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Anglikanisch-altkatholische Theologenkonferenz

in Rheinfelden vom 15.—18. September 1957

Zusammenfassungen der Referate

(Schluss *)

Eucharist and Ministry

Summary by Dr. A. Rinkel, Archbishop of Utrecht

The motives which led to this conference created the theme summarized under the title. The aim is not to get a complete more or less theoretical-dogmatic exposition of the two notions and of their contacts, their connection and mutual dependence, but some answer to the questions which in the preparatory discussion were found and which were touching upon the two domains, that of the Eucharist and that of the Ministry.

* * *

It is desirable, before answering the specified questions, to start with the principal thing. As such "*the Church*" has to been mentioned. Eucharist and Ministry do not hang in the air, they cannot exist and are unthinkable without the Church. In the meanwhile, no complete theology about the Church is needed here, we restrict ourselves to the essentials.

Jesus Christ builds the Church, i. e. through the Holy Spirit He brings the Church to manifestation.

He "builds" the Church means to say, that He directs his whole "kerugma" to it. The world will not be conquered by a philosophic or ethical idea, by a confession or a program, but by the *Church*, which is a *community* of people, called, animated, driven by the Holy Spirit, and equipped with the *doctrine*, *functions*, *institutions* given to her by her Lord "in principle".

The "*community of people*" we see growing from "the Twelve", the larger circle of "disciples" and all those who "believe in Jesus Christ".

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* Vgl. IKZ. Jahrgang 1958, Heft 1, S. 40 ff.

The "life-doctrine" as the constitution of the kingdom is the *ethics* that preaches the Gospel (Sermon at the Mount, parables, etc.).

The "*functions*" are fundamentally guaranteed in the "*ministry*", which the Lord transfers in optima forma to his apostles when after the resurrection He says: "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you."

The principle of the "*institutions*" we see deposited in *Baptism* which the Lord commands, giving to this already well-known act a new meaning; also in the *Lord's Supper* which He sets as the central institution for the "memorial of his redemptive work in his sacrificial death".

The "community of believers" which appears to be present after Pentecost answers entirely these features and can only and absolutely be explained from the principles given by the Lord. When it is said of this "community" (Acts 2: 42) that "they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and in the fellowship, and in the breaking of bread and in prayers", we recognize there the "principles" as manifested in the preaching of the "kerugma", in the ethics of charity, in ministry, sacrament and liturgy. This "community" *is the Church*, such as the Lord founded it and desired it to be.

We repeat: Jesus Christ sets *merely the principles*. He *does not* found an institution, an apparatus with a codex of rules, laws, functions and ceremonies. No, He sets the rule of belief, concentrated on his person, He puts forward the life-law of charity; He creates the Ministry, but without official and functional regulations; He gives his means of salvation, but without liturgical circumscription. He founds a living organism, not a statute. He creates for Himself a Body which in all its functions will act through and from Him, who as Head is the life of the Body. He grants his ambassadors authority and instructions: "As my Father hath sent me, *even so send I you*.'

* * *

The Church of the first centuries answers these principles.

She is the "church of God" (1 Cor. 15 : 9, Gal. 1 : 13, Phil. 3 : 16), the "new Israel", which as the "new creation" of the Lord is loosened from the "old Israel after the flesh", there is no more dis-

tinguished from both Jews and Greeks, between whom there is in her communion and fellowship no longer any difference. For the Church is one, because God is one, her Mediator is one, the way of redemption is one. The Church is all-embracing, she covers always and everywhere the "holon". All differences of nation, race, sex, order, standing and age have fallen away, "Christ is all, and in all" (Col. 3 : 11).

This is manifesting the idea of *catholicity*. Originally not meant as locally-universal, but soteriologically-universal, i. e. universal after the salvation-intention of God. This unity of the "kat'holon"–this is important for our subject–excludes any division and schism, as meant in Acts 15 and 1 Cor. 1. There is only one Gospel, for Gentiles and for Jews (Gal. 1 : 6, 2 : 1–5), according to the Lord's intention (Joh. 17 : 20 sq.).

Just because of this unity St. Paul speaks of the Church as the "*soma Christou*", which implies these two things: 1. the Church is an *organism*, the well-being of which depends on the joint solicitude of the members for the whole (1 Cor. 12 : 12–17, Rom. 12 : 4 sq.); 2. this Body has *Christ as Head* (Eph. 1 : 22 sq., 4 : 15 sq., 5 : 23, Col. 1 : 18, 2 : 19), and on the union with this Head depends the well-being of the Church, the life of the Body and of each of its members.

Also when the Church is called the "oikodomê" of which Christ is the corner-stone (Eph. 2 : 20 ssq., 1 Cor. 3 : 9 ssq., Col. 2:7), this is meant spiritually-soteriological, not firstly external-organisatorical, for the Church is "the dwelling of God in the Spirit".

