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Women's Work in the Church of England.



OPPORTUNITIES  
FOR  
SERVICE.

Pamphlet

Issued by  
The Central Council for Women's Church Work,  
Room 25, Church House,  
Westminster, S.W.1.

PRICE - 1D.

Printed by A. Driver & Sons, Chelmsford.

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## OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICE.

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### INTRODUCTION.

It is possible to glorify God in any profession but there are many women who desire to give their service more directly, whether as paid or unpaid workers, and these are asking in what particular ways their help is needed, what definite work the Church can give them and how they can best qualify themselves for this work. The aim of this paper is to attempt some answer to these questions, in so far as salaried posts and the Church of England are concerned. Many of the posts referred to are, of course, open to those who do not require a salary if they have the requisite qualifications.

The Church has always called women to her service but the sphere of work offered has been, or has seemed to be, rather limited. There has always been since the revival of the Religious Orders among us one way of life in which the service is complete and all-demanding, but obviously only the few have this vocation. Women have since the end of the eighteenth century been encouraged to serve as Sunday School teachers, later as leaders of Clubs and Guilds and in general parochial visiting, but till recently it has often been supposed that willingness was a sufficient qualification. Those who did such work in their leisure hours did it as a rule by the light of nature, and as salaried workers the Church has often been content to employ women who have not received either higher general education or professional training. Those who have spent years in specialised training may reasonably expect that if the Church accepts their service they will be given scope to use to the full what they have acquired and that, as skilled and qualified workers, they will receive recognition and remuneration not wholly out of proportion to the time and money spent in training and the salaries they might command in other forms of work.

There should be a place in Church work for the professionally trained and highly qualified woman. Many dioceses now employ women in posts of considerable responsibility and opportunity. Even within the limits of the parish the fact that many of the clergy have been, or still are, content to employ untrained women whose activities have necessarily been limited in scope does not mean that there is no demand for work of a different type. It may be largely inarticulate and the worker in a parish which has hitherto known only old-fashioned and narrow methods will often have to make her own opportunities. Any woman prepared to do this will find that nothing she has learned need be wasted. In Sunday School, Club, Women's Fellowship or other Parochial organisation; in her visiting and other personal contacts; she will find that there is need for a kind of help which can best be supplied by the woman well read in theology, and trained in pastoral and educational method, with some knowledge of psychology and social science, who has given time and energy to thought and study. To say this is not to deny or belittle the very valuable work done by many a woman with no qualifications but simple devotion to God and love of her fellow men. These are essentials for any good work, but modern conditions make technical knowledge more and more important. There are openings for the specialist and a need for women who, whether as specialists or not, can bring to bear on their work a trained intellect, powers of leadership, initiative and imagination. Much of this work is still in the pioneer stage and should, for this reason, appeal to all those who wish to employ their energies and abilities in work of a really creative kind.

In these days of widespread doubt and questioning as to the truth of religion, one of the most pressing needs of the Church is for workers who have not only thought out for themselves reasons for their faith, but are able to help others to do the same.

The scale of salaries has greatly improved of late, but the funds available are very inadequate to the manifold calls upon them, and as long as this is so women who wish to give their whole time to Church work must be prepared to make sacrifices and must often be content to accept salaries much lower than those they could command elsewhere. Efforts are being made by the Central Council and other bodies to raise the scale of remuneration for women's work for it is fully realised that in order to be physically and mentally healthy a woman working for the Church needs books, interests beyond her immediate surroundings, some chance to go on learning and enlarging her outlook, and some opportunities for congenial companionship and amusement, no less than if she were employed in other spheres. These things cannot be obtained without adequate salary.

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The demand for highly-qualified women makes the question of training all-important. There must also be some means of testing would-be workers and some generally recognised Certificate of proficiency. These matters are the special care of the Central Council for Women's Church Work which co-operates with various Training Centres in devising suitable schemes of training, examines candidates, and issues a Certificate. Many Bishops now grant licences only to those women who hold this Certificate and for this reason it is essential for salaried workers wishing to be able to move from one diocese to another. Many part-time workers also are glad to equip themselves with the Certificate, while others make use of the courses of lectures and some part of the training without taking the examinations. The cost of training varies considerably, but it is generally about £70 to £120 per annum if taken in a residential centre.

