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**Society for the Ministry of Women**  
**(Interdenominational)**



**Annual Report**  
**1935**

**Pamphlet**

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# SOCIETY FOR THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN

(INTERDENOMINATIONAL)

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*Hon. Editor "The Coming Ministry" and Press Sec.:*

Mrs. D. M. NORTHCROFT, Oak Way, Englefield Green.

*Editorial Board:*

REV. CLAUD COLTMAN, B.Litt., The Manse, Moon Street, Wolverton, Bucks.  
Miss M. E. J. TAYLOR, M.A., Settrington, Bakeham Lane, Englefield Green.

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**AIM.**—To attain the ideal that in the ministry of the Church of Christ no distinction should be made between men and women.

With this object to work for—

- (1) Equal opportunity in training and service for women ministers in those Churches in which the principle of equality is already recognised;
- (2) The full ordination of women in those Churches which do not at present grant it: or in the case of those Churches which do not use the word "ordination," its exact equivalent.

**MEMBERSHIP.**—All persons of 18 years of age and upwards calling themselves Christians, who are in agreement with the above object and who pay an annual subscription of 1s. or more, are eligible for membership of the Society.

Subscribers of 2s. or more receive the quarterly news-sheet, *The Coming Ministry*.

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*Affiliated Societies:*

Edinburgh Equal Citizenship Society.  
Fellowship of Equal Service in the Church (Church of Scotland).

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## Sixth Annual Report.

The last Annual Report was issued while the General Assemblies of the Church of Scotland and the Presbyterian Church (England) and the Annual Conference of the Methodist Church were still in session and their respective decisions as to the admission of women to the ministry had not been arrived at. As will be seen from the section in this Report headed "Present Position," the question in all three communions was postponed. This result, while disappointing to those of our members and friends who have been actively engaged, some of them as actual members of the committees concerned, in pressing for this reform, is not a matter for despair. Postponement is much to be preferred to an adverse decision which might close the doors for many years to come. In the case of the Methodist Church such a negative vote was in fact given, but the situation was saved by our Vice-President, Dr. Russell Maltby, who secured by a later resolution that the question should be reopened this year.

It is obvious that sustained and continuous effort on the part of the Society and its members is more than ever necessary, and during the year which has elapsed since the issue of the last Report a great deal of work has been done. As some indication, it may be mentioned that in connection with the Annual Meeting alone, over 100 personal letters were sent out, besides some 150 circular letters with handbills, 2,000 individual handbills, and about 2,000 in addition distributed in various other ways. For the Service at Kingsgate Church, 4,000 handbills and a large number of personal letters and circular letters were despatched. When the Society is asked, as it sometimes is asked, what it is doing (the questioner meaning: what is the Society achieving) no answer can be given as there are no means of assessing results of such work. Yet there can be no doubt that the results are valuable, and in no year since the foundation of the Society has the work for meetings fallen below the level of that above-mentioned, while in some years much more has been done. In addition there are the ordinary inquiries and correspondence, often interviews and special pieces of work, and such regular activities as are referred to later. Further there is the work of individual members, which is helped, as they frequently tell us, by their membership of the Society.

### ANNUAL MEETING, JUNE 9TH, 1934.

The Society's Annual Meeting of members on June 9th, 1934, was held in the Town Hall (Court Hall), St. Albans, Herts. The Chair was taken by the President, Dr. Maude Royden, C.H.

The officers of the Executive Committee were re-elected for the ensuing year with the exception of Miss Gotch (Hon. Treasurer) and Miss Poffley (Hon. Registrar), the latter having resigned owing to pressure of work. Miss Gotch urged that the office of Registrar should be abolished, that the Hon. Treasurer should be responsible for the Registrar's work, and that Miss M. E. J. Taylor, M.A., should be invited to accept the office of Hon. Treasurer, a payment being allowed for clerical help. This arrangement was agreed to. A cordial vote of thanks to Miss Gotch and Miss Poffley for their services was moved from the Chair and carried unanimously.

The Hon. Secretary's Annual Report was adopted and the accounts received.

Dr. Royden drew attention to the passages in the Annual Report respecting the proposals being put forward for a separate or special training, and separate Orders, for women. Dr. Royden warned members that any such proposals, if carried into effect, would necessarily, in view of the present attitude of the world, be construed to mean an inferior status for women; that any acceptance of this differentiation on the part of our supporters was tantamount to admitting the principle of inferiority of women, because that is the way it would be worked out; and suggested that our opponents, in making this offer, were really trying to defend the "last ditch."