But this does not alter the fact that the designation "Body" as well as that of "building" throws light on the organizing form of the Church which is developing in the breachless unity. All organization as well as all spiritual life, all distribution of grace is bound to the unity; extra ecclesiam nulla salus. Even the plural "church*es*" is never and nowhere an indication of pluriformity, but the testimony of each local organization finding its privilege of being "church" in the *one* Church of God.

* * *

In the one Church the "breaking of the bread"–soon called *Eucharist*–as the communion of the Body and Blood of Christ (1 Cor. 11 : 23 ssq.) is the sign of unity, the centrum unitatis (1 Cor. 10 : 17).

According to Acts 20 : 17 ssq. an apostle–here St. Paul–administers the Eucharist. From the first moment of her activity the Church acts through her ministers, and as soon as tasks arise which can be performed by others than the apostles, she appoints new ministers. The appointment of the "seven" (Acts 6 : 1 ssq.) is a liturgical, dogmatical and sacramental instance. As soon as in the Church the so-called missionary functionaries fall into the background–and this means that the Church is consolidating herself–the significance of the local ministers who after fixed rule are called, chosen, appointed and "ordained", is increasing.

This "ordination" is performed as fixed rule by the "epithesis cheiroon", which is connected by "proseuchai" (Acts 6 : 6, 13 : 3, 1 Tim. 4 : 14, 2 Tim. 1 : 16). The prayer asks for the gift, the charisma, and the laying-on of hands "signifies", manifests the coming of the gift from above. This laying-on of hands is performed by the other ministers, like the apostles lay hands on the "seven". There is an evident analogy with the later rule: the bishop with the priests.

All this shows *order*. The Church creates ministries, where it is necessary. She performs the appointment in a fixed, sacramental form, for she is "the habitation of the Holy Spirit". Therefore the gifts of the Spirit come through the intermediary of the Church, and as a fixed rule through laying-on of hands and prayer. There is even little appearance of vagueness in this method of action, and at any rate this method is fixed at the end of the apostolic time: *the laying-on of hands* is *done by the Church through the hands of her lawful ministers*.

Summarizing–The New Testament does not yet show an unchangeable system from the beginning. It cannot be said that episcopacy is absolutely the first, still less a form of presbyterialism. A romanism with a petrine primacy does not offer a definite holdfast; a congregationalism or a kind of federalism is flagrantly contrary to the priority of the universal Church.

In the Church of the apostles there is something temporarily fluctuating, the end however shows very decidedly the trias of bishops, priests and deacons. Apparently the apostles, supported by their instruction and authority received directly from the Lord, kept a continual eye on the needs and requirements of their own days. The Church as a living organism follows in their footsteps and adapts their instructions to the growing needs of the future.

But this does not alter the fact that there are fixed *principles* from the beginning. There is an ordered community, *the Church*, a

living organism, led and inspired by the Holy Spirit and able to meet any contingency and need, giving form to and performing her means of salvation, and creating her Ministry, and in all these activities working after a fixed method, orderly and regularly (1 Cor. 14:40). Always the Church follows the order of the laying-on of hands with prayer as a fixed sacramental rite. She acts through her ministers, and through their hands she bestows the commission and powers on those she has appointed for receiving them. In the track of the apostles the Church builds a fixed and ordered organism, which, itself furnished with grace, performs mediatory service in the distribution of grace.

* * *

To these "essentials" we want to add the following statements.

On the strength of the principles of the New Testament and on the strength of the answer given by the oldest Church in her development in teaching, organization and sacramental life, we stick to the unchangeable *unity* of the Church, which does not allow schism, not even any pluriformity, and which demonstrates this unity outwardly in the unity of *doctrine*, the unity of her *form of Ministry* and the unity of her *sacramental life*. These three pillars manifest and guarantee the *catholicity* as well as the *apostolicity* of the Church, because these three belong to its nature. Without a definite doctrine, expressing the full truth, without a regular and as apostolic recognizable *Ministry* and without *sacramental means of salvation* which give grace "realiter et vere" and not merely as tokens or seals, the Church cannot be the Church the Lord aimed at and manifested.

We avow in the *Eucharist* the means of salvation which represents the Lord's redemptive work, making history a continual present, the sacrament which, according to Hebrews, makes the perpetual redemption effected by the Lord, present and active for us, encloses us in it through the communion of the Body and Blood of the Lord, which we receive in the "eulogized", the "eucharized" tokens or gifts of the bread and the wine.

We confess the *Ministry*, which the apostles, commissioned and authorized by the Lord, created, and to which they gave a fixed form in the trias of bishop, priest and deacon, and which by the unchanging way of laying-on of hands with prayer is transferred and handed-down by the highest ministers, *of course*, but after the will, the commission, the command and the authority of the whole

Church. *This is the apostolic succession*, which therefore does not exist in a line of separate ministers, but which is carried on and guaranteed *by the one Church* at every moment of its continuation, i. e. in each separate laying-on of hands.

