

COPY.

AR/2106

South China?

KONG YUET DIOCESE.

(~~Hong Kong~~)

The Holy Catholic Ch. in China

To : All Diocesan Synods of the Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui
From : The Diocesan Synod of the Diocese of Kong Yuet (through
its Standing Committee)

ON THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN TO THE PRIESTHOOD.

1. We enclose herewith a copy of a proposed canon which we shall present to the General Synod at its 1947 meeting.
We have asked the Standing Committee of General Synod to arrange for the proposal to be discussed and voted upon.
2. This proposal was passed unanimously by our Diocesan Synod at its 1946 meeting.
3. Members of the Synod found the attitude of the Church in the West impossible to understand. The Rev. Lei Tim Oi's ordination seemed to them natural and inevitable, and her work as a pastor has been quite outstanding. She has shown in life and ministry that God has given her the "charism" of the parish priest.
4. It is our belief that the action taken by Bishop Mok in licensing Lei Tim Oi to celebrate the Lord's Supper and Bishop Hall's action later in ordaining her to the priesthood were God inspired. We believe that God is using China's age-long respect for women, and traditional confidence in women's gifts for administration and counsel, to open a new chapter in the history of the Church. (It is noteworthy that Chinese motherhood has been more remarkable in counsel and leadership of children than in the nurture of babies, i.e. essentially a pastoral rather than a maternal function.)
5. We believe that the Western Churches should expect new things such as this to happen under God's providence, when Christianity really begins to take root in a civilisation as mature as Chinese civilisation.
6. The original ordination of Pastor Lei Tim Oi was done to meet an emergency situation. A large Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui congregation (refugees from Hong Kong and Canton) were completely cut off from the sacraments of the Church. But in the diocese of Kong Yuet we expect that we shall always need the services of a few outstanding women in the priestly ministry to enable us to develop and maintain the Church on an essentially pastoral and parochial basis. This may be true of other dioceses in China.
7. Bishop Hall acceded to the request of the House of Bishops at its meeting in February 1946 * because his action - though not expressly forbidden - is plainly not envisaged in the Canons.

in ordaining
L.T.O?

The established
canons?

* This refers, presumably, to the withdrawal from Pastor Lei Tim Oi of her license to officiate as a priest which has been misrepresented in some quarters as the repudiation of her Orders.

He had asked the House of Bishops to agree to leave the matter [?] the judgment of General Synod. The majority of Bishops were not ready to do so. As a result, one of our far too few pastors has been seriously restricted in her work: clergy have had to be taken from their work to celebrate Communion in the Church of which she is in charge; and the whole Church in South China has been spiritually wounded and most grieved at heart. We consider such discrimination against women in the Church of Jesus Christ unreasonable, unchristian and unscriptural.

8. Several Bishops voted against Bishop Hall's request to delay action till General Synod, not because they were opposed to women as priests, but because they desired to maintain canonical order in the Church.

in
accord.
with T.O.
having

9. We ask the support of your diocese in pressing this canon so that the work of Christ here in South China can go forward without limitation.

10. We do not know if there is in other provinces of the Anglican Communion need for women in the ministry. We know that in our own Diocese there is such a need and that God has raised up at least one woman able to meet that need.

11. We understand that other provinces of the Anglican Communion are afraid that our action may prejudice relations between our Communion and some other Christian sects, e.g. the Roman and the Eastern Churches. To meet this fear, whose whose conditions of life and traditional civilisation are very different from our own, we propose that the Canon allowing the ordination of deaconesses to priesthood should stand for twenty years only and thereafter la unless specially re-enacted by another generation of Christian basis of actual experience of the working of the Canon in the Chinese Church.

12. By God's measurement of time the Church is still young, still in the process of adjustment and development to the needs of its work for God in the world. The late Archbishop Temple bade us remember that we, in this 20th century after Christ, are still "the primitive Church."

We venture, therefore, to close by quoting the words of Gamaliel, that great non-Christian teacher of St. Paul:-

"If this counsel or this work be of man, it will come to naught, but if it be of God ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found to fight against God."

We ask for twenty years testing that we and the whole Church may know whether what has happened in our Diocese is of God - or of man.

with AL/2106

This is all I have —
I have written to
Bishop of Fukien
& to Hsieh & will
send you any
material if it comes
in time for Tuesday.