The Report of the Executive Committee on the affiliation of the Society to the National Council of Women (which question had been referred to the Committee by the Annual Meeting of 1933) was received, and it was agreed *nem. con.* that the Society should apply for affiliation to the National Council of Women.

On the motion of the Hon. Secretary, seconded by Miss Daisy Low, it was agreed that the words "of the Secretary (or Hon. Secretary)" be omitted from Clause 5(3)(iii) of the Constitution, the amended Clause to run as follows:—

"(iii) to receive and if approved to adopt the Annual Report."

The following resolution, moved by Rev. Rosalind Lee, M.A., seconded by Dr. Sybil Pratt, was carried unanimously:—

"That the Committee be instructed to consider the question of raising funds for bursaries for women training for the Ministry and to report to a future General Meeting."

It was unanimously agreed to reappoint Miss E. Watts (Chartered Accountant) as the Society's Auditor.

Miss Collisson moved a vote of thanks to the Chairman and Hon. Secretary, which was carried.



## PUBLIC MEETING AT ST. ALBANS, JUNE 9TH, 1934.

At 6 p.m. on June 9th, 1934, a Public Meeting was held at the Town Hall, St. Albans. Dr. Maude Royden, C.H., was in the Chair, and the speakers were Rev. R. F. Rattray, M.A., Ph.D., of the Memorial Church, Cambridge, Miss E. Picton Turbervill, O.B.E., Rev. Chas. H. Maxwell, M.A. (Rural Dean of Battersea), and Rev. John S. Whale, M.A. (President, Cheshunt College, Cambridge).

The subject was "The Coming Ministry"—i.e. a ministry of women and men.

Full reports of the Annual and Public Meetings were given in *The Coming Ministry* for June, 1934.

SERVICE AT KINGSGATE CHURCH, LONDON,  
SEPTEMBER 19TH, 1934.

In response to many requests received after the service held at the Guildhouse in 1933 that further services conducted by women ministers might be arranged, the Society invited the Rev. Dorothy Wilson, M.A., B.Litt., to conduct a service and preach on September 19th at 7.45 p.m. Miss Wilson is well known as an inspiring minister and helpful preacher, and the announcement was generally welcomed. Unfortunately the date chosen clashed with a number of other fixtures and, in spite of heavy publicity work beforehand, the attendance was disappointing. The service was one which no member of the congregation would have cared to miss, and the Hon. Secretary received in the course of the following week several letters from strangers who had been present, asking for information about the Society, requesting to be put in touch with Miss Wilson, or expressing appreciation and a desire to be kept informed of future services.

## MEETINGS.

*Mrs. Pollard's Visit to Scotland.*

The Society's efforts to secure meetings have during the past year resulted rather in enlisting personal interest and local propaganda than in requests for speakers. The Society has been applied to by local speakers for detailed information for their speeches, and by secretaries for other suggestions. One important

society, with the secretary of which the Hon. Secretary had been in correspondence for several years in the hope of securing a meeting, was able last year to obtain sufficient support for such a meeting, found its own speakers, and asked the Society only for free literature for distribution. The North Ayrshire National Council of Women asked for two speakers, a woman and a man for a meeting held on November 15th, 1934, but as travelling expenses precluded the sending of speakers from a distance, the Hon. Secretary was obliged eventually (after trying to secure speakers living in Scotland) to enlist the aid of Mrs. McKerrow, Hon. Secretary of the Fellowship of Equal Service in the Church (Scotland) and a member of our Society, who very kindly found the speakers. The Society sent literature for distribution and for sale.

Miss Helen Ward spoke at a drawing-room meeting at Peebles (arranged by the Misses Henderson) on October 2nd, 1934.

On October 24th, 1934, Dr. Royden addressed a crowded women's meeting in Glasgow on the Ministry of Women, held in connection with the Annual Assembly of the Baptist Union of Scotland.

Mrs. Alys Russell arranged a meeting at Crosby Hall for the Society and Mrs. Joyce Pollard who addressed the meeting found it sympathetic and there was an interesting discussion. Mrs. Russell kindly undertook to distribute copies of our literature to all members of the Crosby Hall Executive Committee.

