3.3.6.2 The Similarity Between Christians and Travelling Teacher-philosophers

There appears to be little doubt that audiences listening to Christian missionaries would have been familiar with teachers and philosophers. Not only the audiences would have recognized the similarities between these missionaries and teachers / philosophers but also magistrates had experienced similar disturbances caused by other teachers of this sort. One scholar writes:

"It is inevitable, despite noticeable differences, that the traveling (sic) Christian missionary should have been associated with other itinerant teachers of his day".[368]

It seems evident that Christian teachers pursued some of the practices of these travelling philosophers. Two such practices were prominent, firstly their methodologies and secondly their financial expectations.[369] Identification with these philosophers would have been negative because these philosophers were despised for their barbarian and arrogant behaviour. They too had political insinuations in their philosophy. Lastly, they became the foremost social

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[368] Warden (1986:109). Also see the chapters in Hengel dealing with such philosophers (1986:202-207).

[369] Christian missionaries certainly had financial claims which they could bring against those they taught, as did the other teachers and philosophers. For examples on these claims see first Cor. 9:7-14; Gal. 6:6. In the first siting of a claim to financial expectations we also find the justification thereof. The possibility also exists that collections for other congregations (which occurred in Corinth and Galatia)(first Cor. 16) could have been confused with personal financial gains.

critics[370] against the ways of the Emperors.[371]   The classification of Christians with philosophers would have added support to the perception of Christians as a threat to political and social stability.[372]

3.3.6.3 The Similarity Between Christians and Magical Practitioners as well as their Followers[373]

There seems to be certainty as to the commonality of magical practitioners in the late first century world of western Asia Minor.   They were widely accepted as a medium of influence. Both Greek and Roman literature contains large numbers of references to magical arts.   The practice of magic developed to such an extent that it was almost seen as a religion in its own right.   The following quotation was written in support of this view:

"... it appears that magic was an accepted form of religious piety that ran parallel to other religious institutions".[374]

Initially magic was generally respectable to the Romans, but as time went on magic was used to the detriment of people and / or things.   This resulted in magic becoming a crime and consequently led to prosecution.   Subsequently, magical practice was declared illegal, although

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[370]   Benko (1984:33).

[371]   Also see Dill (1905:334-383) for the impact of philosophy on Roman society.

[372]   Rostovtzeff (1957:116).

[373]   Consult the dissertation written on this theme called "The Charismatic Figure as Miracle Worker, see Tiede (1970).   Also see Ferguson on the relation between religion and magic (1977:49-53).

[374]   Benko (1984:128).

the interpretation thereof was subjective.[375] Because the definition of magic depended on the fancy of the accusers and magistrates the potential existed for utilizing such charges to suppress any religious group which fell into disfavour.[376] Although difficult to evaluate the definition of magic it was supposed to be the invoking of higher powers, gods or demons, through the practice of certain esoteric formulas, or the calling on certain names whose powers were presumed to be formidable.[377] The result of all this was that magic and superstition synthesized into religious practice. The danger was that once Christians fell under suspicion as a threat, extensive evidence could be produced for bringing charges that they were magicians.

If Christians were seen as magicians they would have been perceived as a threat to Roman peace and order. What is more, is that they would have been operating outside legal boundaries. The following were the most common accusations brought against miracle workers:

a.   Subversion.[378]

b.   The use of powers for evil purposes.

c.   The use of miracles for personal gain.[379]

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[375] Warden (1986:116).

[376] See Nock (1972:315) who lists three ways in which the ancients used the word "magic". The use of interest to this discussion is the last which according to Nock (1972:315 Vol1) is of "... religions belonging to aliens or on any general ground disapproved".

[377] To view an attempt to define what constituted magic or not see Kelenkow (1980:1479,1480 Vol. 23 part 2).

[378] Rostovtzeff (1957:119).

[379] Kolenkow (1976:107).

