



bi-annual Bulletin

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

Our recent series of talks at the Centro on "Reception", the last of which appears in this number of the *Bulletin*, will also appear in a forthcoming issue of *One in Christ*, thus ensuring a wider circulation of what we believe to be one of the most important series we have presented in recent years. We also note with sadness the recent death of Msgr. Richard Stewart of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity of the Holy See, whose paper began the series (*Bulletin* N^o 25, Spring 1984). His contributions to ecumenism will long be remembered.

Our "Corso Breve di Ecumenismo" continues to attract an enthusiastic group of local participants to the annual series of classes held here at the Centro (October to December), and this year's series features a detailed analysis of the contributions of the various Eastern Christian Churches to the spirituality of the West. Meanwhile last year's texts on "*La Spiritualità delle altre grandi religioni nel mondo*" have been published in textbook form as Volume 6 of our Corso series with bibliographies suitable for further study. These books are offered as supplementary materials along with the annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity publications. This year they are published in cooperation with Edizioni Paoline, a major Italian religious publisher, and we expect to double last year's distribution of over fifty thousand pieces of literature. Various members of our staff serve on the both local and international bodies which promote the Week of Prayer, including the Ecumenical Commission of the Diocese of Rome, and the Joint Annual Consultation on the Week of Prayer of the World Council of Churches and the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity of the Holy See.

Other publishing efforts include our *Bibliography of Interchurch and Interreligious Theological Dialogues*, a volume published within the year, which now has its first annual supplement in this issue of the *Bulletin*; the *International Directory of Ecumenical Research Centers and Publications* which is currently being completely revised by the Centro and which you will receive as the next number of this *Bulletin*; a newly revised version of the biography of our Founder, Fr. Paul Wattson, S.A., who was a pioneer in promoting what is now the Week of Prayer; and finally, the current issue of *Face to Face*, published by B'nai B'rith of New York carries the full texts of the papers delivered at a consultation held here in Rome last April on Jewish and Christian concepts of Covenant, which was sponsored by that organization, this Centro, SIDIC, the Faculty of Theology of the Pontifical University of St. Thomas (The "Angelicum") with the collaboration of the Commission of the Holy See for Religious Relations with Judaism.

The Centro continues to host the meetings of many groups and individuals, including Societas Oecumenica (European Society of Ecumenical Research Centers), The Permanent Ecumenical Consultation of Religious (representing the Superiors-General of Roman Catholic, Anglican, Reformed and Orthodox religious communities), members of the Anglican Consultative Council and many others.

Our Centro library is well used, especially by students studying in Rome at the various Pontifical faculties. Two Centro directors are currently professors of ecumenical theology at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas (where the current Pope received his doctorate). The library is constantly being refined and restructured, and currently numbers over ten thousand specialized volumes in ecumenism with 110 major and 155 minor periodicals currently received. The collection is being partially computerized. Our library continues to cooperate with *Studi Ecumenici*, published by the San Bernardino Ecumenical Institute of Verona, by providing its documentation service.

As always, we are grateful for the interest and support of those we seek to serve.

Charles Angell, S.A.
Director

ABBREVIATIONS FOR CONFESSIONAL FAMILIES
AND CHURCHES

FO	: Faith and Order	OC	: Old Catholic
A	: Anglican	OO	: Oriental Orthodox (<i>Non-Chalcedonian</i>)
B	: Baptist	Pe	: Pentecostal
C	: Congregational	R	: Reformed
D	: Disciples of Christ	RC	: Roman Catholic
E	: Evangelical	U	: United
L	: Lutheran (<i>includes dialogues formerly under Ev</i>)	WCC	: World Council of Churches
M	: Methodist	DOMBES	: Dialogues des Dombes
O	: Orthodox (<i>Byzantine</i>)		

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LIST OF DIALOGUES

- FO**: Faith and Order Commission
- A-B / usa (nc)**: North Carolina Baptist-Episcopal Dialogues
- A-L**: Anglican-Lutheran International Conversation
- A-L / can**: Anglican-Lutheran Dialogue in Canada
- A-L / eng-d**: Representatives of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and of the Church of England
- A-L / eur**: Anglican-Lutheran European Regional Commission
- A-L / usa**: Episcopal-Lutheran Dialogue in the U.S.A.
- A-O**: Commission for Anglican-Orthodox Joint Doctrinal Discussion
- A-O / usa**: Anglican-Orthodox Theological Consultation in the U.S.A.
- A-OC**: Anglican-Old Catholic Theological Conversations (*formerly*: Bonn Agreement)
- A-OC / usa**: Anglican-Old Catholic North American Working Group
- A-R**: Anglican-Reformed International Commission
- A-R / eng-nl**: Representatives of the Netherlands Reformed Church and of the Church of England
- A-RC**: Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC)
- A-RC / can**: Canadian Anglican/Roman Catholic Dialogue Commission
- A-RC / f**: Groupe mixte de travail anglican catholique en France
- A-RC / usa**: Joint Commission on Anglican-Roman Catholic Relations in the USA
- A-RC / usa (lna)**: Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue in Louisiana
- A-RC / usa (va)**: Anglican/Roman Catholic Commission on Moral Issues
- B-L / n**: Theological Conversations between the Church of Norway and the Baptist Union of Norway
- B-R**: Baptist-Reformed Theological Conversations
- B-RC**: International Theological Dialogue between Baptists and Roman Catholics
- B-RC / usa (sb)**: Southern Baptist-Roman Catholic Dialogue in the USA (*formerly*: Baptist-Catholic Regional Conferences in the USA)
- C-L / sf**: Talks between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Free Church of Finland
- D-R**: International Consultation of Theologians of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the International Disciples Ecumenical