The Edinburgh Equal Citizenship Society again invited the Society to send Mrs. Pollard to Scotland, and Mrs. Pollard very kindly arranged to visit Scotland while travelling in that direction for Peace meetings. She addressed a Public Meeting in Edinburgh on April 2nd, 1935, Dr. Herbert Gray, one of our Vice-Presidents, being the other speaker. The Society had tried to secure Dr. Gray on Mrs. Robertson's behalf for a meeting held in 1934. On April 3rd, Mrs. Pollard addressed a meeting of the Dunfermline Women's Institute.

The North Surrey Group of the British Federation of University Women arranged a meeting on the Ministry of Women on May 16th, and invited Mrs. Pollard to speak.

## PUBLICITY.

*The Coming Ministry.*

A majority of members subscribe to *The Coming Ministry*, and in addition the periodical has been sent each quarter to some 400 people, on prepared lists, some of the lists being used for two or more consecutive issues, others being changed each quarter.



The Society's Annual Meeting at St. Albans was reported, in some cases at length, by twenty-three papers in England and Scotland. Large numbers of press cuttings are received also at such times as the question of the ministry of women is being considered at General Assemblies and Conferences, after which references in the Press become fewer and gradually cease. It has been the Press Secretary's endeavour to secure that the subject shall not be dropped entirely but that some reference shall appear from time to time in the Press. Many contributions are, however, rejected.

#### THE SOCIETY'S PUBLICATIONS.

A valuable four-page leaflet for use at this present time has been published by the Society, price ½d. (1d. post free): "*Special*" *Order or Holy Order*, by Dr. Maude Royden, C.H. Members are reminded of another useful leaflet for propaganda purposes by Dr. Royden: *The Ministry of Women*, price ½d. Other publications of the Society include: *Certain Women of Christ's Company*, by Dr. Royden, price 4d. (postage 1d.); *St. Paul and the Ministry of Women*, by Rev. A. E. N. Simms, M.A., B.D. (Rector of St. Mary's, Bryanston Square), price 2½d. post free; *Why Forbid Us?* by Muriel Lester (a few copies left), price 2½d.; and *Spiritual Equality—the Fundamental Principle*, price 2½d. post free.

Members are invited to apply for back numbers of *The Coming Ministry*, membership forms, &c., for free distribution.

#### OUR SPEAKERS AND HELPERS.

Our thanks are due to Mrs. Joyce Pollard (whose work has been mentioned above), and to Miss Helen Ward who went at short notice to speak at Peebles; to Miss M. Shotter, Miss Elizabeth Butters, Miss Amy Peddell, and Miss Margaret Gordon for help in various directions; to all those who have been ready to help the Press Secretary by sending letters and articles to the Press, especially Mrs. Ursula Roberts, Mrs. Guy Rogers, and Miss Taylor. We are grateful also for the active co-operation of many members, who are finding opportunities of their own to further the work—writing articles for periodicals, bringing up the matter in their

churches and among their friends, &c. News of such work often reaches headquarters more or less by chance and affords great encouragement.

#### PRESENT POSITION.

##### *Anglican Church.*

The Lambeth Conference of 1930 passed the following resolutions:

"70. Under the sanction of the Province, the Bishop may, on the request of the Parish Priest, entrust the following functions to the ordained Deaconess:—

- (a) to assist the minister in the preparation of candidates for Baptism and for Confirmation;
- (b) to assist at the administration of Holy Baptism by virtue of her office;
- (c) to baptise in church, and to officiate at the Churching of Women;
- (d) in church to read Morning and Evening Prayer and the Litany, except such portions as are reserved to the Priest, and to lead in prayer; with the licence of the Bishop, to instruct and preach, except in the service of Holy Communion."

This resolution was confirmed in June, 1931, by the Upper House of Convocation of York, *subject* to the addition in respect of (c) of the words "in exceptional circumstances" after the words "to baptise in Church" (Canterbury); before the words "to baptise in Church" (York). The Lower House of Convocation of York (January, 1932) approved functions (a) and (b), rejected (c), and on (d) reserved judgment until the matter had been considered by the Commission on the Ministry of Women.

In the Report of Sub-Committee II on "The Ministry of the Church" (Lambeth Conference, 1930), the following significant passage occurs:—

"There has risen before us a vision of a great Order of ministry for women distinct from and complementary to the historic Orders of the Church."

And Resolution 68 of the Conference contained the following words:—

"The ordination of a Deaconess should everywhere include prayer by the Bishop and the laying on of hands, the delivery of the New Testament to the candidate . . . such ordination . . . should not be combined with the ordination of priests or deacons."

