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Central Council for Women's Church Work.



SECOND
BULLETIN
1932.

Including
Report of Meeting of the
Central Conference held on
June 29th, 1932.

Pamphlet

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Report of the Forty-fifth Meeting
of the
Central Conference on Women's Church Work.

The forty-fifth meeting of the Central Conference on Women's Church Work was held in the Church Missionary Society Hall, Salisbury Square, E.C. 4 (by kind invitation), on Wednesday, June 29th, 1932. Mrs. Theodore Woods was in the Chair. There was an attendance of sixty-nine, including seven visitors from overseas.

Prayers were said by the Master of the Temple, and Mrs. Woods welcomed new members and overseas visitors on behalf of the Conference.

THE ARTS IN THE SERVICE OF RELIGION.

The subject before the Conference was "The Arts in the Service of Religion," and the first speaker, Mr. Martin Browne, Director of Religious Drama in the Diocese of Chichester, said that during the last generation great strides have been made in the development of religious drama, and that the demand is now so great that there is a danger of undertaking productions without sufficient preparation. For that reason he would welcome the interest and criticism of members of the Conference.

Religious drama, he said, relies upon the power of the eye over the mind to impress things upon the memory. Plays do not make merely a passing emotional impression, for we all have in our minds vivid and unforgettable scenes from plays which have changed our whole view about the side of life with which they deal. It is this power that makes religious drama so important. He was glad that a second diocese had now appointed a Director of Religious Drama. It has been said that through drama religious truth may be brought home afresh, the imagination be healed and stirred, and that the production of a religious play in a right spirit and an excellent form may itself be an offering of worship.

Plays, written by priests and performed under the ægis of the Church, were largely used to teach religion in the Middle Ages. The writers followed the Bible narrative, and these old plays are being increasingly revived to-day because their humanity and simplicity of approach appeal to modern minds. Modern playwrights are using the model of the old mystery plays, with a modern setting, thus bringing home afresh religious truths. Masefield, Housman and others are turning to the Bible for material for plays and poems, and using the actual Bible words. A development from this is the great interest in "choral speaking" of the Bible. It has been found that young people in clubs or village groups delight in learning to speak the Bible in this dramatic way, based on the

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Greek form of solo and chorus—the chorus taking the descriptive parts and the characters the dialogue.*

Showing how religious drama could be made an offering of worship, Mr. Martin Browne said that the aim should be not realism, but the presentation of the Christian approach to the Bible story in such a way that the emotion aroused in the audience would be an urge to them to make the discovery for themselves. There must be a community spirit among the players—they must come to give their services for the setting forth of God's glory. The audience must also share in this act of worship, and therefore the audience is being more and more brought into the play. This contact between play and audience is helped by the use of the mediæval open stage, and this is really a most modern theatrical practice, as in the newest theatres the proscenium frame is being abolished. Acting in church is felt by some people to be a mistake, and it can only be justified if what goes on is so linked with the services that the play becomes an extension of regular worship, and not alien to it. It is certainly wrong to set up a theatre stage in church. The day may come when we shall see stories dramatically portrayed, instead of being merely read as part of the ordinary services of the Church. The development of drama would give many young people an active part in the worship of the Church, and this is one of its great possibilities—the provision of an avenue of worship for many people who have not had one before, as well as being a means of giving life to the truths of religion.

Miss Carol Graham spoke next on Indian Music and Drama in the Telegu country. She said that the Telegu people were of Dravidian origin and were extremely musical and dramatic. Drama takes a very large part in the native religious life. It generally contains a great deal of soliloquy in recitative. It seldom lasts less than five hours, beginning about 11 p.m. and going on till early morning. Religious drama is being used in the Christian Church. The Diocesan Missioner wrote two plays, one on Amos and the other on Jeremiah. These were performed first by people of some education. Later a play on the Queen of Sheba—a drama with interludes of explanation—was written as a picture of the search for God. This was written for and performed by a group of men and women belonging to the Sudra caste, most of whom were quite illiterate and the women so shy that they could not even answer questions in class. The play lasted about three hours, and it was done in many parts of the diocese. After the players had dispersed to their villages and some months had passed, Miss Graham found the same play being performed in a village, the whole cast having been taught word by word and note by note by a man and his wife who had been in the original play. At first it

* See "Choral Speaking of the Bible," published by The Religious Drama Society, 26, Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, E.C. 4. Price 6d.

was assumed that no woman would act and that the plays could not be done in church. The St. Joseph in a Nativity play, however, volunteered one day to allow his wife to take the part of the Virgin. Later all the players came in a body and asked that the play might be performed in church, and thus was prejudice broken down. With one play they toured the villages, Miss Graham and another European going by car with the properties, and all the men in the cast walking or going by bullock cart. In each village two women were chosen to take the parts of the Virgin and St. Elizabeth.

A very common form of indigenous play is the Kalakshepam, a one-man oratorio, in which the story is told in recitative, chorus and aria. The story-teller's mate gives comic turns at intervals as an interlude. This method of story-telling is now being used by Christians for Bible stories. At first the comic interludes were included, but these often took the form of poking fun at the Brahmans or Mohammedans, and gradually the people have come to feel that they are out of place, so orchestral music is being introduced instead. A number of gramophone records have been made, and the "tune-box" is in great demand, drawing crowds to hear the Bible stories.