Council

D-RC: Disciples of Christ-Roman Catholic International Commission for Dialogue

E-RC: Evangelical-Roman Catholic Dialogue on Mission

L-M: Lutheran-Methodist Joint Commission

L-M / d: Lutheran-Methodist Dialogue in Germany

L-M / usa: US Lutheran-Methodist Dialogue

L-O: Lutheran-Orthodox Dialogue

L-O / d-cp: Theologisches Gespräch zwischen dem Ökumenischen Patriarchat und der Evangelischen Kirchen in Deutschland

L-O / d-rus: Bilateraler Theologischer Dialog zwischen der Russischen Orthodoxen Kirche und der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland

L-O / ddr-rus: Dialogue between the Federation of Evangelical Churches in the German Democratic Republic and the Russian Orthodox Church

L-O / usa: Lutheran-Orthodox Dialogue in the USA

L-O-R / f: Dialogue between Representatives of the Inter-Orthodox Bishops' Committee in France and the Protestant Federation of France

L-O-R / r: Lutheran-Orthodox-Reformed Dialogue in Romania

L-R: Lutheran-Reformed Joint Committee

L-R / f: Conseil Permanent des Eglises luthériennes et réformées de France

L-R / usa: Lutheran-Reformed Conversations in the USA

L-R-RC: Joint Roman Catholic-Lutheran-Reformed Study Commission on "The Theology of Marriage and the Problem of Mixed Marriages"

L-R-RC / f: Comité mixte de travail catholique-protestant en France

L-R-U / eur: Lutheran-Reformed Conversations in Europe

L-RC: Gemeinsame römisch-katholische/evangelisch-lutherische Kommission

L-RC / d: Joint Commission of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and the German Episcopal Conference

L-RC / india: Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue in India

L-RC / jap: Roman Catholic/Lutheran Joint Commission in Japan

L-RC / usa: Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue in the USA

L-U / usa: Dialogue between the Lutheran Council in the USA and the United Church of Christ

M-RC: Joint Commission of the Roman Catholic Church and the World Methodist Council

O-OC: Mixed Orthodox-Old Catholic Commission

O-OO: Theological Dialogues between the Eastern Orthodox and the Oriental Orthodox Churches

O-R / ch: Commission de dialogue entre la Fédération des Eglises Protestantes de la Suisse et les Eglises orthodoxes en Suisse

O-R / rus: Dialogue between the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Russian Orthodox Church

O-RC: Commission mixte internationale de dialogue entre l'Eglise catholique romaine et l'Eglise orthodoxe

O-RC / ch: Orthodox-Roman Catholic Dialogue in Switzerland

O-RC / f: Comité mixte catholique-orthodoxe en France

O-RC / usa: Orthodox-Roman Catholic Bilateral Consultation in the United States

O-U / aus: Conversations between the Uniting Church in Australia and the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese in Australia

OC-RC / usa: Joint Commission of the Polish National Catholic Church and the National Conference of Catholic Bishops

OO-RC: Oriental Orthodox-Roman Catholic Relations

OO-RC / usa: Oriental Orthodox-Roman Catholic Dialogue in the USA

Pe-RC: Pentecostal-Roman Catholic Dialogue

R-RC: Study Commission on the "Presence of Christ in Church and the World"

R-RC / usa: Roman Catholic/Presbyterian Reformed Consultation in the USA

RC-WCC: Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches

DOMBES: Groupe des Dombes

PERIODICALS SURVEYED

WITH THEIR ABBREVIATIONS

Actualité Religieuse (**ARel**); American Baptist Quarterly (**ABQ**); Anglican Theological Review (**ATR**); Australasian Catholic Record (**ACR**).

Bausteine; Biserica Ortodoxă Română (**BOR**).

Catholica; Centro Pro Unione; Chrysostom; Civiltà Cattolica (**CivCatt**); Clergy Review (**ClRev**); Currents in Theology and Mission (**CTM**).

Diakonia; Diálogo Ecuménico (**DiálEc**); Doctrine and Life (**DL**); Documentation Catholique (**DocCath**).

Ecumenical Bulletin (**EB**); Ecumenical Press Service (**EPS**); Ecumenical Review (**EcR**); Ecumenical Trends (**ET**); Ecumenism; Ecumenist; Église et théologie (**EgTh**); Ekklēsia; Ekklēsia kai Theologia (**EkTh**); Ekklesiastikos Pharos (**EPh**); Ekumenisk Orienting. Faith and Order (**EkOr.FO**); Episkepsis; Epworth Review (**ER**).

Foyers Mixtes (**FM**).

Greek Orthodox Theological Review (**GOTR**).

Herder Korrespondenz (**HK**).

Information Service (**ISer**); Informations Catholiques Internationales (**ICI**); Internationale Kirchliche Zeitschrift (**IKZ**); Irénikon; Istina.

Journal of Ecumenical Studies (**JES**); Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate (**JMP**).

Kerygma und Dogma (**KD**); Kosmos en Oekumene (**KOek**).

Lutheran World Information/Lutherische Welt-Information (**LWI**); Lutheran World Information: Monthly Edition (**LWI - Monthly**); Lutherische Monatshefte (**LMH**); LWB-Dokumentation; LWB-Information; LWF-Dokumentation; LWF Information.

