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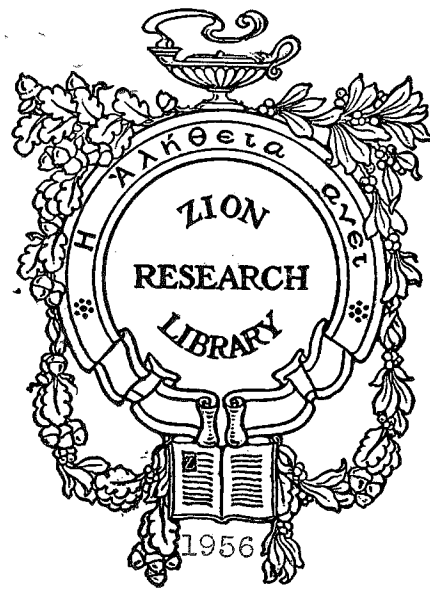
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# The Work of Women for the Church



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*The Church and Woman*

## THE WORK OF WOMEN FOR THE CHURCH

THE rapid and important changes in our national life during the past fifty years have effected a revolution in the activities and outlook of women. They are now expected to play a considerable and practical part in industry, politics, the professions, and the services, and this change has recently been so much accelerated that there is grave risk of destroying that essential of national well-being, the secure and happy family life of which the woman is the chief guardian.

It is a matter of urgency that the Church should enlist the aid of able, experienced, Christian women who can give help, guidance, and inspiration to their fellows in facing situations that are difficult to understand.

These women must be equipped for the task of evangelizing a generation that has been given a liberal secular education, but is almost wholly ignorant of the Christian Faith and sorely in need of it. They must also be prepared to dedicate their lives to the service of God in His Church, and be willing to train for this service with the same care and thoroughness that is demanded of teachers and nurses.

Many do not yet realize the opportunities that exist for the full-time worker. The position has been set out in reports<sup>1</sup> issued by committees set up by the Archbishops in 1944 and 1945, whilst much of the responsibility for the selection and training of candidates rests with the Central Council for Women's Church Work, a Council of the Church Assembly. The Council also

<sup>1</sup> "Women's Work in the Church," 1/-; "Training for Service," 2/-.

concerns itself with questions affecting the workers' salaries, status, conditions, and pensions. Moreover, in the majority of dioceses there are Boards of Women's Work, co-operating with the Central Council, and closely concerned with the welfare of their own candidates-in-training and the workers in their diocese.

All women who hope to become full-time lay workers, eligible for licensing by a Bishop, must first obtain the Inter-Diocesan Certificate awarded by the Central Council for Women's Church Work. Some eventually may wish to seek ordination as Deaconesses,<sup>1</sup> but this step can only be taken after they have served for a time as licensed lay workers. For fuller particulars about the Order of Deaconesses enquiry should be made to the Secretary of the Deaconess Council.

No attempt is made to give information to those who feel called to the Religious life or to the Overseas mission field; in these cases, they should apply direct to the Head of a Community or to the Secretary of one of the Missionary Societies.

## TRAINING

### *The Inter-Diocesan Certificate (I-D.C.)*

Normally the candidate for the Inter-Diocesan Certificate, having passed a medical examination, attends a three days' residential selection centre where, in a setting of prayer and worship, she has the opportunity of considering her vocation and of discussing her plans with men and women of experience and judgment. Having been recommended for training by the selectors she starts the normal two years' course at one of the Training Houses recognized by the Council. During her course she studies theology and either pastoralia and religious education or moral welfare work. Alternatively she may already possess certain qualifications in some

<sup>1</sup> "Deaconesses in the Church of England," 6d.

of these subjects, which may reduce the period of training. Provided that she reaches the required standard and is recommended by her diocese she will then be granted the Inter-Diocesan Certificate and is eligible to be licensed for work in any diocese subject to its Bishop's approval.

The I-D.C. may also be awarded to those possessing other professional qualifications such as nursing, youth leadership and teaching, provided they have passed a Selection Centre and have reached the required standard in Theology.

### *Cost of Training*

The average cost, excluding personal and vacation expenses, is about £180 per annum for two years. Grants are available from training houses, dioceses, various societies and the Church Assembly.

## FULL-TIME SERVICE IN THE CHURCH

### *Parochial Work*

This work is never stereotyped and gives scope for initiative and for every variety of gift. It is of an intensive and personal nature providing special opportunities for evangelism, for teaching the Christian faith, and for training others in Christian witness. The worker is accepted as a full member of a parochial staff. If she has specialized in any particular branch of work, she may be entrusted with the general oversight of that section in the parish. She will be able to help in the preparation of women and girls for confirmation and marriage, to develop such parochial organizations as meet the local need, to help the members in their Christian duty, and to discover and train voluntary leaders. She will probably be concerned with the running of youth clubs, the organization of the Sunday School, and will devote much time to visiting the people in their homes or in hospital.

The Central Council for Women's Church Work recommends that full-time parish workers should start at not less than £250 per annum rising by increments to not less than £300. This recommendation has not yet been implemented in all dioceses. Contributory pension schemes are in force.

### *Moral Welfare Work*

In every diocese there are Churchwomen who are specially trained social workers doing moral welfare work for the Church which offers both pastoral and educational opportunities. Some are working in Homes or Hostels for difficult children or young unmarried mothers. Others are doing outdoor work in an urban or large rural area helping members of a family when something has gone wrong in their personal relationships. This work is carried on in close co-operation with local health and welfare authorities.

Salaries for outdoor workers are usually between £300 and £400; for diocesan organizers £350-£500, and for Heads of Homes from £200 with full board, considerably more for those with nursing qualifications.

