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Anglican Group for the Ordination of  
Women to the Historic Ministry of the  
Church.

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# Annual Report

1937-1938

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ANGLICAN GROUP FOR THE ORDINATION  
OF WOMEN TO THE HISTORIC MINISTRY  
OF THE CHURCH.

*President:*

*Vice-Presidents:*

THE BISHOP OF LICHFIELD.  
THE DEAN OF CANTERBURY.

*Executive Committee:*

*Chairman:* MISS H. C. ESCREET.

MISS M. ATTLEE	MISS E. S. HOLLIS
REV. DEACONESS BEL- FIELD	MISS HOPE JOSEPH
MISS G. M. BLACKBURNE	MISS H. KNIGHT
MISS DOROTHY CARRUTHERS	MISS A. K. ORRED
MISS I. SHEWELL COOPER	MRS. ROBERTS
MISS E. FROST	CANON GUY ROGERS
REV. DEACONESS HARGOOD-ASH	MISS U. M. SAUNDERS
REV. G. H. V. HART	MISS M. E. J. TAYLOR
	DR. TURNER WATTS

*Hon. Treasurer:* MISS HELEN TOOBY,  
Storrington School, Westcliff-on-Sea.

*Secretary:* MRS. RONALD BEST,  
17, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1.  
Holborn 2470.



## ANNUAL REPORT, 1937-38.

The need for women's contribution to the life and work of the Church is being recognised by an increasing number of people. It is therefore specially regrettable that a year which has seen two great Œcumenical Conferences in this country—in Oxford and in Edinburgh—should be lacking in any apparent advance in the official attitude of the Church towards the ordained ministry of women. Fear in one form or another, though often unrecognised as such, seems to pervade the atmosphere and this was particularly evident in the debates in the Lower Houses of Convocation in January and June upon the Resolutions sent down to them by the Upper Houses regarding the status and functions of deaconesses.

The Resolutions approved by the Upper Houses of Canterbury and York are as follows:—

### RESOLUTIONS AGREED TO BY THE UPPER HOUSE OF CONVOCATION ON JANUARY 20, 1937.

1. That the order of Deaconesses is the one existing ordained ministry for women, and has historical precedent as such from the fourth century onwards. As to the significance of ordination, this House is content to say with the Lambeth Conference of 1920 that it confers a distinctive character, and that the ordained woman is dedicated to a lifelong service, and that her status has the permanence which belongs to Holy Orders. If the Order is not, in our opinion, precisely parallel to any of the three



Orders open to men, we, nevertheless, think that it is among the clergy and not among the laity that the Deaconess ought to be ranked, and that for all religious and ecclesiastical purposes she ought to be regarded and described as a person who is in Holy Orders.

2. That in a future revision of the Book of Common Prayer, the Form and Manner of Making Deaconesses, as already sanctioned by Convocation and now in use in the Provinces of Canterbury and York, should be published with the Ordinal in the Prayer Book, and that prayers should be offered for Deaconesses in the Offices of the Church as for the rest of the clergy.
3. That all those ordained should take an Oath of Canonical Obedience and make a Declaration of Assent and receive Letters of Orders, being ordained to some definite sphere of work, parochial or other; that they should always work under licence from the Bishop, and their names should be entered on any diocesan roll of ordained ministers.
4. That it should be regarded as appropriate—
  - (a) that there should be assigned to the Deaconess, by virtue of her office, a distinctive seat in church;
  - (b) that she may be addressed as "Reverend";
  - (c) that she should wear a special dress or emblem;
  - (d) that where a Deaconess is licensed to a parish she should be regarded as a member of the ordained staff of the parish.
5. That the licensed Deaconess should be eligible for membership of the Parochial Church Council under the same rules as licensed assistant curates, and that she should be regarded as qualified for membership of the Ruri-decanal Conference and Chapter.

6. That steps should be taken to consider the representation of the Order of Deaconesses in Diocesan Conferences and in the Church Assembly.

7. The functions of the Deaconess should include the following, subject to the authorisation of the Bishops: (i) to read the Services of Morning and Evening Prayer, and the Litany, except for those portions reserved to the Priest, and to lead in prayer; (ii) to instruct and preach, except in the service of Holy Communion; (iii) to officiate at the Churching of women; (iv) in the absence of the Priest to baptize infants.