The conclusion is thus drawn that Christians tended to come to the attention of city magistrates and officials due to disruptions which surrounded the proclamation of their message and their proselytizing. Taking all of the above into account and seen from their own perspective the governing powers would have felt justified of being suspicious of Christians and even to suppress them all together. When a religion became a threat to Rome they did not deal with it lightly.[380]

3.3.6.4 The Similarity Between Christians and the Greek City Cults

The Greek religions were held in high esteem not only for their religious value but also as an essential element in the civilization and political stability. These religions thrived due to:

a. The people had respect and admiration for ancient laws which led to reforms in both fiscal responsibility and ceremonial / ritual purity.

b. The building of temples also aided religious revival.

c. Numerous festivals and games abetted religious excitement.[381]

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[380] In the writings of Pliny (<u>Natural History</u> 29.12) there is reference to an incident in which Claudius summarily executed a Roman knight whose only crime was the wearing of a Druidic emblem which was believed to posses the power of granting victory in a court of law. The probable reason for such stern action was the disfavour Druidism had come into with Rome because of its resistance to the Romanization of Gaul. If Christianity was in disfavour with Rome one would expect similar stern treatment. For further discussions on Roman perceptions of religious threats see Benko (1984:9).

[381] To research the reasons for the proliferation of such religions during this time period see Koester (1982:169).

There also seems to be a dichotomy between this external / material growth and the spiritual / inner decline. Both Koester[382] and Sinclair[383] agree that the material signs of vitality serve as a mask for the failure of these religions to satisfy the inward, religious needs of the people. But the evidence still suggests that the eastern mystery religions, astrology and Christianity (although at a later time) gained considerably from the milieu of the Greek city. The conclusion is reached that traditional Hellenistic religions were both prominent and influential in the Greek cities throughout the first and second centuries.[384]

The Greek city cults were not only well and alive but temples were built, sacrifices were provided and priests were appointed from the community by official acts of government. Because of this fusion (between city cults and government) the city cults became an essential feature of government itself.[385] Rome favoured the cults since their religion served Rome's purposes. In fact Rome used this religion in their favour. It has been said:

> "It is the will of the gods that city and society should live according to well-defined order. City and society see to it that the lawful pattern of life is preserved, and the gods stand guard to prevent violation. It is wicked and impious to rebel in impudent pride against the gods and in insolence to disregard the limitations that are set for mortal man".[386]

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[382] Koester (1982:169).

[383] Sinclair (1951:243,244).

[384] To see how others reached this conclusion also see Warden (1986:133).

[385] Warden (1986:134).

[386] Lohse (1974:223).

It would seem as though the gods willed what Rome wanted them to will. One cannot help but wonder to what extent the gods were not just a religious portrayal of Roman will. The gods' will and Rome's will are therefore the same wills.[387] Fate was all encompassing. As such Rome was fated to rule as the Greeks were fated to be ruled. The will of the gods and fate were the same.[388] If Rome engineered the will of the gods, they also masterminded fate. This political doctrine is an undeniable expression of the solidarity of state and religion. They (state and religion) were not only united but were one and the same thing. Thus Rome had total control from the viewpoints of politics, military, economics and religion. Because of these factors Rome had a vested interest in the support which her subjects offered the long-established religions. Therefore we have the following situation:
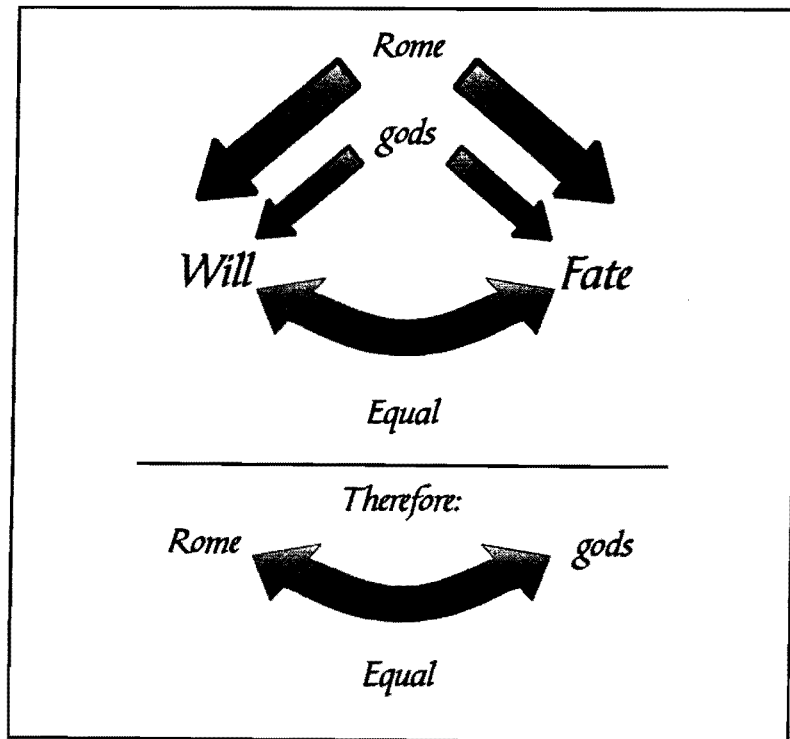