On account of this we put the first accent on the recognition of *full catholicity* in the *intercommunion* with the Churches of the "Anglican Communion", and we see the intercommunion as the *mutual recognition* of catholicity.

* * *

Here we meet a first question, to wit "intercommunion" and "open communion".

In oecumenical circles the notion of *intercommunion* is rather vague. The word "intercommunion" was for the first time practically used on the Conference at Bonn in 1931 between the Anglicans and the Old-Catholics. There it had–and up till now it has–a very definite meaning. Intercommunion between these Churches means the result of mutual recognition of catholicity, the result, not "a means" leading to it. Where the "holon" was esteemed to be present, there all the things of salvation are "communis", in common. There was noted the unity in belief, the one Ministry and the same conception of the sacraments; there was catholicity in its fullness, the essence of the one Church of God.

Therefore, we think the so-called "*open communion*" a mistake, an abuse, a grasping forward to something which actually is not yet present or not yet a common possession.

1. The notion "intercommunion" has there been narrowed to exclusively a communion of the Lord's Supper, a narrowing which in the meantime grasps for the highest point.

2. People meet in a "unity of sentiment" which has not or not yet proved its reality as true catholic unity. As long as there is no certainty that participaters profess the same belief about the Holy Eucharist the Ancient Church professed, there is no communion with and through the Lord present, for this is–to speak with St. Paul– "*not* to eat the Supper of the Lord".

3. The Lord's gift of grace, the sign of unity and peace, is used as a means to "suggest" unity and peace, without these two having proved and professed in thinking and experience. The gift of salvation is used as a sort of medicine. If this road should be followed, we

should then in practice also allow a non-catholic "minister verbi divini" to lay hands-on at a catholic consecratio or ordinatio.

4. Such a forced grasping forward at a unity not yet present misses its aim; it does not bring the unity hoped for or idealized. It brings at most a momentary satisfaction of a desire for unity, but after that nothing appears to be changed, neither in thought and conviction, nor in organization and experience.

* * *

A second question: What is our opinion of the *ministry* and the *value of the sacraments* of the *non-catholic Churches of the Reformation* ?

For the catholic-thinking man Church, Ministry and Sacrament are inseparably connected. Ministry and Sacrament belong to the manifestation-forms, i. e. to the nature of the Church. Where the idea of the Church is weakened or even neglected, the meaning of "ministry" and "sacrament" is also weakened. If the Church does not any longer require these two, does no longer carry them, both lose their deepest and actual contents.

Most Churches of the Reformation possess a ministry as well as sacraments. Even the office of bishop is present, mostly, however, as a form of ministerial organization, not dependant on a consecration per traditionem. And even there where is a form of laying-on of hands in a more or less correct form of apostolic succession, the idea of apostolic succession through the ministry is decidedly repudiated and the continuity of the Church is emphatically and exclusively sought in the continuity of the pure faith. This applies especially to the Lutheran Churches.

The ministerial organization of the Calvanistic Churches is called presbyterial in principle, but just as much in principle the idea of sacramental ministry-ordination and transmission of ministry is repudiated. Here a deliberate new reformed beginning was made, just the thing we never can accept as sound and justified. That new start means a deliberate breach, which compels us to say, that the ministry here does not bear any longer the full apostolic character, and that as logic consequence the administering of the sacraments and the value of the sacraments must be affected by it.

Of course, we stand here before a dilemma. We cannot deny that the Holy Spirit works also in non-catholic Churches and also through their ministers. The Spirit blows where He wills. But even

His sovereign acting does not give *us* the right and liberty to blot out the limits which are *for us* a deep conviction of faith, rooted in the ages. According to that conviction the ministry which is not obtained and carried on in the ancient catholic way, is defect, irregular, not giving any certainty of belonging to the nature and true possession of the Church. We bow our heads before God who can also choose and use other ways than those which *bind* us. But the sovereign liberty and omnipotence of God does *not* give *us* a right to leave the ways, the limits and the order which *God* through his apostles and his Church has taught *us* and commanded *us*, and to consider the self-chosen ways of others as equivalent.

We do not deny the truth that there is an individual call from God, but we do deny the reliability on human side of such a call, if it is not guaranteed by the *ecclesiastical succession*, which is for us as well a divine call and the expression of the divine will. We do not deny the reality of a sacramental grace directly given by God, but we do deny the presence of the reliability *guaranteed by the Church* and the reality of the sacramental act, which is also God's will and work. The definite, reliable certainty is in *God*, who calls, consecrates and distributes *through his Church*. Church, Ministry and Ordination, Sacrament and administration of the sacraments are only and absolutely reliable, because "God sanctifies and governs through his Spirit *the whole Body of the Church*". All through the ages we are doing the same thing in Ministry and Sacrament the apostles did. And herein is our certainty, that in that we are so doing the same thing happens as happened through the hands of the apostles. Where this *does not* happen in our opinion, led as it is by the Church of all the ages, we keep at a distance, leaving the judgment to God, but at the same time firmly convinced of what God has *commanded us*.