The Deaconess (as was admitted at the Lambeth Conference, 1920) is in Orders. Resolution 71 of the Lambeth Conference, 1930, refers apparently to *laywomen*—it runs as follows:—

"71. The Conference recommends that Bishops give commissions to women of special qualifications to speak *at other than the regular services*, or to conduct Retreats, or to *give spiritual counsel*." (*Italics are ours.*)



The Archbishop of Canterbury announced in 1933 that in order to bring Canterbury into line with other dioceses which have been foremost in giving women's work *a rightful place in Church order*, he will "grant commissions to women with special qualifications, to speak in Churches at *other than the regular services*, to conduct Retreats, or to give *spiritual counsel*." Existing licences for deaconesses and women messengers will be retained and future licences (endorsed for different kinds of work) will be granted to deaconesses and lay workers. (*Italics are ours.*)

The following passages are quoted from the Report of Sub-Committee II of Lambeth Conference, 1930:—

"The number of women asking for ordination as Deaconesses is comparatively small . . . far more women of the stamp and qualifications envisaged find scope for their gifts in other ways . . . the urgent plea for the admission of women to the priesthood . . . in part arises from an intense desire to serve the Church *with the grace that admission to the priesthood would bring* . . . we are bold to say that in the Order of Deaconess . . . *there is scope* for the exercise of women's ministry *within the commissioned orders* of the Church of such a kind as to *satisfy the highest aspirations.*" (*Italics are ours.*)

It will be noted from the words italicised in passages above quoted, read with Resolution 70, that women qualified for the office of spiritual counsellor (surely part of the priestly office) would apparently find no "scope" in the Order of Deaconess, but would have to exercise this office as laywomen *without* "the grace that admission" to Holy Orders would bring. Yet *any man* in Holy Orders may exercise this office of spiritual counsellor whether possessed of "special qualifications" for this particular work or not.

The Archbishops' Commission on the Ministry of Women appointed in 1932 has not yet reported, but there is a rumour that their Report may be expected this year.

#### *Methodist Church.*

By a small majority the vote was carried against the admission of women to the ordained ministry, in the Methodist Conference in July, 1934. By a later resolution, however, the Pastoral Conference expressed its dissatisfaction with the present position and provided for the raising of the question again in 1935.

#### *Presbyterian Church—England.*

The Special Committee on Women and the Ministry recommended to the General Assembly of 1933, should the Assembly decide to welcome women to the ministry:—

- (1) That the same rules of admission as for men should be observed.
- (2) That it would be essential that rooms for the women students should be secured outside the College.

(3) That it is not advisable that women should share in the use of the men's common-room. Arrangements as regards common meals should be left in the hands of the College authorities.

(4) That the necessary arrangements for connection with the Ministerial Insurance Funds and the question of equality of stipend for women as well as men should be remitted to the Ministerial Support Committee.

The Assembly decided that the recommendations of the Committee be sent to Presbyteries for consideration and report after the fourth recommendation had been dealt with by the Ministerial Support Committee. By a series of mischances the subject was not placed on the agenda of the Ministerial Support Committee before the recommendations were sent to the Presbyteries and those recommendations being in an incomplete form a number of Presbyteries postponed consideration of the whole question. Other Presbyteries asked for further information on important details, and the Committee in their Report to the Assembly of 1934 set out these points with their replies. Three of these questions, with the unanimous conclusions of the Committee appended, are given here:—

1. Would a married woman whose husband is living be eligible for admission?—*Yes.*
2. Would marriage subsequent to induction be a ground for terminating the pastorate?—*No.*
3. Would a change in our regulations involving the admission of Women to the Ministry affect our relation to other Churches under their acts of Mutual Eligibility?—*No.*

The Committee concluded their Report by recording their own conviction that on the points submitted for consideration no insuperable difficulty as regards the training of women for the ministry had become evident.

The General Assembly of 1934 after consideration of the Report decided to postpone the question until the Assembly of 1935 in order that full reports from all the Presbyteries might be received.

#### *Church of Scotland (Presbyterian).*

The Committee appointed three years ago to consider the petition asking that women be made eligible for the diaconate, the eldership, and the Ministry submitted its report to the General Assembly of 1934 and asked to be discharged by the Assembly as in their opinion no useful purpose could be served in proceeding to consideration of women in the Ministry when the eldership had been rejected by the Presbyteries. This was agreed to.