Figure 6

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[387] *Warden (1986:134).*

[388] *Nilsson (1925).*

In figure six we find that Rome had a certain political will. Strangely, the gods seemed to have exactly the same will as that of Rome, for whatever Rome willed the gods seemed to will as well. That which Rome did not want to take credit for or that which could not be explained was attributed to fate. Once again, the same things that Rome attributed to fate was attributed to fate by the gods. If this were the case, then the will equalled fate as both were determined and the offspring of the dictates of Rome and the gods. But because the will of Rome equalled the will of the gods and similarly with fate, the deduction could then possibly be made that Rome equalled the actual gods in as much as Rome seemed to determine what the gods willed and attributed to fate. If this were the case then the gods became just another political tool to Rome to use to arrive at their political objectives.

It seems to be highly inconceivable that a new religion whose doctrine has no room for official city cults would find favour with the Roman authorities or municipal governments. The reverse, on the other hand, is also true that as the church gained adherents and strengthened its hold on their conduct (which Peter certainly did) it is liable to be noticed at official levels.

3.3.6.5 The Similarity / Difference Between Christians and the Emperor Cult[389]

The Emperor cult in Rome can in essence be defined as a means of honouring one's predecessors and ancestors. Another feature of the Emperor cult was the deification of the Emperors, although this usually happened after their death.[390] There was a special relationship[391] between

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[389] There are many books on this topic examples of which are Jones (1980); Millar (1973); Price (1984). Also see Ferguson (1977:33).

[390] For an examination of the process of deification peruse Cerfaux and Tondriau (1957:103-121).

[391] The relationship between the Emperor and the gods was one in which the Emperor

the world of the gods and the cult of the Emperor. This was not just another religion but an engineered part of Roman foreign policy as the cult symbolized the submission and devotion of the cities to Roman overlordship. It was designed to bring people of diverse cultural traditions together. Their togetherness and bond were used to create a common allegiance[392] to Rome.[393] Frend juxtapositions the Emperor cult and worship of the Emperor as follows:

> "In veiled form it (the cult of the Emperors genius) was the worship of the Emperor himself, ... It had something in the nature of essence, the energizing and life-giving force of a personality, in this case the divine power assuring the permanence of the imperial house".[394]

The Emperor cult served important political and economical functions. The worship of the Emperor cult was equated to loyalty. Conversely, the lack thereof was interpreted as disloyalty.[395] The more lavish the worship was, the more loyal the subjects. It is in this sense that politics and religion were married. But this marriage was polygamous since the monogamous politics (only Rome) was married to many religions and many gods, hence,

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acted as intermediary between the people and the gods. He thus had direct access to the gods. See Frend (1982:9).

[392] Warden (1986:140).

[393] Although the discussion of Ramsay is rather dated, it still has value hence the reprint in 1979. See (1897:191).

[394] Frend (1982:5). Also see the work of Taylor (1931:193) which seems to be a classical work on which many scholars writing on this topic, depend. Wardman writes that the Emperor was the exclusive object of religious ceremony and therefore he was worshipped (1982:95).

[395] Frend (1982:5).

polytheistic in nature.[396] It is in this religio-political setting that Christians preached their message. Their message made no provision and left no room for polytheism since they only acknowledged one God. Ephesians 4:4-6 is rather explicit when it reads: "εἰς κύριος ... εἰς θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ πάντων".[397] The conclusion is obvious: Rome would see the Christians' refusal to perform accepted civic displays of loyalty as an unreasonable reaction.[398] As mentioned before, the Christians' refusal to acknowledge Caesar as lord developed from just "unreasonable" into a real issue.[399] Long before the appearance of Christianity other religions refused to participate in Emperor worship. The Romans loathed such religions. When Christians joined the Jews in their refusal to give proper honour to Caesar the Roman officials saw it as synonymous to jeopardizing the peace and prosperity of the world. The well-being of the Empire was closely related to the well-being of the Emperor.[400] Thus refusal to worship

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[396] Wardman (1982:2,21,52,80).