### *Religious Education*

There are opportunities for qualified women teachers as Scripture Specialists in schools of all types. In most cases preference is given to those who can offer another subject in addition to their Scripture teaching.

Most dioceses employ an Adviser in Religious Education (sometimes called Assistant Director of Religious Education or Adviser in Children's Work). One of her main tasks is the training of leaders in the matter and method of religious education. These leaders may be experienced people or young recruits to Sunday School teaching who know little, but who, with the right encouragement and training, may become efficient and devoted.

Besides the ability to give advice gracefully, to impart knowledge, and to kindle enthusiasm, some

gifts of administration are necessary as there will be office work to deal with, and Summer Schools, training courses and committees to arrange and carry through. It is essential that in addition to teaching qualifications and experience, a Diocesan Adviser should have a sound knowledge of what is possible and acceptable in a parish, and that she should be sufficiently adaptable and tactful to commend her work to clergy, parents and teachers.

The average salary is between £300 and £400 per annum.

### *Administrative Work*

The Church has a certain number of posts for women with secretarial qualifications and organizing ability, particularly those who have first-hand experience of work already described. The Secretaries of the Boards of Women's Work have wide responsibilities needing vision and ability and a capacity for getting on with groups and individuals. The big Church societies such as the Mothers' Union and the Girls' Friendly Society and the missionary societies need diocesan or area organizers and sometimes require women to fill vacancies on their central staff. In most cases professional qualifications must be allied to real understanding of the Church's task and an ability to speak about its work.

There are diocesan organizing secretaries who co-ordinate the moral welfare work, keeping abreast of social legislation and in touch with Local Authorities. At the same time they co-operate with those engaged in religious education in all its branches to promote Christian teaching about sex, marriage, and the family. In some dioceses there are full-time lecturers for this educational aspect of the work.

The work of the Diocesan Adviser in Religious Education has already been mentioned under "Religious Education".

There is the need too for private secretaries, for bishops and clergy and for those holding responsible positions in Church Councils and Societies.

#### *Chaplains' Assistants*

The valuable work done by the Chaplains' Assistants during the war has been officially recognized by the War Office and Air Ministry authorizing their continuation as part of the life of the permanent women's services.

Chaplains' Assistants are selected by the Committee of the Churches' Work for Women in the Forces and are appointed for not less than two years by the Chaplain General to serve amongst the W.R.A.C., and by the Chaplain-in-Chief amongst the W.R.A.F. A grant is given towards the cost of uniform and the pay compares favourably with other forms of Church work.

The work offers unique opportunities for pastoral care and initiative. In most camps the Chaplains' Assistant is able to teach through Padres' Hours, Discussion Groups, Confirmation Classes, and (where there are married families) in Sunday Schools. Hospital visiting is an important part of her work.

#### *Church Settlement Work*

Women working in settlements established on a Church foundation make an important contribution to the Church. Through their varied forms of service in the field of Church and Social work, residents find occasions for teaching and evangelism, both in connection with ordinary Church life and also among those who are not influenced by parochial organizations.

The Settlement can be a centre from which Church teaching spreads and also a meeting-place for those who desire instruction and fellowship. It may thus be a considerable asset to neighbouring clergy, Church and social workers, who can call upon the residents to help them in widening their contacts, and who can also find in it a centre of corporate prayer which will strengthen the life of the Church in the neighbourhood.

Church Settlements have always done pioneering work and in this present age there is an increasing need and opportunity for Settlement workers to go out into the rapidly developing new towns and housing estates.

#### *Youth Work*

There are opportunities for women to do youth work in direct connection with the Church: for instance, through clubs in Church Settlements, and parochial clubs and fellowships run by leaders who are also doing other parochial work. These workers take their part in school after-care and co-operate with the local youth committees and youth centres and other recognized statutory and voluntary agencies. In so doing they strengthen the essential spiritual basis of all sound work among young people. There are some posts as assistant organizers of Church youth work in dioceses under diocesan Youth Councils or the G.F.S.

#### *Vocation to other forms of Service*

This pamphlet is mainly concerned with the different forms of full-time Church work, but one important fact must not be overlooked. Many women undertake secular work with the clear conviction that in such work their vocation lies. By bringing to their work—whether in school, or hospital, factory, office, or shop—the spirit of Christian service, they find opportunities for evangelization sometimes denied to those in full-time service. Some may wish to take advantage of a course of study in theology provided by universities and training houses and thus equip themselves more adequately for these opportunities.

### VOLUNTARY WORK

No attempt can be made in this small space to summarize all the openings for voluntary work done in connection with the Church. It can only be said that there is no possibility or suggestion that the full-time

trained worker should supersede the voluntary worker; this would be not only impossible, but highly undesirable. A very considerable part of the Church's work in the world has been and always will be done by devoted lay people in the little leisure that modern life allows, and many of them spend their holidays and every available opportunity in equipping themselves more fully for this service. A most valuable contribution is made by those who as members of parochial councils, local or diocesan committees, the Church Assembly or central committees give much time and thought to the administrative work of the Church.

Various part-time training schemes, summer schools, and conferences are provided by the Diocesan Councils for youth, religious education, moral welfare, and by the principal Church societies.

#### FURTHER INFORMATION

may be obtained from:—

The General Secretary, Central Council for Women's Church Work, Church House, Dean's Yard, Westminster, S.W. 1.

or

The Secretary of the Diocesan Board of Women's Work.

The General Secretary, the Church of England Council for Education, 69 Great Peter Street, S.W. 1.

The General Secretary, Church of England Youth Council, 69 Great Peter Street, S.W. 1.

The General Secretary, Church of England Moral Welfare Council, Church House, Dean's Yard, Westminster, S.W. 1.

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