* * *

In this light stands also our view as to the attempts from Anglican side to promote unity or intercommunion among certain Churches along the way of catholizing penetration, as by adopting episcopacy. Of course, we think here primarily of South India, but also of the negotiations which have been conducted between several Churches of Great Britain for the last few years and about which an important report has been submitted to these Churches.

Though the two cases are not identical, they present a same way and method, that of gradual infiltration. As to South India we may say that the infiltration will evidently happen in a catholizing direction. As to the negotiations with the British Churches, we have the impression that more a mutual infiltration, an exchange of spiritual values is aimed at, whereby our second impression is this, that from Anglican side little or no effect is expected of adopting presbyterial ideas, so that it is without danger, whereas every effect is expected of a penetration of catholic-anglican thought into the presbyterian Churches.

We believe it is sufficient for our theme, if we restrict ourselves to the work of the "United Church of South India". And then we would like to divide our opinion into a point of view *on principle* and one of *practise*, and may we emphatically say that the expression of these points of view is personal and should be considered as personal.

On principle the way followed in South India is insufficient. To attain a sound catholic Ministry in the long run, the non-catholic ministry is for the time being also valued as sufficient and with equal rights, but nevertheless with the intention in the background to discontinue it as no longer allowable after the course of years. This is not a method of "Heilsgeschehen", of the "via salutis" and of the conviction of faith, but of ecclesiastical organization and ecclesiastical-political management. Moreover, the questions after the tenor, the essential value, i. e. the grace-giving function of the Ministry and the dogmatic content of the Sacrament remain deliberately unanswered and unsettled, and indeed the whole content of faith, the "doctrine", remains undefined and does not explicitly aim at unity. Therefore, we can perfectly understand that many Anglicans are alarmed at this way of reunion, just as we would never take this way for our responsibility. If God will this way can lead to a satisfactory end,–it can just as well be a failure. For us the doubtful side of this way lies in the fact that the whole accent is laid on the significance of "adopting episcopacy in the system", while the inner meaning of episcopacy remains "undiscussed", and the development of the method is left to time or to chance or to the practice of experience. There is in this method something mechanical, we would almost say: magical.

Next to it there is also a *practical* point of view. We have just said: this way *may*, if God wills, lead to a satisfactory end. We mean this seriously, and that on the following grounds.

In our opinion a limit on dogmatic level has been reached in the œcumenical work and we can state a deadlock of the different points of view, which is manifest in the contrast: catholic–protestant. If the oecumenical endeavour is from God, there must be a way-out and it may be looked for and aimed at. With all the defects and dangers which in our opinion are attached to the way chosen in South India it may not be deemed impossible, that God wants to use this human-week, perhaps even human-turbid attempt to show "a" way-out, even if this way-out is not "the" way-out. A growth towards catholic truth *may* manifest itself here, which some day can develop into full catholicity, the more so as the experience of a few years has already taught, that this possibility is not a chimera. Looked upon like this we await, trusting in the guidance of God's Holy Spirit, the development of the future. But the danger remains that people are to soon satisfied with the result, and that they take an organisatorical, outward unity for a unity in principiis. We respect and understand the "comprehensiveness" of the Anglican Church within her own walls, but a "comprehensiveness" outside her *can* still always bear the character of an insignificant tolerant federation of opinions, which in deepest principle remain divergent and contradictory. Such a result would in the long run be destined to disintegrate into the old divisions. And with this the point in practise returns to that in principle, where theological thought has to remain on its guard.

The Eucharist and the Order of Creation

By the Revd. F. J. Taylor, Principal of Wycliffe Hall, Oxford

The Holy Eucharist is the central and most significant symbolic rite of the Christian Church. The direct dominical institution of this sacrament and the intention that it should be perpetually celebrated has indeed been challenged in critical discussions of the primitive Christian documents during the last century. There is much difference of opinion about what can be taken as authentic details of the original form of celebration, but it is now generally agreed that the core of the rite comprised a sevenfold action in which bread was taken, blessed, broken and given; a cup of wine was taken, blessed and given. Words were spoken in relation to the bread, "This is my body" and also over the cup, "This is my blood of the new covenant". A series of actions

with a loaf of bread and a cup of wine, none of them strange or without intelligibility in their context, and a few words referring to body and covenant-blood thus constitute the essence of the rite. Despite the critical discussions to which reference has been made over, all Christian traditions, as is evident from their authoritative statements, hold that the warrant for the observance of the rite is derived from these actions and words of Jesus at a crucial moment in His ministry, a moment which has the particularity of a precise date in history, the night of his betrayal.