[397] Also read Acts 17:22-31.

[398] This conclusion was reached as early as 1933 by Nock (1933:229). It has also been established that "the imperial way of life imposed some religious duties" (Emphasis mine) (Wardman 1982:84).

[399] For a discussion on the name calling of the Emperor or the lack thereof, including the consequences of not obliging see Nock (1933:228).

[400] This is adequately illustrated by the inscription found at Ancyra where Augustus enumerates his accomplishments and the honours conferred upon him. The text can be found in Ehrenberg and Jones (1949:3-31). There is also Biblical evidence to suggest this view, since one of the first charges brought against Christians, was their acknowledgement of another king and kingdom. See Acts 17:7; 16:20,21. Also look at The First Apology of Justine where he writes:

"And, when you hear that we look for a kingdom, you rashly conclude that we

or acknowledge the Emperor had political and religious implications. It was not just about religion. It must also be said that the religious practice in this context centred around polytheism. There was a diversity of gods for various purposes (rain god, etc).[401] As a result Emperor worship did not really clash with other religions. He was seen as another god for another domain. Yet, ultimately he was in control of both the state and the church or religion. The tension developed with the Christian stand of monotheism which left no room for other religions and Emperor worship. The following situation transpired for society, where the Emperor equalled gods and therefore the empire and state equalled the church and religion:
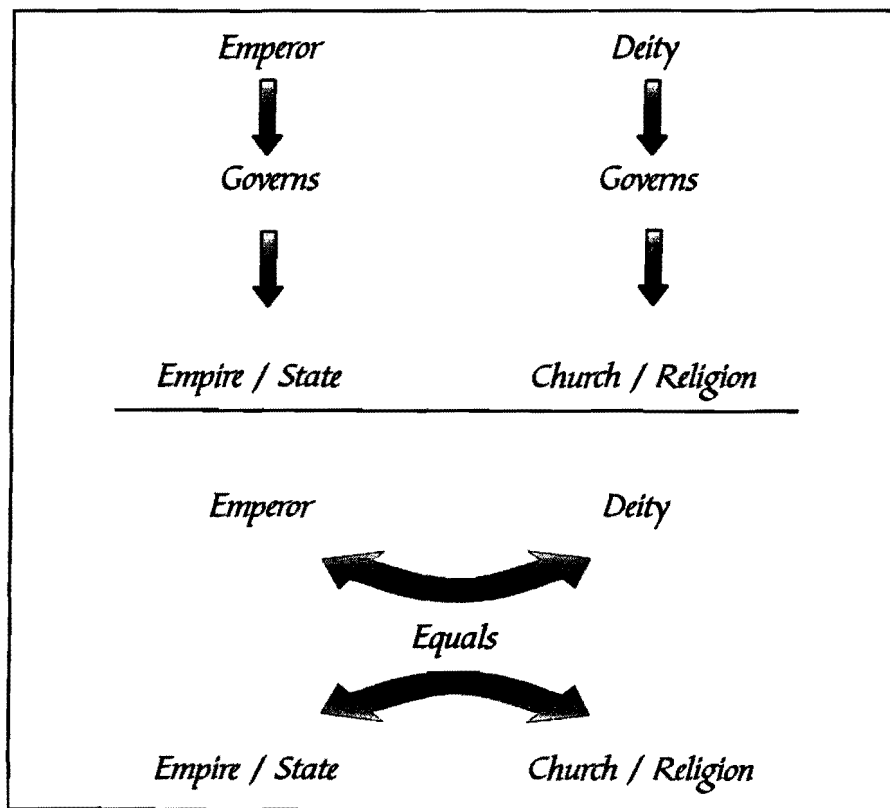

Figure 7

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mean a human one, although we declare that it is to be that which is with God, ..." (1.11).

[401] Wardman (1982:1).