*United Free Church of Scotland (Presbyterian).*

The principle that women are equally eligible with men for ordination was accepted by an almost unanimous vote when the United Free Church of Scotland was reorganised in 1929. Rev. Edith S. Martin has for some years been a "Probationer" Minister (*i.e.* ordained but not called to a charge). Since 1934 she has been Minister-in-Charge of Balbeggie and Collace. The Rev. Elizabeth B. Barr, M.A., B.D., was, in March, 1935, ordained and inducted to the pastoral charge of Auchterarder United Free Church.

*Baptist Church.*

The principle that women are eligible for admission to the ministry is accepted in the Baptist Church, but no women have been admitted to the Colleges for some time. The Rev. Violet Hedger, B.D., LL.A. (Minister at Littleover from 1926-9), was in 1933 called to North Parade Baptist Church, Halifax, and the other two women ministers are doing good work in their respective spheres.

*Congregational Church.*

The Ministry of the Congregational Churches is open equally to men and women. Some of the Theological Colleges are open to women to take training for the Ministry.

The Congregational Union of Great Britain and Ireland has recognised the Ministry of Women by placing those who have taken a full training and been called to a Church on their list of recognised Ministers.

There are already seventeen ordained women ministers and several students in training.

*Unitarian Church.*

Seven women ministers are in charge of churches. One is co-pastor with her husband, one is District Minister in charge of two churches and supervising any others in the district that may be temporarily without a regular minister, another helps her husband unofficially, and one who is doing educational work in Calcutta has been appointed as Assembly representative in the Khasi Hills. There is also a lay worker doing excellent work in a small church, who for health reasons has been unable to qualify as minister. One student expects to qualify this June and another has been accepted for training. A woman minister has been chosen by her fellow students to conduct the Communion Service at her College Old Students' gathering. Opportunities for training are available for a limited number.

*Church of Ireland (Anglican).*

The ministry is not open to women. Women may be elected as members of the "Select Vestry." They may not serve on the Diocesan Synod or on the General Synod (which latter corresponds to the Church Assembly of the Church of England).

A League was formed four or five years ago ("The Church of Ireland League") "to obtain for women admission to all the Lay Offices of the Church of Ireland." When the League has secured this object, it will dissolve. Among the supporters of the League are the Bishops of Kilmore, Ossory, Down. The Dean of Belfast moved a resolution for permission to introduce a Bill at the General Synod, on May 15th, 1934, allowing women to serve on Synods on the same terms as men. The Dean's proposal was, however, defeated by 177 votes to 151.

*Present Position in Churches Abroad.*

It is not possible to insert in this year's Report particulars as to the position in Churches Abroad.

In Holland there are five or six communions, and in Switzerland the position of women differs from Canton to Canton, so that information respecting these two countries alone would occupy several pages. *The Coming Ministry* for March, 1935, contains on pages 4-6 details in respect of Switzerland, and the Hon. Secretary will be glad to send to anyone interested such information as is in the Society's possession as to the position in Australia, the United States of America, Holland, and other countries.







# Society for the Ministry of Women

(Interdenominational)

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE :

(a) PRESIDENT, VICE-PRESIDENTS, HON. SECRETARY,  
HON. TREASURER (*ex officio*).

(See page 3 for names.)

(b) DENOMINATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES.

(Representing members of the Society who are members of the respective denominations.)

*Anglican :*

Mrs. Ursula Roberts. Mrs. Beatrice Powell.

*Baptist :*

Miss A. M. Duncan. Miss D. M. Gotch.

*Congregational :*

Miss M. Gordon. Rev. Joyce Rutherford, B.Sc.

*Methodist :*

Mr. A. E. Appelbe, M.A., LL.B. Miss A. E. Slack.

*Presbyterian :*

Miss Rosamond Clark. Miss J. Greig.

*Unitarian :*

Rev. Rosalind Lee, M.A. Miss H. E. Hargrove.

(c) ELECTED MEMBERS.

Miss L. Banks.

Miss C. Shore.

Miss M. Shotter.

Dr. Eva Morton.

Mrs. Northcroft.

Miss Lucy Hammick.

Mrs. Howard Lewis.

Mrs. Joyce Pollard.

Miss Carol Morrison, M.A.

(d) CO-OPTED MEMBER.

Dr. Sybil Pratt.



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