

AN ANGLICAN VIEW OF THE SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES RAISED BY THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN AND OF HOW ARCIC-II MIGHT HANDLE THE QUESTION.
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When I was asked to write a paper of this title for ARCIC-II, I replied that the question has already been so widely discussed especially by Anglicans especially in North America that I was not inclined myself to write still another paper but that I would be willing to collect a dossier of some of the significant writings that have been influential within the Episcopal Church of the USA on this question as well as to provide a substantial bibliographical supplement. The latter I have already posted to ARCIC members, and a further supplement is appended hereto. Now in this mailing there follows the dossier of writings that are particularly significant for our work in my opinion, writings that do support the assertion of our Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning that the Episcopal Church in the USA has in fact proceeded to the Ordination of Women on the basis of "serious and convincing theological reasons which it is willing to share with other churches." (cf. no. XIV below, his comment upon the recent papal correspondence). These fourteen writings raise, I believe, the substantive issues. As to how ARCIC-II might handle the question, I shall bring along a few tentative suggestions to the meeting itself.

Dossier of Writings

I. "Ecumenical Relations and the Ordination of Women to the Priesthood in the Episcopal Church," by William A. Norgren. This article, by the Ecumenical Officer of the Episcopal Church in the USA, gives a capsule history of the subject together with his view of the ecumenical impact.

II. "Women Priests and the Episcopal Church in the USA," by Dr. Susan M. Cole-King. This article, written in 1985 by a student at the General Seminary, gives some pertinent statistics and probes the question of whether women's ordination has been responsible for any major decline in church membership, as is sometimes asserted.

III. "The Ordination of Women and the 'Maleness' of Christ," by Richard A. Norris, Jr. This essay, by an Anglican priest who is professor of patristics at Union Seminary in New York, has been probably the single most influential theological piece for American Episcopalians. It addresses directly the rationale later offered by the Vatican declaration Inter Insigniores 27, that women can not be ordained because it is necessary that the priest must bear a "natural resemblance" to Christ who was male (a line of reasoning also taken by the Orthodox Bishop Kallistos in the section 'The Priest as Icon' in his widely distributed article "Man, Woman, and the Priesthood of Christ.")

IV. "In the Image of Christ," by Sonya A. Quitslund. Another essay on the same subject, in response to the Vatican declaration.

V. "The Sacrament of the Good Creation," by Donald J. Keefe, S.J. This paper and the next one were the principal theological writings submitted by the Roman Catholic team when the substantive issue was finally debated openly and officially within ARC/USA.

VI. "Sacramental Sexuality and the Ordination of Women," by Donald J. Keefe, S.J. See comments upon no. V above.

VII. "Christology and Sexuality--An Anglican Contribution," by Charles P. Price. This paper constitutes one Anglican response to the two papers of Fr. Keefe, and summarizes fairly well the reasons why most of the Episcopalian members of ARC/USA did not find Fr. Keefe's papers convincing. Fr. Price is professor of theology at the Virginia Theological Seminary of the Episcopal Church.

VIII. "Ordination of Women to the Christian Priesthood--An Anglican Perspective," by Charles P. Price. Another paper written later for ARC/USA to explain why the Episcopal Church can view the ordination of women not as the denial but as the fulfilment of the catholic tradition. Professor Price has given me explicit permission to circulate these two unpublished papers within ARCIC, but he wished me to emphasize that he would want to alter occasional details (but not the major thrust) before publication.

IX. "Theological Reflections on the Ordination of Women," by the (U.S.) National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1972. This was the principal official Roman Catholic position statement that the Episcopal Church had, in addition to the letters of Pope Paul VI, prior to its 1976 General Convention when the vote to ordain women was passed.

X. "ARC/USA Statement on the Ordination of Women," October 1975. This was the official ARC statement which the Episcopal Church had at the time of its 1976 General Convention. Note the summary at the top of the first page, and please compare the theological reasoning of these two statements with that of Inter Insigniores.

XI. "Versailles Consultation, 1978." This is the report of the international consultation sponsored by our churches on this subject.

XII. "Christ, Revelation, and the Ordination of Women," by Arthur A. Vogel. This major published essay by one of the leading theologians of the Episcopal Church, together with its public but unpublished conclusion, was highly influential upon my own thought as well as others.

XIII. "A Consideration of Some of the Historical Objections to the Ordination of Women," by Geoffrey W.H. Lampe. Although by a British author, this essay by the late patristics specialist, apparently not noted in the preliminary Bibliography compiled by Sr. Cecily and Dr. Tanner, was of some considerable influence within the USA and was circulated widely in this country by xerox.

XIV. "Statement by Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning on the Recent Correspondence concerning Women's Ordination." This bears directly on the way in which ARCIC might handle the question.