Figure seven shows the two lines of command. The Emperor governed the empire whilst the deities governed the religions. However, as we saw previously, the Emperor equalled the deities[402] since he decided to a large extent what the deities willed and attributed to fate. If this deduction holds water, it stands to reason that the empire and the "church" (used broadly for all religions here) were also equal since they were both governed ultimately by the Emperor.

The end result of this equation was that the Emperor governed, not only the empire, but also the church and religions, so much so that Ferguson calls it "Roman political religion"[403] in his discussion of this topic. People who refused the Emperor his governance, represented a political threat as Roman religion was strongly political.[404] The above supports the suggestion that the Christians' refusal to offer sacrifices to Caesar provided a reason for official suppression of the church.[405] The hatred and suppression that ensued led to the conclusion that being Christian was a crime.[406] Credence was given to the view that Christianity was a dangerous sect worthy of violent suppression because of their unwillingness (and therefore disloyalty) to pay Caesar proper homage. The following conclusions will suffice:

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[402] There seems to be enough evidence to conclude that certain Emperors were deified, mostly after their death (Wardman 1982:81). Wardman, for example, writes that: "The deified emperors (sic) were revered as such throughout the whole Mediterranean area as well as in the favoured peninsula" (1982:80).

[403] Ferguson (1977:31).

[404] Ferguson (1977:31).

[405] According to Warden (1986:143) this suggestion is plausible during "the last third of the first century".

[406] Grant (1970:15).

a. *The worship of the reigning Caesar usually as god was the common practice of the Greek-speaking inhabitants of western Asia Minor throughout the first and second centuries.*

b. *Important factors in anti-Christian polemics during the same time period were:*

    b.1 *Their negation to participate in the Emperor cult.*

    b.2 *Their doctrine of another kingdom and another Lord.*

    b.3 *Their view that Caesar was subordinate to God.*

    b.4 *Their belief that Caesar's will could only be adhered to in as much as it conformed to God's will.*

c. *The component of society which had the most reason to be concerned about Christianity were the ruling authorities.*

d. *Therefore the prevalent persecution described in first Peter was more than just unofficial, societal resistance.*[407]

Due to the cult of the Emperor, religion was at the heart of all aspects of society. Every choice whether social, economical or religious became a political choice in the eyes of the Emperor. Every choice whether social, economical or political became a religious choice in the eyes of the Christian. Every move was to be compared to the example of Christ. Thus both for the Christian and the Emperor everything was intertwined although the core differed.

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[407] *Warden (1986:146).*

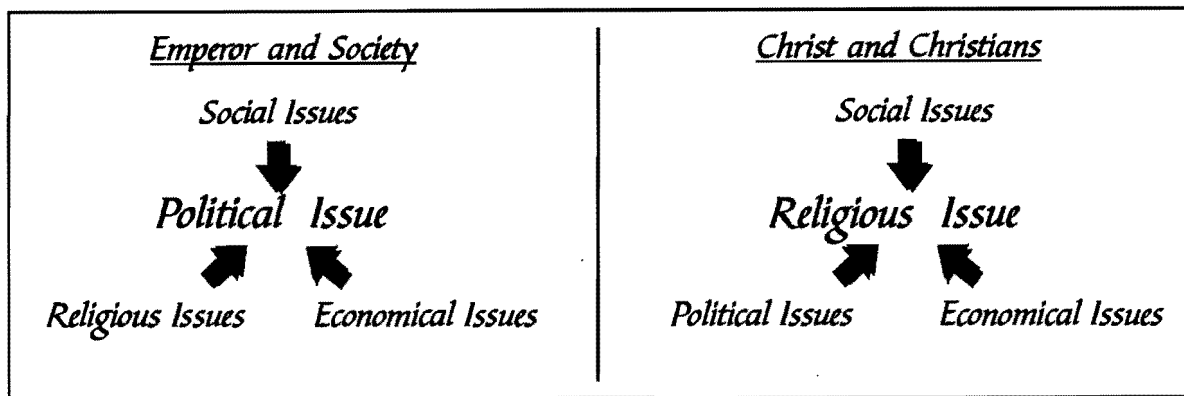| *Emperor and Society*	*Christ and Christians*
Social Issues	Social Issues
⬇	⬇
Political Issue	*Religious Issue*
⬈ ⬉	⬈ ⬉
Religious Issues Economical Issues	Political Issues Economical Issues

Figure 8

Figure eight serves the purpose to illustrate that the pinnacle of view and interpretation of these two groups differed. To the Emperor and society all actions were viewed and interpreted in a political light.[408] To Christians all decisions were made in the light of religious convictions. Thus it can be seen that they misinterpreted each other. Their principle interests were different.