Materialdienst des Konfessionskundlichen Instituts Bensheim (**MD**); Mid-Stream; Month.

Nicolaus; Notizie Ortodosse (**NO**).

Oecuménisme; Okumenische Rundschau (**OR**); Oekumenisches Forum (**OF**); One in Christ (**OiC**); One World; Origins; Ostkirchliche Studien (**OS**).

Positions Luthériennes (**PL**); Proche Orient Chrétien (**POC**); Protestantesimo.

Reformed Press Service (**RPS**); Reformed World (**RW**); Regno; Renovación Ecuménica (**RenEc**).

St.Vladimir's Theological Quarterly (**SVTQ**); Service d'information (**SInf**); Service oecuménique de presse et d'information (**SOEPI**); Sobornost; Star of the East (**SE**); Stimme der Orthodoxie (**SO**); Studi Ecumenici (**StEc**); Studii Teologice (**StTeol**).

Tablet; Theologia; Theology Digest (**TD**); Theological Studies (**TS**).

Una Sancta (**US**); Unitas; Unité Chrétienne (**UC**); Unité des Chrétiens (**UDC**); Ut omnes unum

(**UOU**).

Worship.

Žurnal Moskovskoj Patriarkhii (**ZMP**).

ABBREVIATIONS OF PERIODICALS

ABQ: American Baptist Quarterly; **ACR**: Australasian Catholic Record; **ARel**: Actualité religieuse; **ATR**: Anglican Theological Review.

BOR: Biserica Ortodoxă Română.

CivCatt: Civiltà Cattolica; **ClRev**: Clergy Review; **CTM**: Currents in Theology and Mission.

DiálEc: Diálogo Ecuménico; **DL**: Doctrine and Life; **DocCath**: Documentation Catholique.

EB: Ecumenical Bulletin; **EcR**: Ecumenical Review; **EgTh**: Eglise et théologie; **EkOr.FO**: Ekumenisk Orienting. Faith and Order; **EkTh**: Ekklēsia kai Theologia; **EPh**: Ekklesiastikos Pharos; **EPS**: Ecumenical Press Service; **ER**: Epworth Review; **ET**: Ecumenical Trends.

FM: Foyers mixtes.

GOTR: Greek Orthodox Theological Review.

HK: Herder Korrespondenz.

ICI: Informations Catholiques Internationales; **IKZ**: Internationale Kirchliche Zeitschrift; **ISer**: Information Service.

JES: Journal of Ecumenical Studies; **JMP**: Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate.

KD: Kerygma und Dogma; **KOek**: Kosmos en Oekumene.

LMH: Lutherische Monatshefte; **LWI**: Lutheran World Information/Lutherische Welt-Information; **LWI - Monthly**: Lutheran World Information: Monthly Edition.

MD: Materialdienst des Konfessionskundlichen Instituts Bensheim.

NO: Notizie Ortodosse.

OF: Oekumenisches Forum; **OiC**: One in Christ; **OR**: Okumenische Rundschau; **OS**: Ostkirchliche Studien.

PL: Positions Luthériennes; **POC**: Proche Orient Chrétien.

RenEc: Renovación Ecuménica; **RPS**: Reformed Press Service; **RW**: Reformed World.

SE: Star of the East; **SInf**: Service d'information; **SO**: Stimme der Orthodoxie; **SOEPI**: Service oecuménique de presse et d'information; **StEc**: Studi Ecumenici; **StTeol**: Studii Teologice; **SVTQ**: St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly.

TD: Theology Digest; **TS**: Theological Studies.

UC: Unité Chrétienne; **UDC**: Unité des Chrétiens; **UOU**: Ut omnes unum; **US**: Una Sancta.

ZMP: Žurnal Moskovskoj Patriarkhii.

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TOWARDS THE COMMON CONFESSION OF THE APOSTOLIC FAITH

An Ecumenical Investigation into the Fundamentals of the Faith

A talk given at the Centro Pro Unione,
on Tuesday, May 7th, 1985

by Günther Gassmann*

I. INTRODUCTION

The Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches has recently become one of the best known sections of the World Council. The convergence document on *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, adopted by the Commission at its last meeting in Lima 1982, is now the most widely discussed ecumenical statement in the history of the ecumenical movement. It was prepared during a long process by representative theologians of the Protestant Free Church, Reformation (including Anglican), Old Catholic, Orthodox and Roman Catholic traditions - Faith and Order is the only Commission of the WCC where the Roman Catholic Church is officially represented. This document has so far been translated into more than 25 languages and over 300,000 copies have been printed. It is studied in thousands of congregations, ecumenical groups, theological faculties and decision-making bodies of the churches, including the Roman Catholic Church.

So far we have received over twenty official responses from churches to "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry" and hundreds of other reactions. By the end of this year many of the member churches of the WCC as well as non-member churches like the Roman Catholic Bishops' Conferences will have sent us their responses. We are thus witnesses of a wide-spread reception process in which the official responses of the churches are one important element. This process is already a clear indication that "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry" is rendering a major and unique contribution and impetus to the advancement of better mutual understanding and closer fellowship between the

churches on their way to visible unity.

