

Apostolic Fathers Contribution to the Development of Christianity

Growing up in a Christian home I never thought about how the New Testament Canon came to fruition or the early writings that preceded it. To be honest I never heard it mentioned in Sunday School or Bible study growing up. One thing that I know for sure is that it would not have happened without God's orchestration. In this paper I will briefly discuss how the apostolic fathers contributed to the development of Christianity. I will include names of those who made significant contributions as well as their accomplishments.

The term Apostolic Fathers refers to a set of early Christian manuscripts written by men who were believed to have been connected with the apostles. Some of the documents that fall under the heading of apostolic fathers are 1 Clement, 2 Clement, epistles from Ignatius, Polycarp. This writing came along after the writings in our New Testament canon. The Apostolic fathers provides us with data about the Christian church in the period after the apostles. The subjects to which some allude to deals with church leadership, worship services, its holy observances, its treatment by the government, church discipline, moral education, and its definitive source of authority.

Although the work of the Apostolic Fathers is not part of the New Testament it does allow us to see the continuation of God's work through the development of the early church. The works of the Apostolic Fathers are not esoteric settlements but rather are firmly associated with the genuine issues early church congregations and its individuals faced during the first two centuries of the church. After the death of the apostle's the church government was under the rulership of bishops, elders, and deacons. Furthermore, great strides were taken to maintain Christian love and unity. I believe that the work of the Apostolic Fathers helped to keep the church stable and keep its identity as it faced an ever-changing world.