

CJH/AFT

30th July 1976

Thank you very much for your thoughts on Mgr. Moeller's letter. I do agree there is some confusion here.

My guess is that as this has been Bill Purdy's responsibility, in Bill's absence on holiday in England it has been taken up by other staff members with consequent understandable confusion.

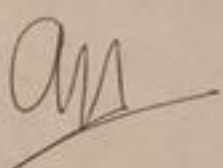
I think I have indirectly added to the confusion by my question to Pierre Duprey at the Sub-Commission of ARCIC. I asked whether there was any progress in response to the Archbishop's letter following from the note addressed by those gathered informally at the Vatican last November. This I am sure is responsible for the reference to recent conversations between Secretariat staff and C.F.R. Fr. Duprey told me that it was likely that some document on the subject of women in the Church (not specifically on the ordination of women) was likely to come from Rome at some stage next spring. Fr. Duprey was I think anxious that the consultation should take place before the finalising of such a Rome document. I said that I doubted whether this would be possible from the Anglican side.

On the specific Church of England question, the Archbishop's answer in Synod this month will I think make it clear that even for the Church of England to pursue the question of "yes" or "no" would be somewhat out of date.

May I now share my thoughts on a possible Canterbury response to Mgr. Moeller's letter? In the first place there could be a welcome of the idea of a consultation on the question of the ordination of women, provided the Archbishop makes it clear that he is talking about the proposal of the Rome Contact Group of last November. As you note, the Archbishop's letter of the 9th February originally made this clear by quoting in extenso the note composed at those informal talks - perhaps a clear reference to the November talks would again be necessary. The Archbishop's reply might then say that for the A.C.C. to propose an Anglican team would seem to indicate a gathering no earlier than 12 months from now (or whenever you deem it possible). The Archbishop could then add that the practical arrangements should now be made directly with you.

On the question of venue and payment, the Archbishop said in his letter that he hoped that such a consultation might only need to meet twice. I suppose that a meeting place in Italy and in England would successfully divide costs, travelling expenses coming from the Secretariat and A.C.C. respectively, though should you feel it right that the staffing be done from C.F.R., as with ARCIC and AOJDD, this would reduce costs to some degree on the A.C.C. side. C.F.R. might also be able to help with an English delegate, if the A.C.C. Commissions' budget is somewhat stretched.

I hope these thoughts make some sense.



The Rt.Revd. John Howe.

P.S. Thank you for the Agenda for the Contact Group.

C.J.H.