

AL/2109

ORDINATION OF WOMEN ANGLICAN AD HOC COMMITTEE.

Room 44a,
25 Victoria Street,
London, S. W. 1.

My Lord Bishop,

Many people are aware of the ordination of a Chinese deaconess to the priesthood by the Bishop of Hong Kong in January 1943. It is less generally known, however, that the Bishop's action led, in August 1947, to the presentation by the Diocesan Synod of South China to the General Synod of the Church in China of a Resolution for a proposed new Canon which would authorise the admission of women to the priesthood for an experimental period of twenty years.

News has now reached us that this Resolution has been referred by the General Synod to the Archbishop of Canterbury, as Chairman of the forthcoming Lambeth Conference, together with an enquiry "whether or not such liberty to experiment within the framework of the Anglican Communion would be in accordance with Anglican tradition and order."

We trust that this enquiry will receive a favourable reply from the Bishops assembled at Lambeth. Careful consideration of the whole question of the admission of women to Holy Orders is urgently required, not only in relation to the present situation in China but as a matter of fundamental principle and practical need for the whole Church. It is common knowledge that the Christian Ministry is greatly in need of more recruits of the highest standard of character and ability. It is, also, generally recognised that there are many women with gifts of leadership, intellect and devotion which would be of inestimable value in the ordained service of the Church. Yet, in spite of these facts, the threefold ministry remains uncompromisingly closed to women.

We desire to know upon what grounds the Churches of the Anglican Communion continue to exclude women from the highest service to God and Man. If it is held authoritatively that women are inherently incapable of receiving the grace of Holy Orders - as some objectors declare - we have a right to ask an intelligible reason for an assertion which seems, on the face of it, to be wholly incompatible with any doctrine which is put forward in the name of Christ in whom "there can be neither male nor female". Or, if tradition and order, and supposed expediency, are at the root of this matter, we should be told why these constitute sufficient justification for withholding from a new Age a potential source of new life and power.

We respectfully submit that it is for Authority in the Church to consider these questions and to make known their answers to them, clearly and unequivocally.

I am, on behalf of the Committee,

Your Lordship's obedient servant,

M. Nunburnholme.

Chairman.

with AL/2109

*THE RESOLUTION OF C.H.S.K.H. GENERAL SYNOD
ABOUT THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN

“Resolved that the following resolution be referred to the Archbishop of Canterbury as Chairman of the Lambeth Conference:—

‘Whereas this Synod having received from the Diocese of South China the following proposal for a new Canon of the C.H.S.K.H.; viz., For a period of 20 years only from the adoption of this Canon by General Synod, a deaconess may be ordained to the priesthood, provided that:—

- (1) She has the same theological, spiritual, and pastoral qualifications as are required of a deacon before ordination to the priesthood,
- (2) She is full 30 years old and unmarried, and intends to remain unmarried, and undertakes, should she later find herself called to the vocation of marriage, to return her licence to the Bishop.

This Canon lapses unless re-enacted at the expiration of 20 years from its adoption by General Synod, though women ordained under it shall continue their ministry for the rest of their life-time.’

The General Synod of the C.H.S.K.H. takes no action at this meeting, but refers to the Lambeth Conference at its meeting in 1948 the question whether or not such liberty to experiment within the framework of the Anglican Communion would be in accordance with Anglican tradition and order.”

(The above resolution was passed on August 26th, 1947. The House of Bishops initiated the discussion, and the resolution was concurred by the House of Delegates.)

RONALD HONGKONG.

*Reprinted from “THE OUTPOST.”

ORDINATION OF WOMEN AD HOC COMMITTEE

- Mrs. Corbett Ashby, B.A., LL.D.,
(President of Honour, International Alliance of Women).
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Miss G. M. Ireland Blackburne, S.Th.
Miss C. M. E. Burrows, M.A.,
(Formerly Principal of St. Hilda's College, and of the Society
of Home Students, Oxford: Member of the Archbishops' Com-
mission on the Ministry of Women).
Miss E. M. Chrystal, M.A., S.Th.,
(Tutor in Theology, Newnham College, Cambridge).
Mrs. V. H. Galbraith, M.A., Ph.D.
The Rev. Prof. L. W. Grensted, D.D.,
(Nolloth Professor of the Philosophy of the Christian Religion,
Oxford: Member of the Archbishops' Commission on the
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(Gen. Sec., Association for Moral and Social Hygiene).
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(Lecturer, Westfield College).
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Miss Eleanora Iredale,
(formerly General Secretary, Christian Reconstruction in Europe).
The Rev. H. T. Malaher, M.A.
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Miss Julia Mann, M.A.,
(Principal of St. Hilda's College, Oxford).
The Very Rev. W. R. Matthews, K.C.V.O., D.D., Dean of St. Paul's,
(Member of the Archbishops' Commission on the Ministry of
Women).
The Dowager Lady Nunburnholme,
(Past President of the National Council of Women of Great
Britain; Vice-President of the International Council of Women).
The Rev. Professor C. E. Raven, D.D.,
(Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge University; Master of Christ's
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The Rev. Canon T. Guy Rogers, B.D.,
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Miss Mabel Shaw, O.B.E.,
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The Viscountess Stansgate.
Mrs. J. L. Stocks, B.Sc.,
(Principal of Westfield College, London).
Miss E. M. Verini, M.A.,
(Principal of Cambridge Training College for Women).