NOTE: This House desires further consideration of the possibility of the Bishop giving permission to the Deaconess where there may be special need, as, for instance, in girls' schools and women's colleges, to administer the chalice.

8. The Deaconess should be allowed, with the authorisation of the Bishop, to exercise the above-named functions in consecrated as well as unconsecrated buildings.
9. That this House requests the Committee to consult with the similar Committee of the Upper House of the Convocation of York as to the next steps which may be appropriately taken.

The Lower Houses refused to endorse the recognition of a deaconess as "a person who is in Holy Orders," and whittled away most of the functions approved by the Bishops who, it should be remembered, were only giving effect to the recommendations of the Archbishops' Commission on the Ministry of Women.

The **Annual Meeting** was held in the Assembly Hall, Mary Sumner House, Tufton Street, S.W.1, on Saturday, November 20th, 1937.



In the afternoon the Rev. Paul Gibson, Principal of Ridley Hall, Cambridge, took the chair at a meeting which dealt with some important considerations affecting the relations between the Historic Church and Youth. Miss D. Carruthers, Headmistress of the Green School, Isleworth, and the Rev. Canon C. Dunlop, of Henfield, were the speakers.

Miss Carruthers said that present day schoolgirls were anxious to see how religion affected their own contact with life, and were dissatisfied with the Church as an institution. She thought that this was because the Church did not demand enough from them, and they found less scope in it for service than in secular organizations. Girls began to think of what their life work was to be before leaving school, and to frame their studies accordingly, and if the ministry of the Church were open to them, they would consider it as boys of the same age do. Spiritual force would not be lost, but organized religion would disappear if the sense of vocation in some who might be eminently suitable candidates for the ministry continued to be stultified and the best service of quite half the members of the Church were unused.

Canon Dunlop emphasized the need for giving young people the sense of being members of the Christian family, through uniting them in worship at the Eucharist—in which the highest expression of worship was found. Every member needed to make his or her contribution to the service, which should be at a time which would suit the largest number of people.

Further, it should be possible to offer the highest service—the priesthood—to all young people. Sex could never be a barrier to the service of Christ, and the barrier of custom must be gradually broken down.

The Chairman referred to the difficulty many people felt with regard to the effect the ordination of women might have upon reunion but he felt that truth must not be sacrificed to expediency, and a unity gained by expediency would not be worth gaining. The priest

represented humanity to God—and humanity meant men and women, so that sacramental life must have universal expression.

This meeting was briefly reported in the *Times* as well as in some Church papers.

The Annual Business Meeting was held after tea—37 members and friends being present. Miss Teacher was elected chairman of the meeting.

There was some discussion of the situation regarding the Order of Deaconesses, and it was clear that the only conception of the Order which could satisfy the Group was that it should be included in the threefold ministry.

The question of the appointment of women as lay officers of the Church—for paid as well as voluntary work—was then discussed, with special reference to lay readers. It was felt that this question was important as being preparatory to the specific aim of the Group, and that the Group ought to be concerned with the opening up of opportunities for lay work, while keeping the Ministry always in mind.

Some practical suggestions were made and were referred to the Executive Committee for further consideration and appropriate action.

#### Officers and Executive Committee.

The officers of the Group were all re-elected and Miss Escreet has again served the Committee as chairman. Miss Bradford accepted the Treasurership, but said she would be glad if someone could be found to take her place very soon, and Miss Helen Tooby has kindly offered to take over this important work. Her offer has been very gratefully accepted.

Miss Bradford has served the Group as Treasurer for ten difficult years, during which expenditure has steadily increased, and the Group owes her a great debt of gratitude and appreciation for the untiring way in which



she has carried on her work. The accounts included in this Report are the best testimony to its success.

During the year the Group has lost two of its Vice-Presidents—the Rt. Rev. J. E. C. Welldon, D.D., who died in June, 1937, and the Bishop of Middleton, who died in August, 1937.