The reception process of "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry" will continue. There are also critical questions raised which require further discussion. Faith and Order will have to elaborate a comprehensive response to this reception process during the next three years. Alongside this work the Faith and Order Commission is now concentrating its attention on the study project called *Towards the Common Expression of the Apostolic Faith Today*. The significance of this project is to be seen in its relation to "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry" as well as in the broader context of the ecumenical discussion as a whole. I would like to begin with this second aspect.

II. CONVERGENCE BETWEEN *FIDES QUA* AND *FIDES QUAE*

The ecumenical movement could only emerge at the beginning of this century and continue until today because there was a recognition of an already existing communion in personal faith and Christian love. Representatives of divided churches, which in several cases were and still are not able to recognize each other fully as churches, entered into forms of co-operation and theological dialogue. They were able to do this because they had discovered that they were, despite all differences on doctrine and ecclesiastical structures, bound together by their one Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, and by their common allegiance to him.

In the first stages of the ecumenical movement this given fact of a common faith and

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trust in Jesus Christ was regarded, by some traditions and theological positions, as a sufficient basis not only for common Christian prayer, but also for closer fellowship and inter-communion between the churches. Anglicans, Orthodox, Lutherans and others, however, protested against this predominantly liberal or pietistic Protestant position. They also valued the existing bond of faith among Christians. But they saw in it rather a basis from which a discussion on the dividing doctrinal issues could start. Without such a discussion or dialogue, they were convinced, the divisions between the churches, deeply rooted in history and in different interpretations of God's revealed truth, could not be overcome. This conviction has become dominant in the Faith and Order movement and has since then guided its work.

But these two dimensions or perspectives on sharing in the life of faith and discussion on the content of faith have remained constant, in a way also dialectical and in any case essentially necessary constellation within the ecumenical movement and for the ecumenical theological discussions. There is a certain dialectic between the *already* of the experience of a common faith and the *not yet* of an agreement on the fundamental content of faith within a full fellowship between the churches. This dialectic between the *fides qua creditur* and the *fides quae creditur* has however not remained a static one in the course of the ecumenical movement.

Through increasing encounters of Christians of different traditions, by means of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, through a mutual participation in each other's rich heritage of spirituality, through common translations and study of Holy Scripture, the experience of a common life of faith has been deepened and broadened. Liturgical reforms in many churches have followed similar lines and make it easier for Christians to worship together. The fact that the worship life at the Assembly of the WCC in Vancouver 1983 was generally regarded as one of the most significant and lasting impressions of the Assembly is a sign of this development. We call these forms of expressing and living our common faith through mutual love, respect, common prayer and spirituality "spiritual ecumenism". The importance of this spiritual dimension of ecumenism for all attempts towards manifesting Christian unity in faith, sacramental fellowship, witness and service has been strongly underlined in the Decree on Ecumenism of Vatican II and in many documents from multilateral and bilateral ecumenical dialogues.

But the other side of the dialectic between *fides qua* and *fides quae* has also changed. The initial excitement of the new encounter and mutual re-discovery of the churches or

the ecumenical movement was accompanied by a more painful consequence. In the new contacts and the serious theological dialogue which followed, the churches had to recognize that in the course of a history of isolation and conflict, more far-reaching differences in their doctrines and ecclesial structures had arisen than they were often aware of. But in a second stage of the dialogue, and this applies to the multilateral dialogue which led to "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry" as well as to the results of the many bilateral dialogues during the last 15 years, many existing agreements on faith were formulated. Above all new and unexpected convergences on formerly dividing issues were reached in these dialogues.

This important process has led to another convergence, the even more fundamental convergence between "spiritual" ecumenism and "theological" ecumenism. In other words: The gap, the distance between the experience of sharing and celebrating the same faith on the one hand, and the struggle to overcome the differences in the understanding of this faith on the other, is becoming smaller. We are moving in the direction of that day when the common sharing of the faith is no longer limited and burdened by the disagreements concerning the content of the faith. It is in this situation that the Faith and Order study on "The Common Expression of the Apostolic Faith Today" receives its special significance and promise because it deals with the same sources which make personal faith possible and which are at the same time constitutive for the confession of the content of faith by the Christian community. I would now like to draw out the other lines which have led to this study project.

III APOSTOLIC FAITH IN THE ECUMENICAL DISCUSSION

In the history of the Faith and Order movement the question of the common confession of the Apostolic Faith has been on the agenda of theological discussion from the first days of this movement. This agenda was originally determined by the four points of the *Lambeth Quadrilateral*, the formula for the unity of the Church accepted by the Lambeth Conference of Anglican Bishops in 1888 and reaffirmed at all the following Lambeth Conferences. As a basis for the reunion of divided churches the *Quadrilateral* mentions, first, the Holy Scriptures as "containing all things necessary for salvation and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith". As a second element it refers to the Apostles' Creed as the Baptismal Symbol and the Nicene Creed, "as the sufficient

statement of the Christian faith". The third element are the two sacraments ordained by Christ (i.e., Baptism and the Lord's Supper), and the fourth is the Historic Episcopate.

In the initial Faith and Order discussion the first element, the authority of Holy Scripture, was not specifically taken up, probably because one assumed that this was no problem, but the other three elements became central topics for the first period of Faith and Order deliberations. The question of the sacraments and of the ministry were discussed in the broad perspective of all their different aspects and their ecclesiological significance - including the issue of intercommunion. The task of the common confession of the faith, however, was reduced to the question of the acceptance and place of the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds in the churches, the significance of later confessions of faith and the possibility of formulating new Creeds. This discussion led, as was to be expected, to no satisfying results. The chance of dealing with the common confession of the apostolic faith was lost because the issue of the authority of Holy Scripture was not taken up and the question of the apostolic witness and tradition in the Early Church was limited to the formal issue of the acceptance and use of the Creeds.