In the reformation tradition it has been customary to teach that the existence of a sacrament depends on the word of promise attested in the scriptures, so that it is not anything in the material element but only the divine Word that can make bread and wine sacramental. Such teaching carries a profound truth and manifests a passionate jealousy for the sovereign grace of God and a profound fear of the danger of an idolatrous regard for creaturely elements. Yet even the Word is a sign of revelation through the sense of hearing or through the faculty of sight when the written word is under consideration. There is a passage in *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Book IV. XIV. 18) in which Calvin recognizes how far-reaching is the principle that it is the divine Word which alone makes a sacrament. He admits that God can take any one of His created elements and use it sacramentally, apart from those rites which are generally accepted as sacraments in the narrow sense. To illustrate his point he cites the rainbow which in the Genesis narrative was given to Noah as a sign and pledge of the mercy and faithfulness of God.

If any dabbler in philosophy, in order to deride the simplicity of our faith contends that such a variety of colours is the natural result of the refraction of the solar rays on an opposite cloud, we must immediately acknowledge it; but at the same time we will deride his stupidity in not acknowledging God as the Lord and Governor of Nature, who uses all the elements according to His will for the promotion of His own glory . . . Shall not God be able to mark His creatures with His Word, that they may become sacraments, though before they were mere elements.

Shall not God be able ? There are the sacramental signs and seals of the old covenant such as the sabbath, circumcision, the sacrificial system and the Book of the Law. In the new dispensation inaugurated by Christ, divine action sacramentally mediated, "to represent, seal and apply the benefits of the new covenant", seemed to be limited to

the gospel sacraments. But even on this view of sacraments a good deal more was implied than was immediately apparent. Any material object, such as a great picture, or a landscape, or great music, or the beauty of a human face may, as even Calvin admits in the passage quoted above, become the means whereby God communicates Himself to people and in this sense be sacramental. The gospel sacraments are marked off from this other limitless number of possible sacraments, not because some parts of the material universe are incapable of serving as means of God's self communication, but because the gospel sacraments are by divine institution representative of this capacity. The representative character of the sacraments thus distinguished from the latent capacity of all things to be used to bring God to men, may be compared to the church which in order to represent the whole of mankind must at present be distinguished from the whole of humanity; or to the priesthood which in order that it may represent the priestly character of the whole mystical Body of Christ, must be distinguished from among the members of that Body. So God may come to a starving beggar by means of a meal given to him in the name of Christ. But it is the consecrated bread and wine, given to us by Christ as His Body and Blood, which shows and assures us that this can be so.

The most obvious fact about the eucharist is that visible, tangible elements from the natural world are taken and set aside to be as well symbols of the divine love as vehicles of the divine grace to those who use them rightly. This presupposes that the structure of the natural order and its material objects are patient of a transcendent significance. It discloses the conviction that things can be used to express personal relationships and to convey personal communication from God to man. There was nothing arbitrary or unintelligible about this choice of material signs on the part of Christ. Food and drink not only possessed a fitting and evident symbolism but had already acquired for the people of God a profound significance. Behind this development in Hebrew religion was the basic conviction that the world was created by Yahweh. In contrast to many oriental faiths, the Hebrews rejected the notion that there was anything inherently evil in matter. He confessed that the natural order was an expression of the divine will. " God saw that it was good" is the repeated liturgical refrain in the opening chapter of the Bible, and this conviction governs the thinking of every writer in the holy scriptures.

The natural order is thus the medium through which God can act for man's succour and advantage. The place of the material universe in the purpose of God comes to its fullest expression in the Incarnation, Passion and Resurrection of the Son of God. The link between Creation, Incarnation and the Eucharist received eloquent expression in the second century from the pen of Ireneus in his controversy with Gnostic dualists.

"The Church alone offers this pure oblation to the Creator, offering to Him with giving of thanks the things taken from his creation... But how can they (i.e. the Gnostics) be consistent with themselves, when they say that bread over which thanks have been given is the body of their Lord and the cup His blood, if they do not call Him the Son of the Creator of the world, that is, His Word, through whom the wood fructifies and the fountains gush forth?" (Adv. Haer. IV. 184/185). Emphasis is thus laid by Ireneus on the offering of the Eucharist as an offering made from God's own creation.

In the first chapter of Genesis, God is represented as giving to man, dominion over all things created. In man, the priest of nature, all creatures were to express their gladly given homage to the goodness of the Creator and so the Creator would dwell among them. But man used this dominion given to him by God to make himself the centre of all things and refused to homage to God. Nevertheless the purpose of God was fulfilled by the incarnation of the Son of God who as very Man freely and gladly offered Himself up to His Father. The cost of this self-offering in a world alienated from God was the passion and death of Christ. As perfect man, acting for men the Son of God expressed representatively the self-surrender of the entire created order to its Creator. The Eucharist is rooted in that creative act whereby God raised Christ from the dead, and its efficacy is derived from the self-offering of the Incarnate Son on the cross, through which the created order also receives the promise of deliverance from bondage.

