

A NOTE ON APOSTOLICITY1st D. 2/1rSub-Commission 1.

1) Traditional formulae, such as "built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets" or "I believe.....the apostolic church" express the church's belief that its faith ^{and life} ~~must~~ truly reflect the witness to the life and work of Jesus Christ 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 pertains to what christians believe. It is God's gift in Christ, which relates the Church to the Incarnate Lord and sends it on its mission.

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 (creeds). These are not "objects" of faith, ^{shelley} but ^{as the Word of God which they mediate & safeguard} signs and criteria ^{independent} 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 apostolic character of these criteria ("derived", "second level") has become clearer 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 a number of these.

1 Ministry in N.T. (No 1 of SC2)

2 Apostolicity of Church

3 Apostolic Ministry

Exam. of Functions:

Forgiveness of Sins

Priestly quality of ministry (Sub. 3)

4 Form of Ministry } B.
P.
S.

5 Ordination

Scor. of Orders

"The Nature of Ap. Succ.
Ordination & the Sacrament of Order
Functions of Bps & Presbyters
a) the priestly quality of min.
b) the forgiveness of sins

Sub-Commission 1

4. In the New Testament, Christ alone is represented as High Priest on our behalf. Ministers are never described as priests (hierous-sacerdotes), nor is there any evidence whether or not it was only 'episcopoi' or 'presbyteroi' who could preside at the eucharist. Though sacrificial language is occasionally used (cf. Romans 15:16), a sacerdotal quality after the Levitical pattern is not present in the New Testament description of ministry. The whole people of God exercises a priestly ministry - the fruits of the sacrifice of Christ, and within that people the ministry exists to promote its holiness and further its mission. As such it springs from the express purpose of Christ for his church; *it is not simply a development out of "the priesthood of all believers."*