Also in the later stages of the theological discussion in Faith and Order after the foundation of the World Council of Churches, the issue of the confession of the Apostolic Faith was not thematized as such, but in fact many elements of what we call "Apostolic Faith" were part of the programme of Faith and Order. More precisely: The predominantly comparative discussion of individual theological topics as they were presented by the different churches gave place to a discussion of these topics with reference to the common sources of our theological reflection. It was first of all the biblical witness which provided this common frame of reference and which was deeply enriched by the broad impact of biblical theology and scholarship after the Second World War. A first result of this new perspective of Faith and Order discussion could be seen at the World Conference on Faith and Order 1952 in Lund, Sweden, with its strong biblical/Christological concentration in dealing with its ecclesiological themes.

With the increasing active participation of Orthodox theologians in Faith and Order after the Assembly of the WCC 1961 at New Delhi the other essential source of the Apostolic Faith came into the foreground: Tradition. The same biblical theology and scholarship which had been of strong influence at Lund, again helped representatives of the Reformation and Free Church traditions to come to a new evaluation of the traditional controversial

theme of the relation between Scripture and Tradition. The decisive breakthrough occurred at the World Conference on Faith and Order in Montreal 1963. Here an agreement was reached that any opposition between Scripture and Tradition is inappropriate. It was clarified that Scripture itself is the witness of the tradition, of the handing on, the transmission of the apostolic faith, the apostolic *kerygma*. And this Tradition, with capital *T*, continues under the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the history of the Church and together with or perhaps also against the traditions of the individual churches in a divided Christianity. This important work on the bases of the Apostolic Faith, which still needs a much fuller reception by the churches within the WCC, has been complemented by other Faith and Order studies:

- The Study on the Authority of the Bible;
- The four meetings, 1964 - 1971, sponsored by Faith and Order, between representatives of Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches on their Christological differences;
- A Faith and Order study on the *filioque* clause in the Nicene Creed
- the study, in the context of the Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council on Catholicity and Apostolicity;
- the study on "Account of Our Hope" (Bangalore 1978).

Finally, the convergence text on "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry" is also dealing with essential elements of the Apostolic Faith. Or, as I would formulate it in my own Lutheran perspective: Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry are at the same time elements of the Apostolic Faith and presuppose the fundamentals of this faith. They are elements of the Apostolic Faith because this faith was communicated and transmitted as the saving activity of the Triune God for our sake through proclamation, baptism and eucharist administered by the ordained ministry in communion with the whole *koinonia* of the Christian community. At the same time proclamation, baptism and eucharist and the ministry which is serving them presuppose the saving revelation of God in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. The Lima document on "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry", therefore, seeks to lead us forward to an agreement on essential elements of the Apostolic Faith and at the same time refers us back to the fundamental presuppositions of these elements, the Christological and Trinitarian bases of the Apostolic Faith.

All these developments, studies and convergences in Faith and Order have contributed

to a deeper common understanding of the Apostolic Faith. As a consequence they have led to the decision to make the confession of the Apostolic Faith *as such* a theme of future Faith and Order reflection and thereby they will bring together and integrate the fruits and insights of these diverse studies.

IV. APOSTOLIC FAITH AS BASIC TO CHURCH UNITY

One should, finally, mention a third line which has led to the present and future concentration on the confession of the Apostolic Faith today. With the development of the multilateral and, in recent years, of the bilateral dialogues and the agreements and convergences they have presented on a number of doctrinal issues, the question inevitably arose as to how the visible unity should be described to which all this work is to be oriented. Again in the Faith and Order movement there were from the beginning considerations on the future form of unity. But after the foundation of the WCC there prevailed at the beginning a reluctance to deal with the question of future unity because of the ecclesiological "neutrality" of the WCC. In 1961, however, an Assembly of the WCC for the first time made an attempt to outline the basic structures of the "unity we seek". This New Delhi formula of unity has become well known, and it formed the basis of further reflection on this question at Uppsala 1968 and this led to the concept of a "conciliar fellowship of local churches which are themselves truly united" at the 1975 Nairobi Assembly of the WCC. In connection with the bilateral dialogues several Christian World Communions have developed since 1974 the concept of "unity in reconciled diversity".

These two concepts differ with regard to the place and role of confessional traditions in future forms of visible unity. Those who support the concept of "Unity in reconciled diversity" believe that confessional traditions and identities, because of their values, should be preserved within a full communion between churches. These churches need not, therefore, be organizationally united. The concept of "conciliar fellowship" has, on the other hand, presupposed an organic and organizational union of local churches. But in the description of the basic presuppositions and structures of visible unity the two concepts are in full agreement. For them the unity of the churches requires mutual recognition of baptism, eucharist and ministry and, above all, agreement on faith or, as New Delhi stated, "holding the one apostolic faith". The Budapest Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation last year,

further developing the concept of unity in reconciled diversity, stated in an official declaration on "The Unity We Seek": "This unity (which is the unity of the body of Christ and participates in the unity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) is expressed as a communion in the common, and at the same time, multiform confession of the one and same apostolic faith".