The words "This is my body", "This is my blood" disclose a view of the sacredness of matter and the natural order that has not always been preserved in the Christian community. They declare the intention of God that nature should be consecrated to His eternal purpose. It would not be entirely out of place to speak of the eucharist as a sacrament as well of creation as of redemption. The Hebrew tradition of prayer which was inherited by the ancient church began

with a thanksgiving to God for His bounty in the creation, for His wisdom, power and love manifest in it. "The earliest references to the Eucharist outside the New Testament" writes Dr. J. H. Strawley (Early History of the Liturgy 2nd Ed. 1947, pp. 214/215) "present it in the light of a Christian thank offering (eucharisteia) in which the gifts of bread and wine, the first fruits of the creatures are offered in thanksgiving to God". The language employed by Ireneus and Origen is cited in evidence and includes such a striking passage from Ireneus as "we offer to Him, not as though He is in need, but rendering thanks to His dominion and sanctifying the creature". (Adv. Haer IV. 31. 3.) The gifts offered at the eucharist in this way were brought into close connection with the creative activity of the Word so that intentions of Rogation Sunday and Harvest Festival found expression in every Eucharist. "This association with the Eucharist of the offering of the gifts of bread and wine, as an act of thanksgiving for God's creation, was a fine Christian instinct, which brought the commemoration of Christ's redeeming activity into relation with His creative activity as the Word and so gathered up in one act of worship the whole conception of God's providence and dealing with men. It was an outcome of the new life of joy, which saw in the truth of the Incarnation the consecration of all nature and all life." (Strawley op. cit. pp.215/216.)

Although in the course of time both in Eastern and Western Christendom the offertory as a great collective act of the people disappeared, traces of it survived through the centuries. Several of the seventeenth and eighteenth century English commentators on the Prayer Book made reference to the ancient custom and interpreted the rubric directing the priest to place bread and wine on the altar at a specified moment as a direction to offer the elements "solemnly to God, as an acknowledgement of His sovereignty over his creatures and that from henceforth they might become properly and peculiarly his". (Wheatley: *A Rational Illustration of the Book of Common Prayer*. New Ed. 1863, p. 271. Daniel Waterland: *The Doctrine of the Eucharist*. New Ed. 1896, pp. 441–443.)

The primitive church does not seem to have laid particular emphasis on the symbolism of bread and wine as the work of men's hands. The stress is laid upon God's gift rather than on man's labour in the offering of the first fruits perhaps because it is taken for granted that without the blessing of God the labour of men cannot be fruitful. Yet it seems reasonable to conclude that there must be some significance in the fact that on the Eucharist the sacraental elements are

manufactured articles—unlike the element used in the other great sacrament of Baptism. Jesus took not grain or grapes but bread and wine the products of human labour to be the material means through which His presence and the fruits of His sacrifice should be communicated to men and women. The bread of the eucharist is not manna from the skies mysteriously present as a kind of heavenly food but the product of the toil and skill of the farmer, the baker, the distributor, the shop-keeper and a host of other persons. The whole world of human labour is involved and represented in the bread and wine which is placed upon the altar. This toil has involved difficulty, distress and hardship. The eucharist through its divinely appointed symbols is brought into close relation with the actual life of man who finds nature difficult and seemingly hostile as he struggles to gain his livelihood. It brings to him also the pledge of redemption, of resurrection and the new creation. "The body of our Lord Jesus Christ which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul into everlasting life." So the members of the Christian society, though on earth are caught up into heaven. In the Eucharist their heavenly citizenship is realised and renewed, but it does not involve the neglect or repudiation of the natural order and the common life of men. It is the will of God that these things should be sanctified, by being gathered up into the sphere of the new creation. In the offertory through the gift of bread and wine which is the people's offering, human life and labour and the whole order of nature are offered to God so that cleansed, sanctified and transformed they may have their place in the new creation of which the eucharist itself is the pledge. Now we see through a glass darkly, but then shall we know what eternal meaning this created order which is the setting on lives now, has for the living God its creator and redeemer.

Eucharistie und Eschatologie

Zusammenfassung des Referates von Prof. Dr. Werner Küppers

Die Wiederentdeckung des eschatologischen Momentes in der apostolischen Verkündigung von Christus und seinem Reich hat bisher das Verständnis der Sakramente mehr nur gestreift als wirklich erfasst. Es mehren sich jedoch die Anzeichen für ein neues Verständnis der Zusammenhänge. Der Hauptteil des Referates versuchte drei

Fragen zu behandeln, um der Förderung dieses Verständnisses im Blick auf das Altarsakrament zu dienen:

1. den Zusammenhang zwischen Eucharistie und Eschatologie auf dem Boden des biblischen und altkirchlichen Christusverständnisses;
2. die Entfaltung dieses Zusammenhanges in den drei entscheidenden Haltungen aller christlichen Existenz: Glaube, Hoffnung und Liebe;
3. die Folgerungen aus diesem Zusammenhang für bestimmte kritische Fragen der Lehre von der Eucharistie.