3.3.6.6 The Similarity Between the Christian and Hellenistic Mysteries[409]

There appears to be a thorough assimilation of eastern Mysteries and Greek religious thought. There were also certain similarities between these mysteries and Christianity. For example:

a.   *Both appealed to personal salvation.*

b.   *Both took part in initiation into esoteric rites which promised a mystical union with the divine.[410]*

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[408] *Wardman (1982:133).*

[409] *Examples of these Hellenistic Mysteries are: a. Isis and Osiris; b.   Sarapis; c. Cybele and Attis. To consult with more authors on this topic see Meyer (1987); Burkett (1987).*

[410]   *Of particular interest to our discussion of first Peter are the similarities and*

c.   Both believed in life after death.

d.   Both partook in religious rites reserved for the select few.[411]

Romans and Greeks who were not part of the Mysteries could manage to tolerate[412] them since they did not interfere with the established religions.[413]   This, however, was not the case with Christianity as they interfered with other religions in the sense that their adherents were precluded from partaking in certain other religious activity.   Concerning both the Romans and the Greeks, religion was an inseparable ally of orderly government.

3.3.7   Problem Seven: The Despising of the Upper Classes by the Christian Constituency

Implying social injustice the Christian messages called explicitly or at least implicitly for social justice.   Christianity would therefore be more appealing to the victims of the social injustice than to the perpetrators thereof.   The Christian message also rejected society's accepted criteria of status.   Accordingly, this message would be more attractive to those of low than for those of high social status.   The values of honour and shame did not play such an important role

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differences between the Christian baptism and the initiation rites into the Mysteries.   Perdelwitz (1911:38) believes that Peter makes a comparison.   For further discussion on the relationship between the Christian baptism and the initiatory rites into the Mysteries see Nash (1984:156-158).   For a study of initiation rites for the Mysteries see Myers (1985:38)(Ph.D. dissertation).

[411]   Warden (1986:158).

[412]   Warden (1986:159).

[413]   There is a document from Sardis that could be cited to refute this statement of Warden.   Robert (1975:306-330) discusses this document.   For counter arguments of why this document does not preclude Roman and Greek tolerance see Warden's (1986:159) footnote on the subject.

in Roman society, because social position rather required affluence and an official act of government to confer the position of senator or knight. The basis of the social class system within the Roman empire was birth and legal status in contrast to social conferment of class. Most things in the Roman empire were cased in classified law. Education had little or nothing to do with one's social (legal) standing,[414] just as in today's societies certain people have power and influence on account of wealth, birth, political position and other variables. It is superfluous to say that the majority did not. Manual labour was despised by the wealthy.[415]

It is fair to say that as a rule, Christians did not attract their membership from the elite, but rather from the largest segment of the population, viz. the working poor. Although it must be acknowledged that the church's constituency did include people from all classes. But, as certain scholars[416] set out to prove, both Acts and the Gospels were more sympathetic with people on the lower end of the social scale.[417] To be objective it must be added that the believers were not the poorest and most wretched members of society.

The social class system formed a hierarchy. At the top of this hierarchy was the Senate (which was based on heredity through the old Roman aristocratic families). Next came the Equestrian Order (who were freeborn military men having key positions of power). The Equestrians were essentially equal in wealth and education with those of the Senate. Then came the municipal bureaucrats, the Decurians and the magistrates. These men were the leaders of the local governments scattered throughout the empire. Then it was the freeborn citizens (plebs) followed by those who had previously been enslaved (freedmen). Lastly, there

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[414] Gager (1975:96-106); Tidball (1984:68-70).

[415] Stambaugh and Balch (1986:66).

[416] Warden (1986:176-179).

