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(not for Plenary)

Note on the Ordination of Women

Since the publication of the Agreed Statement on Ministry and Ordination there have been rapid developments with regard to the ordination of women. Several provinces of the Anglican Communion are already committed to this in principle, and are preparing to go forward in practice. Other provinces will undoubtedly follow their example.

Many, both within and outside the Anglican Communion, deplore - on theological or other grounds - that this step has been taken, and in particular without previous consultation with other churches with whom Anglicans are already engaged in serious dialogue. Conflicting attitudes demonstrate the need for deeper, and wider anthropological as well as theological thinking than this matter has as yet received.

It is important to recognize that supporters of the ordination of women do not believe that this step implies any change in the theology of the ordained ministry as this is expounded in the Agreed Statement. They affirm, for example, that it is not as a ^{male} ~~man~~ or a ^{female} ~~woman~~ that a priest represents Christ, but as a human ^{person} ~~being~~. *This is a main question which calls for resolution.* What effect will this have on Anglican/Roman Catholic/Orthodox relations? Is it possible for a church which ordains women to be in communion with a church which has made it clear that it is not prepared to do so? There are urgent questions which must engage the attention of all who are concerned with the search for reconciliation and unity, ~~and consultations about them are already taking place in many places and at many levels.~~