Die neuere exegetische und biblisch-theologische Forschung hat deutlich gemacht, dass in der Hl. Schrift das eschatologische Moment unablösbar zum zentralen und durchgängigen Zeugnis von der göttlichen Selbstoffenbarung gehört, und zwar in der Weise, dass im Eschatologischen eine ganz bestimmte, wesentliche Seite der Beziehung Gottes zur Welt zum Ausdruck kommt: das Hindrängen und Bezogensein aller Worte und Taten Gottes auf das Ende. Weil aber Christus die Mitte dieser Offenbarung ist, sind Eschatologie und Christologie unlöslich durch den gemeinsamen Mittelpunkt verbunden. Ursprung, Sinn und Ziel aller Geschichte ist in Christus aufgedeckt. Ja mehr noch: weil Gott selbst in Christus ist, ist mit ihm auch immer schon das Ende da. Noch ist nicht alles zum Abschluss gebracht, doch ist schon die Entscheidung über den Abschluss gefallen. Hier nun gewinnt die Eucharistie ganz besondere Bedeutung. In ihr wird nämlich dargestellt, was Christus zum Abschluss bringt. Schon im Alten Bunde ist die Gewinnung des reinen und heiligen Bundesvolkes das Ziel aller Wege Gottes mit Israel. Im Neuen Bund opfert sich Christus am Kreuz, um Gott neu dies reine und heilige Volk zu gewinnen, und stellt dieses gleiche Volk in der Eucharistie Gott dar. Damit aber ist zugleich das Ende da; die Verheissungen sind erfüllt und erfüllen sich weiter; das Reich ist gekommen, und es ist gewiss, dass es vollends kommen wird. Die Spannung zwischen dem «schon jetzt» der Erfüllung und dem «noch nicht» der Erwartung gehört in dieser bestimmten, positiven Prägung des neutestamentlichen Kerygmas zur apostolischen Überlieferung und ist damit auch massgebend für unser Verständnis der Eucharistie. Nicht weniger wichtig ist aber die Feststellung, dass die ältesten Zeugnisse über den liturgischen Vollzug des Herrenmahles die gleiche eschatologische Spannung des «schon jetzt» und «noch nicht» widerspiegeln,

die das gesamte urchristliche Christuszeugnis durchzieht. Möglicherweise wären für diese Verbindung von Christuszeugnis und Eucharistie sogar schon zahlreiche Stellen des N.T. heranzuziehen, die bisher kaum dafür in Anspruch genommen wurden. (Vgl. Jud. 12 und 20; 2. Joh. 4, 7 ff.; 5, 11 f.; 2. Petr. 3, 14 f.; Hebr. 13, 9 bis 15; 8, 14; 10, 22; Tit. 2, 14; Tim. 2, 1–14 bes. V. 5; 1. Kor. 15, 22; 12, 12; 4, 7 f.; Röm. 8, 31 ff.; 9, 4; Eph. 2, 21; Phil. 2, 5–13; 3, 21; Kol. 3, 3; 3, 15). Wichtige Hinweise bietet auch die grundlegende ursprüngliche Bedeutung von Präfation und Anamnese im Kanon der eucharistischen Feier. Nicht auf das einzelne, hervorgehobene, eschatologische Moment kommt es dabei an, sondern auf die durchgehende und wesentliche Verbindung jeder Eucharistiefeier mit dem grossen eschatologischen Duktus der Christusoffenbarung. Es ist deshalb der Satz zu wagen: Die Eucharistie ist das Herzstück des eschatologischen Christusverständnisses der Urgemeinde, wie die Eschatologie der Schlüssel zum eucharistischen Christuskult der ältesten Kirche ist; oder nochmals vereinfacht und pointiert ausgedrückt: In der Eucharistie schlägt das Herz der ältesten Christenheit, und der Schlüssel dazu ist ihre Eschatologie. Die drei Bereiche des Eucharistischen, Eschatologischen und Christologischen gehören im Verständnis der alten Kirche bis hinein in die heutige Feier der ostkirchlichen Liturgie zusammen, und es ist eines der wesentlichsten Anliegen der liturgischen Bewegung der neuesten Zeit, dieses Verständnis für die katholische Messfeier und das evangelische Abendmahl zurückzugewinnen. Zugleich ist damit die Möglichkeit gegeben, die unglückliche Trennung von allgemeiner und individueller Eschatologie von der entscheidenden Stelle her zu überwinden: Wie nämlich in der Eucharistie die vielen Einzelnen mit dem einen Brote gespeist und darin mit dem auferstandenen Christus zu einem Leibe und zum ewigen Leben verbunden werden, so steht über jeder Mahlsgemeinschaft die unsichtbare Wirklichkeit des himmlischen Gottesdienstes und die Verheissung der eschatologischen Vollendung in der Hochzeit des Lammes und der Mahlsgemeinschaft mit dem wiederkommenden Herrn.

