

CJH/AFT

35
5th October 1976

Thank you for your letter of the 15th September. I know that Bishop Howe is also writing to you on the question of the ordination of women and my letter should be taken in conjunction with his.

When we discussed this matter briefly at Venice after the Business Meeting, I am afraid I misled you if I suggested that it was the Archbishop's suggestion that ARCIC should deal with it. I was simply expressing my own view as to the most efficient way of handling the matter. You will see from Bishop Howe's letter that he disagrees and feels that an ad hoc consultation would be more appropriate. I have not in fact discussed this with the Co-Chairmen because I felt that Bishop Howe's views were crucial. There would now seem to be no point. I also send a copy to you of the letter the Archbishop has written to Mgr. Moeller in reply to his letter of July 10th.

In Bishop Howe's letter to you (a copy of which he sent to me) I note that he feels an Anglican team for this could be got together without too much delay. Remembering Fr. Duprey's comment to the Commission that something might be done in the spring, I repeat what I said to you afterward at Venice that by "without too much delay" I am sure Bishop Howe means some time in the summer. I would suggest that as the principle of a consultation is agreed to by the Secretariat on the basis of the correspondence between Mgr. Moeller and the Archbishop and between Bishop Howe and yourself, it might be possible to have definite plans agreed at the Informal Talks.

I shall be grateful if you could inform the Secretariat formally that the Archbishop of Canterbury is more than willing that the ARCIC Statement on Authority should be published. Privately he is very satisfied with the document especially in its treatment of the theology of primacy, its statement of Anglican difficulties with the implication that at least some of these are shared by many Roman Catholics and by the very positive conclusion.

Bishop Howe has asked me to be in Rome for the Informal Talks and I shall of course be present at the Anglican Centre Council Meeting following. I plan to remain in Rome until 11th November with a view to discussing a possible programme for the Archbishop's visit to the Pope in the spring. The Archbishop has asked me to report back to him on a suggested programme. Personally I would hope that the visit would not be simply of a ceremonial nature. In view of the ARCIC document and assuming that it will be published eventually, I wonder if some common statement commending the three ARCIC documents might be possible during the Archbishop's visit. I am not thinking of an Anglican/Roman Catholic endorsement of the three Statements. Nevertheless a joint commendation would be a real step forward.

I look forward to seeing you. With my warm best wishes,


The Rt. Revd. Mgr. W. A. Purdy.

ENC.