It is obvious from these considerations on the unity of the Church that the time has come that, along with the dialogue on the other requirements of unity - agreement in and recognition of baptism, eucharist and ministry - that the issue of the common apostolic faith should be taken up in the program of Faith and Order. Because without a consideration and agreement on the content of the Apostolic Faith the other requirements of unity would somehow "hang in the air". They would lack their necessary foundation on and integration in the fundamentals of the Christian faith.

V. DEVELOPMENT OF THE STUDY PROJECT

Already the Nairobi Assembly 1975 recognized the necessity to take up more specifically this elementary presupposition of unity. It stated: "We ask the churches to undertake a common effort to receive, reappropriate and confess together, as contemporary occasion requires, the Christian truth and faith, delivered through the Apostles and handed down through the centuries". Three years later the Commission on Faith and Order 1978 at Bangalore summarized the three basic requirements of the unity of the Church:

- (a) consensus on the apostolic faith;
- (b) mutual recognition of baptism, the eucharist and the ministry;
- (c) structures for making possible common teaching and decision-making".

The following meeting of the Commission 1982 at Lima then decided: "We recommend the pursuit of the theme 'Towards the Common Expression of the Apostolic Faith Today' as one of the main study projects of the Faith and Order Commission in the years to come". In its Fifth Report of 1983 the joint working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches underlined the importance of the new Faith and Order study and asked for a close relation between this study and its own work on "The Way Towards Unity". And, finally, the Vancouver Assembly of the WCC 1983 in several of its reports affirmed the decision of the Faith and Order Commission at Lima and underlined the high priority of the study on Apostolic Faith "as a presupposi-

tion of effective steps towards unity".

Thus, developments in the ecumenical movement in general and in the work of Faith and Order in particular have led to the point where with an inner logic and necessity the decision to undertake a study on the Apostolic Faith had to be taken. This necessity was recognized and confirmed by the actions of the decision-making bodies of the World Council and the Faith and Order Commission. And the churches themselves who are committed to the ecumenical movement, including the Roman Catholic Church, have also expressed in many and clear ways their support, expectations and hopes for this study.

VI. METHOD, CONTENT AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

But how to undertake such a study project? Which method should be used? What should be its content and its envisioned result? There seems to be no easy answer to these questions. Other topics of ecumenical discussion like baptism, eucharist, ministry, the Church, justification by faith, authority in the Church, etc. seem to be much more specific. We know already about the differences in their understanding which have emerged in the past. And we are aware of new developments in biblical and historical scholarship and in the present interpretation of past doctrinal decisions which are assisting an ecumenical dialogue on these topics. The *status quaestionis* seems to be clear and there are signposts indicating the converging ways towards a sufficient agreement for mutual understanding and recognition.

"Apostolic Faith", in contrast, seems at a first glance to be a very broad and ambiguous term. Is it to be understood in a historical, quantitative or qualitative sense? And what does the term "common confession" or the even more vague term in the title of the study "common expression" mean? After some deliberations before 1982 the Faith and Order Commission came to a rather - if you like - simple solution concerning these questions. It decided at Lima to make the symbol of Nicea-Constantinople (381), in short the Nicene Creed, both the basis as well as the methodological tool of the study on the Apostolic Faith. This decision provided clarity and it also involved a number of problems and risks, but it carries with it the hope of further ecumenical progress.

This decision provided clarity by using the Nicene Creed as a criteria for our understanding of what we mean by "Apostolic Faith". The Creed refers us to the Trinitarian faith with all its implications of the Triune God's action in creation, salvation and fulfilment. It refers us especially to the Christological dogma with its significance for our salvation

and provides us with the basic characteristic of the Church in God's economy. This Nicene Creed is at the same time, within Christianity, the most widely accepted and used Creed and constitutes, therefore, a broad basis for our investigation.

But there are also problems and risks involved in taking this Creed as the starting point, basis and framework. The risk is, that a number of Christian traditions which have not officially recognized this Creed could consider themselves excluded from this study. It will therefore be necessary, and this is one of the purposes of the study, to clarify and show in what ways the Creed is summarizing and expressing the Christian faith as it is, in a normative way, witnessed to in the Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament. And at the same time it would be necessary to show that the fundamental beliefs as expressed in this Creed are capable of fresh, contemporary interpretation in loyalty to and in continuity with the Nicene Creed. If we take seriously these two tasks then there is hope that the risk mentioned above can be avoided and all churches represented in the Faith and Order Commission would be able to participate fully in this work.

With these remarks I have already indicated some of the problems but also purposes of the study. The problem is that the Nicene Creed is, of course, only a short, though authoritative, summary of the Apostolic Faith. It needs therefore to be seen in the wider context of its basis in the biblical testimony and its framework in the development of Christian thinking during the first centuries. And because of its concise, short formulations the Creed is also open to differing interpretations, some of them might even be contradictory. This problem has to be taken into account when the attempt at a common interpretation is undertaken in the study.

What then are the methodological steps to be taken in carrying out this study and what is the result we can expect? Again the Lima meeting of the Faith and Order Commission has given some clear guidelines. Using the Nicene Creed, but in the wider context of the Apostolic Faith as I have indicated, as a basis for the work, three steps are proposed:

- recognition of the Nicene Creed;
- explication of the Creed;
- common confession of the Apostolic Faith today.