Im Anschluss an 1. Kor. 13, 13 und bekräftigt durch Augustin und Thomas von Aquino ist die Trias Glaube, Hoffnung, Liebe zum Inbegriff allen christlichen Lebens geworden. Da aber im ursprünglichen, biblischen Sinn Glaube, Hoffnung und Liebe jedenfalls nicht allgemeine, seelische Verhaltungsweisen des Menschen sind, sondern ganz deutlich auf den konkreten, geschichtlichen Gehalt der Chri-

stusoffenbarung sich beziehen, so folgt daraus, dass gerade in der Eucharistie jene Trias zum Inhalt der christlichen Existenz wird: zum Leben des Christus in den Christen! Das gilt zunächst für den Glauben: Wo wirklich die Eucharistie in der Ordnung der katholischen Kirche gefeiert wird, ist die unheilvolle Trennung von objektivem Bekenntnis und subjektivem Bekennen überwunden. Allem Zweifel und aller Abgötterei, aller falschen Lehre und aller blossen Theorie ist der Raum genommen. Deshalb schlägt hier das Herz des Glaubens der Kirche, und wo sie in dieser Einheit von Bekenntnis und Bekennen verharrt, da ist sie die katholische Kirche und da bleibt sie unerschütterlich in Nacht und Not jeder Anfechtung.

Nicht anders ist es im Bereich der Liebe: Ist schon immer ihr Wesen die echte Personbeziehung, so lebt die christliche Liebe von der Gnade der personalen Begegnung von Gott und Mensch, wie Christus sie vermittelt. Dies aber geschieht nicht durch den «historischen Jesus», auch nicht durch irgendein «Christusbild», sondern nur durch den «ganzen Christus» der Schrift und des Dogmas der ungeteilten Kirche. Wo aber würde mit grösserer Deutlichkeit Gottes- und Menschenliebe nicht nur als Forderung verkündigt, sondern in Tat und Wahrheit verwirklicht als im Vollzug der Eucharistie? Im Frieden des vollbrachten Opfers und im Bund des heiligen Mahles kommt es zu wahrer Gemeinschaft zwischen Gott und dem Menschen wie zwischen Mensch und Mensch.

Nicht anders ist es mit aller Hoffnung, die wirklich mehr ist als eine optimistische Daseinsbetrachtung ohne festen Grund und ohne klares Ziel: Die christliche Hoffnung gründet sich allein auf das Wort Gottes in Christus. Auch hier kann es jedoch nur der ganze Christus, der von Kreuz und Grab zur himmlischen Herrlichkeit erhöhte und wiederkommende Herr, sein, auf dem diese Hoffnung ruht. Stärke und Klarheit der Hoffnung sind deshalb geradezu ein Gradmesser für Reinheit und Tiefe im Erfassen des Gnadengeheimnisses der Eucharistie.

Tatsächlich erhalten und bewähren in der Eucharistie als dem Mittelpunkt der Gemeinde des Neuen Bundes die drei grossen Bereiche aller christlichen Existenz – Glaube, Liebe und Hoffnung – erst dann ihre volle Klarheit, Einheit und Lebendigkeit, wenn die Eucharistie als das Herzstück des Christusverständnisses und die Eschatologie als der Schlüssel dazu angenommen wird.

Wenn diese unter Berücksichtigung des eschatologischen Aspektes gewonnene Sicht auf die Eucharistie zu Recht besteht, könnte daraus

auch Hilfe erwachsen für eine rechte Beurteilung jener grossen «Disputà», die zwar schon zu Raffaelo Santis Zeiten reichlichen Stoff zu einem eindrucksvollen Bild theologischer Vielfalt bot, deren Bild sich jedoch seither aufs schmerzlichste von Raffaelischer Harmonie zur krassen Disharmonie im Stile modernster Kunstschöpfungen gewandelt hat.

In dem Referat wurde versucht, beispielhaft die Kontroversen um die Fragen der Wesensverwandlung und der Abendmahlsgemeinschaft durch die gewonnene Sicht aus der Erstarrung konfessionell geprägter Dogmatik herauszuführen.

In den kurzen abschliessenden Bemerkungen wurde der Blick gerichtet auf die allgemeine Bedeutung des eschatologischen Aspektes für das gesamte sakramentale System der katholischen Kirche und die daraus sich ergebenden Möglichkeiten und Bedingungen der kirchlichen Einheit.