[417] Warden (1986:193).

were the slaves who occupied the bottom of society. The population of Asia Minor at this approximate time amounted to virtually four million people.[418] One of the reasons for dissatisfaction was that the upper-class elite constituted only about two percent of the population but controlled almost all of society.[419] The social stratification resembled the following:
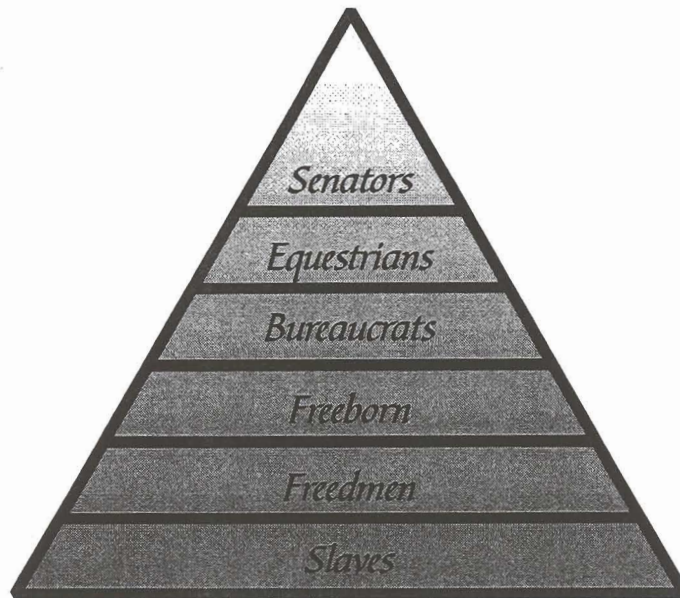

Figure 9

In figure nine we find that the social stratification of the populace formed a pyramid as with the government system. Fewer and fewer people made it to the next level. Eventually only a small group was represented at the top. The members of the lower classes in society had few expectations.[420] They undoubtedly resented the higher powers but they could not do anything about it. The church presented a message that instilled expectations without calling on them to become armed revolutionaries in a hopeless struggle.

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[418] Reicke (1964:303).

[419] Malina (1981:71-73).

[420] Warden (1986:185).

In the Greek world of Asian cities class hatred was a normal feature of life. It was thus expected that society would react with hatred and hostility against Christians. In fact, the very same features which gave solace to the working poor in the church, became cause for suspicion and distrust by society's elite landowners. The more these features attracted the poor, the more the elite hated them. From the vantage point of society they perceived Christianity as an offensive movement consisting of slaves and others of the low-born, indiscriminating plebeians.

3.3.8 Problem Eight: Christian Solidarity

The in-group solidarity is strongly evidenced in first Peter. They were to be united (3:8); prepared to make an apology / defence to anyone who required one (3:15); be ready to suffer for their beliefs (3:17). Their conduct needed to be distinguished by love, forbearance and mutual hospitality (4:8,9). Even their greeting was to be by a kiss of affection (5:14). They were to stand in the knowledge that their spiritual brothers and sisters were facing the same kind of suffering (5:9). Due to this kind of in-group solidarity they saw themselves as an οἴκου (household)(4:17).[421] This view caused society at large even more discomfort as the unity, and well being of the ancient household were largely based on the common religious practice of its members.[422] This would still be the case for the new Christian family but not for the earthly families they belonged to. The Christian was virtually substituting his earthly household with the Christian one.[423] Societies interpreted this as desertion of society in favour

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[421] Also see first Tim. 3:15

[422] See Judge (1960:35) who discussed the topic of the place of religion in the well-being of the household.

[423] The conversion of the head of the household was likely to present fewer problems than that of other members. As patriarch it was his prerogative to make such decisions, and

of Christianity. The early church not only broke up households but inferred that it was acceptable by replacing it with a new household / family / house in the church.[424] Christians were serious regarding loyalty to the household of Christ, and societies were equally serious concerning loyalty to the household of the patriarch. Overriding this conflict was the Christian's allegiance to Christ which had priority to that due to the state.[425]

