they had ordained, second generation of bishops. Those bishops ordained by the apostles, second generation of bishops, ordained other bishops, third generation of bishops, who were the only people who had the right to ordain other bishops. This process continued not only to the fourth generation of bishops but throughout the history of the church. Therefore, every bishop in the church was ordained by legitimately ordained bishop(s), which means ordained by

another bishop who followed in the succession from one generation of bishops to the succor one in the chain until it reached the apostles.

As a result, *the One Church established by Christ continues to exist in the churches that still keeping the Apostolic Succession, which means the churches having a legitimate ordained bishop whose ordination followed the Apostolic Succession.*

Such churches still represent continuation of the church of the New Testament and they follow the rules established for the church by Christ Himself and observed by the apostles. There were more than one document written by the apostles explaining these rules for the church, the bishops, and other matters. Thanks to God, we still have copies of these documents. In an another article I'll talk about those documents and also about what happened in the history of the church in the first few centuries in terms of the Apostolic succession.