#### ORGANISING WORK.

For women of considerable experience as well as technical qualifications there are opportunities for organising work as Secretaries of Diocesan Board's of Women's Work, Associations for Preventive and Rescue Work, and various Church Societies. These posts are necessarily limited in number. The salaries offered vary from £175 to £300 per annum.

#### EDUCATIONAL WORK.

There is to-day an increasing demand for trained leaders in religious education both in diocesan and parochial posts and as Divinity Mistresses in Schools and Training Colleges. Some Dioceses employ one or more diocesan lecturers or teachers to give courses of lectures, hold classes and lead study groups for the benefit of parochial workers, those wishing to qualify for Church work and others. They also give courses of a simpler kind to Women's Fellowships or other parochial groups. There is a limited number of Diocesan Sunday School Organisers who give lectures and hold Training Weeks for Sunday School Teachers; visit Sunday Schools and give advice as to methods. Diocesan teachers should hold a Degree or Diploma in theology of some University or the Lambeth Diploma in Theology. Some Diploma or Certificate in teaching is also desirable, but failing this a candidate should have a real gift for and considerable experience of teaching. For the specialist in Sunday School work St. Christopher's College, Blackheath, provides a two or three years' course in theology and teaching method which includes actual teaching practice in

Elementary and Secondary Schools, Sunday Schools, Bible Classes and Guilds for children and young people.

A non-residential course leading to a Certificate of a lower grade can be taken under the supervision of a competent person by workers already engaged in Sunday School and Bible Class work in a parish. Such candidates must take examinations in theology and educational method and must be working under supervision for at least six months.

There is a good deal of variety in salaries offered but that of a Diocesan Teacher or Sunday School Organiser is usually about £200 per annum.

#### PAROCHIAL AND EVANGELISTIC WORK.

Some few parishes employ specially qualified women as teachers, club-leaders, etc., but others employ only one general Parochial Worker who is expected to turn her hand to various different kinds of work. She needs knowledge of pastoral and evangelistic method for her house to house visiting and her conduct of devotional meetings and services for women and children. She needs also to know something of teaching method since she will possibly take Confirmation or Sunday School classes and will have opportunities for teaching in the Women's Fellowship and other groups. Knowledge of social work and the various societies and agencies for the relief of distress, for Public Health work and Social Purity is also an important part of her equipment.

Parochial workers may qualify under the Council's scheme in educational, social or pastoral and evangelistic work. For the latter they are normally required to take a residential training for a period varying from six months to two years in one of the centres approved by the Council, among which are many of the Deaconess Houses, the Church Army and the Ranyard Mission. Under certain conditions, however, a course of part-time non-residential training can be arranged for candidates who have already had experience in Parochial Work.

There are great opportunities for the qualified woman in general parochial posts. The scope offered is wide and the work varied. It is not easy work, and calls not only for technical ability but for gifts of physical health and strength, power of sympathy, understanding of human nature, patience, courage and a sense of humour.

The provision of salaries is still the fundamental difficulty. Such salaries as are offered vary from £100 to £150 per annum.



It is specially important that those wishing to take up general parochial work should obtain the Council's Certificate, since in many Dioceses grants are made from Diocesan funds only for workers who hold it. A Pensions Scheme has now been approved by the Church Assembly for salaried lay-workers, and is being adopted by many dioceses.

### MORAL WELFARE WORK.

Every Church worker should know enough to enable her to turn to the right quarter for help in questions of moral welfare, but none should undertake a post as Social Purity Worker without a special training. Residence in a training centre is very desirable, though for those who are unable to undertake this a non-residential training can be arranged. There are two residential centres where students may qualify for the Certificate in this branch, namely St. Agnes' House, Clapham, and the Josephine Butler Memorial House, Liverpool. Training covers a period of one or two years. A special course covering a period of not less than six months can also be arranged for women desiring to qualify for posts as Working Matrons in Rescue Homes.