The Commission decided to begin with the second step, the explication or interpretation of the Nicene Creed. Behind this decision lies the conviction that a common recognition of the Creed, the first step, would only be possible for some Christian traditions if by

way of interpreting the content of the Creed for today, they might be helped to see the significance of this Creed in a new light. This explication or interpretation will clarify the biblical foundations of the statements in the Creed, explain them in their historical context, and present their meaning for Christian thinking and life today. Faith and Order has begun this work on explication by holding four international consultations, one already in 1983 in Rome on "The Roots of the Apostolic Faith" and the other three in Kottayam, India, Kinshasa, Zaire, and Chantilly, France in 1984 and early 1985.

Each of these three consultations dealt with one of the three articles of the Nicene Creed. The consultations prepared first reports which present the basic theological content of the statements on the Creed and relate these to problems of our time and world, e.g., with regard to the other religions, especially the monotheistic ones, and in view of the life of Christian and the task of the churches in a world full of suffering, injustice and threatened by the exploitation of natural resources and total destruction through a nuclear conflict. These first reports also take up some of the classical controversies like the *filioque* question and contemporary discussions like the one on the fatherly and motherly elements in our understanding of the Trinity. These three reports will be revised by a small Faith and Order group at the end of May and then presented to the first meeting of the new Faith and Order Commission at Stavanger, Norway in August 1985. The Commission will certainly not be able to produce a final document, but hopefully a draft document which will then be further discussed in Faith and Order as well as by study groups in the churches.

On the basis of this work of interpretation we hope to help churches to recognize the Nicene Creed as a fundamental expression of our common apostolic faith for their theological thinking and their life of worship. At the same time this interpretation should provide direction for further work which could provide the theological basis and the theological perspectives for a common confession of the faith today. This does not mean that we intend to formulate a new Ecumenical Creed. Faith and Order has no authority to undertake a task which belongs essentially to an Ecumenical Council. It was in order to avoid this misunderstanding that the term "Towards the Common Expression of the Apostolic Faith" was chosen. A convergence document, as the result of this study, should rather formulate with the help of the Nicene Creed, the fundamental theological convictions of the Apostolic Faith in their relevance for today as a common basis and orientation for Christian confession, renewal

and unity.

VII. ECUMENICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study "Towards the Common Expression" - or as I would prefer to say: "Towards the Common Confessing of the Apostolic Faith Today" can build on much work which has already been done in the Ecumenical Movement. In the four consultations so far we have had the experience that in the interpretation of the Nicene Creed there exists a great chance of mutual enrichment by integrating the particular insights and emphases of the different Christian traditions. This is possible because we start from a common basis, the Trinitarian and Christological dogmas, which can then be expounded in all their richness and manifold consequences for Christian life and witness today. In this work we encounter only a limited number of deeper doctrinal differences, but a wealth of differences in theological interpretations which are in many cases not specific to a particular Church tradition. The study will respect the diversity of theological interpretations, but must also outline what are - with and under all diversity - the decisive and essential common convictions of faith. This will imply also the necessity to indicate some of the limits for interpretations if they want to remain true to the apostolic faith. Given the presuppositions from which we start and the first experiences we have had I believe that this study has a good chance to come to positive results in the coming years and that it will find much interest and wide support in the churches.

But above all I believe that with this study we have an opportunity to render a decisive contribution to the advancement towards Christian unity. I would like to indicate some of the reasons for this judgement.

1. The study on the Apostolic Faith can provide an important bridge for a further rapprochement between the Eastern and Western traditions within Christianity. It will have its clear basis in the Apostolic Faith of the first centuries and will deal not with isolated aspects of Christian faith but with its wholeness in doctrine, life and worship. This corresponds to the approach of the Eastern tradition. It will at the same time resolutely seek to relate this faith to the modern world and thereby integrate the concerns and insights of the Western tradition.

2. I have in earlier parts of this paper indicated how developments in the Ecumenical Movement have led to the necessity, even the *kairos* to undertake a study on the Apostolic Faith. One of these lines was the convergence between a deepened experience of a common

life of faith and an increasing common understanding concerning the content of that faith. Since both, the *fides qua* and the *fides quae creditur*, have as their common fundament the Trinitarian and especially Christological faith, the new study may help to link both in a very direct way. This would lead beyond a common experience and sharing of personal faith to a common confession of the same faith by the whole *koinonia* of Christians.

3. The tradition in ecumenical study of dealing with one individual aspect of Christian faith after the other has often led to the impression of labouring on a disintegrated and never finished mosaic. Because of its broad scope the study on Apostolic Faith would be in a position to bring together and integrate the different ecumenical studies and their results in a coherent and comprehensive framework and vision.

4. According to present concepts of the unity of the Church (the third line of development mentioned above), a convergence document on the Apostolic Faith would contribute another essential element to the conditions and requirements of taking steps towards visible unity. Of course, such a document will have to be received by the churches. But already the process of reception itself will, as our experience with the document on BEM shows, render a significant contribution to closer fellowship between the churches.

5. The results of a study on the Apostolic Faith, and this is my personal conviction, would put the hierarchy of ecumenical convergences in the right order. Multilateral and bilateral dialogues are dealing with and concentrating on a selection of theological issues. A sufficient

agreement on these is generally regarded as necessary for steps towards unity. But the churches differ with regard to the scope or amount of agreement necessary in each case and they give different priorities to these issues. An agreement and convergence on the fundamentals of the Apostolic Faith would be for all the ecumenical issues of central and structuring importance, in the light of which they would find their appropriate place and relation to each other.

