

CJH/AFT

30th September 1976

Note to the Archbishop of Canterbury

At the end of July a letter was sent to CFR for you by Mgr. Charles Moeller, Secretary of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity in Rome. The letter was in answer to your letter to Cardinal Willebrands of 9th February! Your letter proposed to the Cardinal that there should be a small consultation between Anglicans and Roman Catholics on the question of the ordination of women on the basis of the Note sent to you and to Pope Paul VI by Bishop Howe's Rome Contact Group of November 1975. This Note proposed that such a consultation should try to find out to what extent and in what way churches with women priests and churches without could be reconciled in sacramental fellowship.

Mgr. Moeller's letter to you seemed somewhat muddled and did not mention the November meeting. In your absence in hospital I discussed the letter carefully with Bishop Howe and we both felt that my meeting with Fr. Pierre Duprey, the Under-Secretary of the Secretariat, at the ARCIC meeting in Venice might clarify Mgr. Moeller's letter. I have since reported back to Bishop Howe and now offer a draft answer which Bishop Howe has seen and approved.

Bishop Howe and I are firmly of the opinion that if there is an Anglican/Roman Catholic consultation organised by the ACC and the Secretariat its subject (especially in view of the USA and Canada) should not be 'yes' or 'no' on the question of the ordination of women but rather the relationship between churches which 'do' and 'do not'.

Our draft letter will allow Bishop Howe to take the initiative.

C.J.H.

ENC.