Posts available (exclusive of that of Diocesan Organising Secretary, for which see Organising Work above) include those of Outdoor Worker; Children's Worker; Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent of Training Homes, Maternity Homes, Refuges and Shelters. It is usually necessary for the Superintendent of a Maternity Home to hold the Certificate of the Central Midwives' Board in addition to her qualification as a Moral Welfare Worker. Superintendents of Homes should be skilled in household management while a children's worker must have special knowledge of children. The constructive side of the work is very important and a Rescue Worker should know how to co-operate with all clubs or societies offering healthy recreation to young people and should be able to help the normal girl in the ordinary problems and difficulties connected with sex. On the other hand she will from time to time be called upon to deal with the abnormal and the degenerate. For all alike, in addition to technical knowledge, the most essential qualities are, perhaps, courage, a thoroughly sane and healthy outlook on life and a well-balanced temperament.

The salaries offered vary considerably but range from about £150 to £220 for outdoor and Children's Workers, and from about £50 to £100 for resident Superintendents of Homes.

### GENERAL SOCIAL WORK AND CLUB WORK.

General social work is not as a rule carried on under the Church's management and specialists in such work are more generally employed by the State or by various voluntary agencies, but many women engaged in such work are glad to seek recognition as workers for the Church by obtaining the Central Council's Certificate. Knowledge of the principles and methods of social work is also of great value to women actually employed by the Church as parochial workers, specially in poor and overcrowded districts, and many wishing to take up parish work train for the Council's Certificate in this Branch. The Council accepts for the purposes of its Certificate such qualifications as the Diplomas and Certificates in Social Science given by various Universities (with the addition of further practical training where the preparation for these has been almost entirely theoretical, and of some knowledge of Social Purity work when this is lacking) and the Certificate of the Charity Organisation Society. It also provides courses of training varying in length from four months to a year, and including lectures, practical training in case work and visits of observation. Some Settlements accept students for training but residence is not a necessary requirement for the Council's Certificate.

A special branch of social work provided for under the Council's scheme is Club Leadership. The post of Club Leader gives opportunities for very valuable work in the cause of education and general welfare. The requirements are much the same as those for General Social Work, with the addition of practical training in Club Management. The period of training varies from one to two years and can be taken at various Settlements and Clubs approved by the Council. Residence in one of these is regarded as of great importance, but where this is impossible non-resident training may be arranged. A large part of the work of clubs is social and recreational and proficiency in games, dancing, physical culture and handicrafts is an important part of a leader's equipment. It is desirable that she should be young. It is possible to begin training soon after leaving school and it is best that some experience should be gained as assistant worker before the responsible post of Club Leader is taken. The successful management of young people calls for powers of leadership and control and understanding of psychology which can only be acquired by considerable practice and experience.

Salaries offered for Club Leaders vary considerably according to such considerations as the size of the Club and whether or not the post is residential. Roughly speaking they range from £60 to £150, residential.



## WORK OVERSEAS.

This pamphlet deals chiefly with work at home but no statement of the Church's need for the work of women could be complete without reference to the great opportunities for women in the mission field. For women of good health and under thirty-five years of age, who are fully qualified as doctors, nurses or teachers, there is a wide demand. There are also posts for Welfare Workers and Health Visitors, and for those who are trained for evangelistic work. Full particulars as to the needs and the preparation required may be obtained from the Missionary Societies.

## DEACONESSES.

Full particulars concerning the Order of Deaconesses may be obtained from the Head Deaconess, Central Deaconess House, Hindhead, Surrey.

## THE CERTIFICATE OF THE CENTRAL COUNCIL.

To obtain the Certificate candidates are required by the regulations to qualify in two branches of which Theology must be one, and in granting its Certificate the Council takes account not only of examination results but also of a candidate's personal suitability and the reports furnished on her practical work during training.

A pamphlet setting out the regulations relating to the Certificate and any further information and advice may be obtained from the Secretaries of Diocesan Board's of Women's Work, or from the Secretary of the Central Council for Women's Church Work, Room 25, Church House, Westminster, S.W.1.

