

## APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION IN THE WRITINGS OF YVES CONGAR AND OSCAR CULLMANN

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Since its first explicit enunciation by the end of the second century, apostolic succession has been considered as one of the basic components of the church's apostolicity. As history shows, however, there have been different views on the nature and function of apostolic succession. Moreover, its legitimacy and normativeness have been challenged, particularly since the sixteenth century onwards. In our century, fairly established confessional positions have been reexamined in the light of new theological perspectives, as is evident in the documents produced by the ecumenical movement.

The purpose of this research was to set forth, analyze, compare, and evaluate Yves Congar's and Oscar Cullmann's views on apostolic succession. To attain this goal their convictions were considered in the context of their doctrine of the church, and, whenever relevant, from the perspective of their overall theological systems, without neglecting the presuppositions undergirding these authors' ideas and the methodologies used to support them.

After a concise overview of apostolic succession throughout history, the dissertation focuses on Yves Congar's position regarding the apostolicity of the church, including apostolicity of ministry and apostolicity of doctrine. Besides his views on Christian history it includes Congar's view of the bishop of Rome as successor of Peter, and his understanding of tradition as the content of apostolic succession.

The study also describes and analyzes Oscar Cullmann's view of the uniqueness of the apostles within the framework of salvation history, and his categorical denial of apostolic succession. Attention is given to Cullmann's influential study on the role of Peter in the early church, as well as his analysis of the relationship between tradition, the apostles, and Scripture.

Finally, the dissertation compares and evaluates the inner consistency, the use of sources, and the relative strengths and weaknesses of Congar's and Cullmann's positions from the point of view of their theological systems, their methodologies and presuppositions, and in the light of scriptural statements relevant for the issue of apostolic succession.