Miss M. A. B. Attlee, the Rev. G. H. V. Hart, and Miss Una M. Saunders have been co-opted to serve on the Executive Committee, and Mrs. Barry, Miss Chetham-Strode, Miss Isaac (who has moved away from London) and Miss Storr have resigned.

### **The Year's Work.**

There is no event of outstanding importance to record. The year has been one of quiet work—consolidating what had been begun, circularizing the members of the Lower Houses of Convocation, and maintaining contacts with the Committees dealing with the Resolutions on Deaconesses.

Several addresses on women's church work have been given in schools by members of the Group, and others are being arranged. Some church gatherings have also been addressed by members.

A Resolution on the Ministry of Women sent to the Annual Conference of the British Commonwealth League, in May, by the Group and the Society for the Ministry of Women jointly, was proposed by the Rev. Dss. Belfield, seconded by Miss Picton Turbervill and passed with only one dissentient.

A report of the Headmistresses' Enquiry, written for the Group by Miss Delia Lyttelton, one of the assessors of Biblical and Theological knowledge for the Central Council for Women's Church Work, and not herself a member of the Group, is to be sent to the Archbishops and the Central Council for Women's Church Work.

About 200 answers to the letter referred to in our list Report were received from women missionaries. Those

who answered have in most cases discussed our letter with others—often with people belonging to the country in which they are working—so that the evidence given is of additional value. The views expressed vary greatly, but it is clear that in many parts of the mission field women are doing exactly the same work as ordained men, except for the administration of the sacraments, and that while many are opposed to the full ordination of women, many others would welcome the grace and authority which is conferred by Holy Orders for the fuller service of the Church. A useful and interesting pamphlet has been compiled from this material by Mrs. W. Marston Acres.

References to the ordination of women appear in the provincial and London papers from time to time, and members could do very useful work if they would take up any such references and initiate or continue a correspondence—especially in provincial papers.

The Group itself has entered on a new stage—having acquired office accommodation at 17, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1, in a central position, which should be very useful.

Members and friends will be welcome at the office, and it is hoped that they will use this meeting place as a means of maintaining closer contact with the Group Executive, and of getting to know one another.

The list of Group Publications on page 13 contains several new leaflets, and the Secretary would be glad to send literature to members who will pass it on to their friends or direct to anyone whose name and address are given her.

### **Finance.**

Members have responded generously to the appeal made to them, and the accounts show that the work of the Group can be maintained, but there is no margin for increasing it, and we must not relax our efforts. A



special appeal is made to members to encourage the new Treasurer by sending subscriptions promptly, and by gaining new members whose subscriptions will mean new income.

This review of the work of the Anglican Groups for the Ordination of Women to the Historic Ministry of the Church is more important for its implications of what has to be done, than for its record of achievement. We have to face the fact that the fear which hinders advance is roused very largely by our own avowal of an aim which is as yet far ahead of official thinking. If our efforts were directed solely to the furtherance of women's lay activities in the church, they would be widely welcomed and there are some people—even among our own supporters—who think that it would be diplomatic to take this course. But it is not merely a change in church organisation that is at stake—it is a truth which, as we see it, is fundamental to Christianity itself. We cannot rightly serve the Church unless we bear witness to this truth, knowing that the only hope of the Church in her struggle against disunion, unbelief, indifference or open contempt, is an ever deeper and wider understanding of the truth of the Gospel, made plain for each age by the working of the Holy Spirit.

It is not surprising that those who do not recognise our conviction as truth should be afraid, but we have no cause for fear and must continue our work with quiet confidence and in that spirit of understanding which alone can dispel fear and make possible the continued revelation of truth.

## GROUP LITERATURE.

MEMORANDUM ON WOMEN AND THE PRIESTHOOD,  
presented to the Lambeth Conference of 1930.

WOMEN IN THE SANCTUARY.

THE MISSION FIELD AND THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN,  
by E. Louie Acres.

Price 3d. each. Postage id.

TO-DAY, TO-MORROW AND THE DAYS TO BE, by  
Deaconess Dorothea Belfield.

WOMEN AND THE PRIESTHOOD, by E. M. Chrystal.

WOMEN AND THE PRIESTHOOD, by the Rev. Paul  
Gibson.

THE PRIESTHOOD OF WOMEN, by the Rev. Canon T.  
Shimwell.

THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN TO THE PRIESTHOOD, by  
Ursula Roberts.

THE NEED FOR WOMEN PRIESTS IN THE MISSION FIELD.

WHAT CRIME OR IMPEDIMENT?—AN APPEAL TO THE  
CLERGY.

THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND THE SACRAMENT OF  
PENANCE. (Revised Edition.)

A QUESTION FOR CHURCHWOMEN.

THINGS NEW AND OLD.

A MEMORANDUM TO CLERGY ON THE PLACE OF WOMEN  
IN THE LIFE AND WORK OF THE CHURCH.

STATEMENT ON THE REPORT OF THE ARCHBISHOPS'  
COMMISSION ON THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN.

A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE OXFORD CONFERENCE, 1933.

REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE AT BIRMINGHAM, Septem-  
ber, 1936.

WOMEN DEACONS IN THE EARLY CHURCH, by the Rev.  
Canon C. H. Norton.

WOMEN AND THE PRIESTHOOD, by the Rev. Canon  
C. H. Norton.

ANNUAL REPORTS.

Free. Postage id.

To be obtained from the Secretary.



**ANGLICAN GROUP FOR THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN.**

RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FROM OCTOBER 1ST, 1937, TO SEPTEMBER 30TH, 1938.

	RECEIPTS.			EXPENDITURE.		
	£	s. d.	£	s. d.	£	s. d.
14	To Cash at Bank, October 1st, 1937:				By Secretary's Salary .. .. . 100 0 0	
	General Fund.. ..	12 6 8			,, Petty Cash Disbursements including postages per Hon. Treasurer .. 2 1 0	
	Special Fund .. ..	10 8 2			,, Petty Cash Disbursements including Postage.. .. . 17 0 2½	
		22 14 10			Typing .. .. . 35 17 0	
	.. Deposit with P.O. Savings Bank .. ..	35 0 0			Stationery and Pamphlets .. .. . 5 0 3	
	.. Petty Cash in Hand, Sept. 30th, 1937:				Travelling .. .. . 0 15 6	
	Hon. Treasurer .. ..	0 16 7			Telephone .. .. . 2 14 5	
	Secretary .. .. .	0 17 4			Sundries .. .. . 2 1 3	
		59 8 9			Per Secretary .. .. . 63 8 7½	
	.. Subscriptions and Donations .. ..	121 19 2			,, Cheque book and Bank charges .. 0 10 3	
	.. Special Fund Contributions .. ..	106 16 6			,, Hire of rooms, rent of office and space at Exhibition .. .. . 24 18 9	
	.. Sale of Literature .. .. .	0 17 2			,, Printing .. .. . 8 8 3	
	.. Collections .. .. .	2 14 6			,, Advertisements .. .. . 6 16 0	
	.. Payments for teas .. .. .	4 1 10			,, Press Cuttings .. .. . 3 3 0	
	.. Donations for Congress Expenses .. 24 14 0				,, Donation to "Coming Ministry" .. 1 1 0	
	.. Donations for Office Rent .. .. .	3 2 6			,, Affiliation Fees .. .. . 2 2 0	
	.. Payments for Tickets .. .. .	1 7 6			,, Teas .. .. . 1 8 1	
	.. Interest on Savings Bank a/c. (see Pass Book) .. .. .	0 9 4			<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE. £213 16 11½</b>	

I have examined the foregoing Accounts with relative books and vouchers and find same to be in order.

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A. M. CURRIE,  
21, Churchill Avenue,  
Kenton, Mddx.  
21st November, 1938.

£325 11 3

.. Cash at Bank:			
General Fund	6 11 7		
Special Fund	17 4 8		
	23 16 3		
.. Dep. a/c with P.O. Savings Bank (including interest)	87 9 4		
.. Petty Cash in hand, Sept. 30th, 1938:			
Hon. Treasurer .. .. .	0 5 7		
Secretary .. .. .	0 3 1½		
	111 14 3½		
		<u>£325 11 3</u>	



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*Published by the Anglican Group for the Ordination of Women.*  
*Secretary: MRS. RONALD BEST, 17, Red Lion Square, W.C.1.*