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the duty of the rest of the household was to follow and execute those decisions. The problem arose when someone other than the patriarch made decisions they did not have the right to make and which defied the head of the household. However, this was the case with some households addressed in first Peter (3:1,2). This is also confirmed with Jesus' statement in Matt. 10:35,36 "For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and one's foes will be members of one's own household" (New Revised Standard Version). Texts such as these are indicative of the conflicts which early Christian communities often had to deal with. Other relevant passages include: Luke 12:51-53; Matt. 8:21,22; Luke 9:57-60; Luke 14:26; Mark 3:31-35; Luke 8:19-21; Matt. 12:46,47. Also see the comments of scholars like Lyall (1984:83); Judge (1960:35); and Warden (1986:190,191). Celsus also made a revealing comment quoted at length by Origen in Contra Celsum 3.55. Justine even recorded that a pagan husband denounced his wife (Apology 2.2.). Tertullian indicated that wives had been repudiated and sons disinherited (Apology 3.). For other examples of similar circumstances see Harnack (1908:489-493).

[424] See Osiek (1984:76) where she wrote that encouragement for:

"wives and slaves to think independently ... was indeed subversion of domestic order and therefore of civil order, a sufficient cause for resentment and persecution".

[425] Warden (1986:192).

3.3.9   Problem Nine: The Church's Formal Organization

The church was organized with clearly defined membership, ranks, prescribed times of meeting, and predetermined, liturgical rites. The more organized they were the more they would have been perceived as a security threat and thus fallen into disfavour with the Roman governors.[426]

In conclusion it would seem as if we are dealing with two different viewpoints here. Christians upheld their point of view (which seemed right and noble to them) in contrast to the totally opposite view point of the pagans. What constituted problems in the eyes of the Romans was seen as advantages to Christians. What Christians perceived as positive the Romans saw as negative and threatening. Therefore these problems resulted in hardship for Christians. This conclusion was summarized succinctly:

> "This is not to say that Christianity was intentionally political, but that it arose among those who were without political organization and experience and that it had far-reaching political consequences. Despite protests to the contrary, the churches from the very beginning presented Rome with a serious political problem. Christians were constantly amazed to find themselves cast as enemies of the Roman order, but in retrospect we must admit that it was the Romans who had the more realistic insight".[427]

Because of all of the problems mentioned above that adversely affected the relationship between Rome and Christianity we conclude that Roman rule was involved in the pitiful plight of

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[426] To see further information with regards to organizations and the threat of such see MacMullen (1966:175).

[427] Gager (1975:27,28).

Christians. We arrive at this conclusion based on the discussion above but also referring to the following:

a.   Because of the fact that Roman rule was involved in the suffering and persecution of Christians it constituted official persecution.

b.   Precedents were set by provincial governors when they judged Christians to be criminal or disruptive.[428]

c.   Such precedents were more important to Christians of Asia (Peter's audience) than local sporadic action by the police under Nero or Domitian (if there were persecution under Domitian) in Rome.[429]

d.   It seems evident that the governments of Asia were well acquainted with Christianity. They were convinced that Christianity should be suppressed.[430]

e.   As a consequence of the above mentioned precedents the governor likewise passed

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[428] Benko (1984:14).

[429] They are more important because of their locality and timeousness. We find reference to previous trials of Christians in the writing of Pliny (Letters 10. 96). Evidence from his writing suggests that he was not present at these trials. The outcome of these trials was the characterization of Christians as "contagious superstition". The word contagious certainly points to growth but also to previous cases. We thus have a negative development over time. The results of these trials, the characterizations and the time span involved are factors that lead to the generally accepted precedents. It must therefore, be concluded that suffering was official as trials and the judgements of such cases represented government opinion and actions. The persecutions of Christians in Rome under the auspices of Nero and possibly Domitian had little concern on the persecutions of first Peter (Warden 1986:89). Also see Judge (1960:16).

[430] Warden (1986:88).

judgement on Christianity as being criminal.[431]

f.   *Rome had reason to be involved in the Christians' suffering as these problems would suggest. Benko, for example, concludes:*

"That the Christian complaint that the Romans persecuted them simply on account of their name (nomen ipsum) is somewhat exaggerated and only partly true. In fact, the Romans associated the name with so many real or imagined, questionable, illegal, and perhaps even criminal activities that not even the most neutral Roman observer could see clearly the true intentions and convictions of the Christians".[432]

Suffering has now been looked at and it was discovered that it was probably social as well as governmental / political. The political scene has been explored. Now time will be devoted to examine social developments.

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[431]   *Warden (1986:88).*

[432]   *Benko (1984:24).*