

ARCIC - II 3/2 (83)

SECRETARIATUS
AD CHRISTIANORUM UNITATEM FOVENDAM

CITTÀ DEL VATICANO

Roma, June 22nd, 1983.

Prot.N. 2630/83/e.

To all Roman Catholic Members of ARCIC-II,

Dear Member,

First of all a word of warm welcome to ARCIC-II, as a preface to some information on what it is likely to involve.

On June 9-10 the co-chairmen and co-secretaries of ARCIC-II met to discuss preliminary plans for the Commission's work, particularly for its first meeting at Venice, Aug.30 - Sept.6. These discussions led to amplification and considerable modification of the outline programme (with accompanying notes) drafted at a meeting in Rome last November and enclosed with this letter.

Clearly the Commission's work must get off to a good start at Venice. The "mandate" given to the new Commission by para.3 of the Canterbury Common Declaration of May 29th, 1982 includes, for all its brevity, a considerable amount of very varied material. Our meeting at Venice will need to survey this and to determine the priorities of its work.

The plans proposed in this letter will need to be adjusted as the meeting proceeds, though, of course, the Commission has to adhere to the mandate given it by our respective authorities. In outlining these plans mention will be made of a number of short papers that individual members will be asked to prepare, and which would be available at the meeting itself (since shortage of time makes it impossible to circulate such papers in advance as would be our normal practice).

Members are asked to arrive on Tuesday August 30th (afternoon); instructions about travel, air ticket, etc. are enclosed on a separate sheet. On that evening we hope to have a short business meeting to agree a timetable etc. The secretaries could then give a brief run-down on reactions received so far to ARCIC-I's Final Report, since we must bear in mind that ARCIC-II's work has to be done "in the light of our respective judgements on the Final Report". At that first evening meeting we can also discuss the Commission's pattern of worship during its meetings. (The practice of ARCIC-I was that Anglican and Roman Catholic Eucharists were celebrated on alternate days, with the whole Commission attending).

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Wednesday August 31 would start with an hour of recollection and prayer led by the co-chairmen as a dedication of our work to God. The members would be asked briefly to introduce themselves; time will not permit complete autobiographies, but you are asked to say something of your background and ecumenical experience, particularly in the field of Anglican/Roman Catholic relations. The remainder of the day would be devoted to an assessment of the overall state of relationships between our two Communion. To this end four members are being invited to prepare short papers on salient characteristics and problems of A/RC relations in their own areas (North America, East Africa, Australasia, Britain); in preparing these they will be asked to consult other members living in their regions. Some members come from other parts of the world; they too will be asked to speak briefly on relations in their own areas before the Commission begins further discussion of the emerging picture which is really the background against which all its work must be done.

Thursday September 1st will be given to consideration of the first element in our mandate, "outstanding differences". Anglicans have asked for the inclusion of justification in the agenda; many Roman Catholics have spoken of the need for more work on ecclesiology; all seem agreed on the need for discussion of moral issues. Our preliminary discussions have suggested an integral link between these themes. We are therefore inviting two short papers aimed at outlining the questions rather than proposing the solutions - why justification and ecclesiology are seen as important for our discussions.

Friday September 2nd we hope for similar discussion of the second element in our mandate: (a) what is involved (in the light of ARCIC-I and of our Churches' responses as they develop) in the mutual recognition/reconciliation of ministries and Churches; (b) how the Commission could in due course approach the study of obstacles to recognition (as called for by the Common Declaration). This day's work will likewise commence with short papers from two members. The experience of our preliminary meeting shows that the ecclesiological questions are likely to recur in this discussion also. For this reason we do not at this stage envisage explicit presentation of the material involved in the third element of our mandate ("to recommend practical steps..."); related questions should arise naturally as discussions proceed.

Saturday September 3rd. At this stage it will probably be useful to break up into smaller groups to review discussions so far and to make more precise proposals for the Commission's future work and its method of working. Then, and on the remaining days, the Commission can agree on precise plans, determine its priorities more sharply, and make all the necessary arrangements for papers and other work necessary in preparation for the topic(s) settled on for the commission's second meeting.

It should be added that a free half-day will be built into the programme and an expedition arranged to enable members to see something of Venice. (Indeed, if any members desire to stay on for a day or two at the Casa Card.Piazza this can probably be arranged; but, should you desire to do so, please inform me as soon as possible so that this can be fixed up.)

The co-secretaries have scrutinised the bibliography of ARCIC-I; a small number of papers prepared at an early stage in that Commission's life treat of themes relevant to our work. Copies will be available at Venice.

Apologies for the length of this letter, but it seems the best way of introducing some of our hopes and expectations. The Anglican co-secretary, Christopher Hill, is sending a substantially identical letter to his members. As said at the start the plans for the Venice meeting are subject to revision as the Commission decides, but we hope you will find these useful as you try to envisage what lies ahead.

In Xto,



Richard L. Stewart

Enclosures