6. The outcome of the Apostolic Faith study would provide a spiritual basis and impulse and a theological orientation for one of the most pressing needs felt by many Christians today, namely to be able to witness their faith together. Those who are enabled to experience, live and confess their faith together, will also be empowered by the Holy Spirit to witness to this faith in words, actions and, if necessary, also in suffering.

7. Finally: The study on Apostolic Faith seeks to present a common interpretation and vision of that faith which through the centuries has been at the center of Christian confidence and hope and which makes the Church of Jesus Christ the sign and instrument of God's love to his world. If the study succeeds in achieving this goal, this would be a tremendous encouragement for many Christians who are asking us whether we are still moving forward on our common ecumenical pilgrimage. Then we could tell them, yes, we are indeed, with the help of God's grace, moving forward because we have together rediscovered the deep roots which already now bind us together as the one People of God.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

Please make the following correction in:

Edward Kilmartin, "A Catholic Response to Lima 1982," *Bulletin/ Centro Pro Unione* No. 27 (SPRING, 1985), page 11, first column, 14 lines from the bottom:

"However the Mass is not a propitiatory sacrifice because it is a new offering of the sacrifice of the cross. Yet there is an offering of the sacrifice of the cross in the Mass. It is made by the Church.....".

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Dear Editor,

I wished to say that I found Professor Kilmartin's "A Catholic Response to Lima 1982" in your No 27 Spring 1985 Bulletin a most valuable study, not least at those points where I was obliged to disagree with what was written.

I do not suppose that your Bulletin elicits many responses from its readers. However, in the last 3 paragraphs of the article the question is raised concerning a "corresponding challenge" to episcopal churches. I venture an answer to this question - for the attention of anyone concerned.

The answer is Yes: there is a corresponding challenge; this is implicit in the BEM text,

and in the course of its study of the text the Church of Scotland has made it explicit.

1. Two elements in BEM are to be noted. a) M26 the "communal dimension...requires the community's effective participation in the discovery of God's will and the guidance of the Spirit"; 27 "strong emphasis should be placed on the active participation of all members in the life and decision making of the community". The desideratum here expressed rests on the oneness of the whole People of God, so emphasised in the opening paragraph of the section on Ministry. Since the Ordained Ministry at all levels already exercises such participation, evidently the call is especially and particularly that the laity be enlisted in participation. b) 24 "The threefold pattern stands evidently in need of reformation. In some churches the collegial dimension of leadership...has suffered diminution. In others, the function of deacons has been reduced to an assistant role in the celebration of the liturgy; they have ceased to fulfil any function with respect to the diaconal witness of the Church". Though not the only element in the threefold Ministry needing reform, special emphasis is laid here upon the need for the *diaconate* to be renovated.

2. In its three years' study of BEM, the Church of Scotland has put these two elements together, a) and b). It has been historically characteristic of non-episcopal churches to develop the role of the laity, at all levels short of those pertaining to the Ordained Ministry (cf. Presbyterian elders, Congregationalist deacons, Methodist class leaders); just as it has been historically characteristic of the episcopal churches to disregard or neglect this aspect. Of course emphasis on lay participation has nothing to do with democracy or democratic ideology. (Indeed it can be shown that such lay participation in the affairs of the Church has been partly responsible for the rise of democracy and the participation of all members of the state in the affairs of the state.) Lay participation in the life of the Church is neither more nor less than recognition of the NT emphasis on diversity of gifts and the attempt in obedience to NT teaching to employ and utilise these gifts. In its study the Church of Scotland has seen in the evident weakness of the diaconate as practised in episcopal churches today, and the admitted need for diaconal renovation, the chance to charge the laity with its proper share of responsibility within the Church. To those thinking along these lines, this would be the "corresponding challenge" that BEM presents

to episcopal churches. (It must be explicitly rejected that this discovery is a mere *quid pro quo*, a cheap tit-for-tat of market-place bargaining. Rather it simply is the case that in the mind of BEM these complementary challenges lie implicit; and they should now be made explicit.)

3. It is to be noted that the Roman Church has already started on the road towards greater understanding of the laity and larger employment of the resources it constitutes. One must cite Canons 224-231 of the new Code, clearly outlining "the rights of *lay members* of Christ's faithful"; and also the Synod of Bishops called for 1985 and designed to consider and elicit the practical consequences of Vatican II's emphasis on "impetus to lay apostolate". A trend, similar if also much weaker and less explicit, is discernible in the Anglican Church. Can the same kind of thing be said of the Orthodox Churches?

4. Two further observations may be made. a) The Eldership is offered to episcopal churches not in itself and as it is, but simply as one embodiment (Rahner's concretisation) of the principle of lay participation. (In fact it has to be admitted that profound uncertainty exists about the Eldership, together with a wide disparity of views concerning its nature. It is a matter of urgency that greater clarity be achieved if it is to aid in the renovation of the diaconate.) b) Some episcopal churchmen will certainly deny the propriety of putting and holding together these two elements in BEM, on the ground that the diaconate is the third element in a threefold Ordained Ministry, and would resist any moves towards compromise with the Presbyterian Eldership, or injection of elements from it, as leading to the laicisation of the diaconate. This may well be true. But two things are worth noting. First, the diversity of understanding of the Eldership includes the views that entry to it both is, and is not, by way of "ordination". And secondly, it is possible to cite K. Rahner as tolerant of such laicisation. The lesson of history seems to be that the diaconate does not work when cramped into a trinity of elements within the Ordained Ministry. To make the principle of the diaconate really work in the life of the Church is much more important than perpetuating an arithmetical threeness.

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