

Sub-Commission I - FIRST DRAFT

1) Traditional formulae, such as "built on the foundation of of the apostles and prophets" or "I believe the ...apostolic church" express the church's belief that its faith must truly reflect the witness given in the early church by the apostles and their collaborators, the "apostolic men". In this basic sense, the church is apostolic in its faith. This Apostolicity is God's gift in Christ. It pertains to what christians believe.

2) In a derived sense "second level" apostolicity is the quality of all the factors which contribute to the preservation of this fidelity, such as:

the fellowship of the disciples (koinonia),  
the scriptures of the New Testament,  
the paradosis as rule of faith,  
the succession of ministers in office  
the early Councils.

These are not "objects of faith, but signs and criteria of apostolic continuity, or "notes" by whose convergence the later church may, under the Spirit's guidance, recognise itself and its faith as apostolic ("first level").

3) The apostolicity of these criteria ("derived", "second level") has been seen more clearly as the church has reached deeper awareness of its paradosis, has discerned the canonical scriptures, has structured the threefold pattern of its ministry, has ensured the proper transmission of authority through episcopal

ordination, has resolved the patristic controversies, has elaborated its sacramental system. Through this process, the mystery of the church has been more fully manifested. As a result of the cumulative effect of the signs of its apostolicity, the church has obtained a deeper appreciation of the importance of the early apostolic witness for its continuing faithfulness to the Gospel.

4) We are not aware of divergences between our two communions on the basic apostolicity of the church. Some divergences concerning the signs and criteria of apostolicity seem to be compatible with agreement in faith: they belong to the realm of theology and they cross through lines of ecclesial identification. Further reflection will be required on some of them (e.g. Petrine office).