Miss Graham then spoke of native music, and said that in only one church in the diocese are English tunes and translated English hymns used. In all the others Telegu tunes are used, and the words put into the Telegu lyric form. The villagers know the whole service by heart and their singing is accompanied by cymbals and other native instruments. Miss Graham sang in Telegu to the native tunes a children's song of praise, a prayer for parents used on Mothering Sunday, and the Gloria in Excelsis.

Miss Dorothy Maud also spoke on Religious Drama.

At the afternoon session, after Miss Sibyl Thesiger had explained the Church Assembly Pensions Scheme for Deaconesses and salaried Lay Workers, and Mrs. Temple had spoken on recent activities of the Central Council, Mr. Martin Shaw addressed the Conference on Church Music.

He said that in the far-off days the Arts *were* the Church—the Church herself created all art, for folk music and dancing were not strictly speaking art. The first thing the Church did in musical creation was to take over from the Greeks a vague system of tonality and from it create plainsong—the only system of music ever invented in which the words play the principal part, and the music is a fluid structure which can be adapted to the words. Plainsong was a very great musical achievement. In an Anglican chant words and music are often in conflict, and, because the chant invariably wins, violence is done to the words.

For a time all the great musical composers were in the service of the Church. Then gradually the arts and the Church became divorced. During the eighteenth century music in England was moribund, if not dead. By the nineteenth century artists and the Church had become quite separated. The Oxford movement, however, brought much devoted endeavour to the revival of the arts in the Church. Art expresses the environment of the time, and it suffered in the comfortable days of the early nineteenth century. It thrives best on adversity, as we see when we compare the work of Beethoven, a struggling, poor man, with that of Mendelssohn, the son of a banker, living in comfortable circumstances. Mendelssohn did not reach the heights which Beethoven reached. During the nineteenth century we had no great composers; we were content to steal from our neighbours, and we borrowed the style of our Church music from Mendelssohn, Spohr, Gounod, Handel—and took the worst from each. Our only bright spots were the two Wesleys, and later came Stanford, who led a revival. He saw that what would not be tolerated in a concert hall should not be tolerated in church, and strove for strength and simplicity.

With regard to Church music to-day, Mr. Shaw urged first that hymns containing the too-popular chords of the diminished seventh and the augmented sixth should be avoided. These melting and luscious chords appear too often in church hymn-books. He then gave four points to be considered in judging a hymn-tune: (1) It should have an interesting melodic outline—the curves of a good tune when drawn on a blackboard look well. (2) The bass should move. Too often the bass in hymn tunes consists of one note held almost continuously—a simple way of making harmonies, but dull. (3) The harmonies should be strong, simple, sincere, and not luscious. (4) The melody should be diatonic rather than chromatic. Bearing these four points in mind, judgment can be exercised.

Mr. Shaw pleaded that the new thing should not be opposed just because it is new. Too little is thought of the young England which is to be. For the sake of those who will come after let us say, "Even if I do not like this tune, experts tell me it is good, and I will not oppose it, for the sake of those who will come after me."

It was announced that the next meeting of the Conference would be on October 27th.

N.B.—Those interested in religious drama can obtain advice and lists of plays from the Religious Drama Society, 26, Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, E.C. 4. Colleges, schools, dramatic societies, and other groups can become corporate members of the Society. Individuals may, of course, also become members.

THE NEED FOR MORAL WELFARE WORKERS.

Moral Welfare Work is now everywhere acknowledged as an integral part of the Church's work and the responsibility of all Churchpeople. "A great change has come over the whole climate of this enterprise in recent years. It is no longer lowering, lugubrious and negative; it is positive, hopeful and adventurous. And, therefore, it is far more efficient." (Lambeth Conference Report, 1930). The need for such work was never greater than it is to-day. At home and abroad changing standards of morality and the challenge to the Christian standard make the work imperative, both on the remedial and on the educational side.

On the remedial side it has been much influenced by the Probation System and by the methods employed in "Child Guidance," with the result that every effort is now made to help the individual in trouble to become an independent citizen. There is much more co-operation than formerly with other social agencies, because it is realised that sex difficulties are frequently symptomatic of other troubles or of some stage in the development of the individual. Efforts are more and more being made to help people in their own surroundings, and this involves the need of many more workers in both town and country districts. At the same time conditions in Training Homes have changed with the times, the old "Penitentiary" has gone, the great aim being the re-formation of character so that the girl may be able to make good in ordinary life; this requires real solid training, with healthy recreation and the development of the sense of responsibility.

The unmarried girl who expects to become a mother often needs an entire change of surroundings for some months, and her baby will need loving care with its mother for, if possible, the first six months of its life. Mother and Baby Homes are attempting to fill this need, and often have the co-operation and support of the Public Health Authorities, who realise that help in such cases can only be transitory unless it is founded on Christian principles and the regeneration of character.

There is increasing recognition of the need of work for men, and by men, to tackle the other half of the problem.

Educational work, founded on the study of elementary biology, physiology and psychology of sex, and inspired by Christian ideals, includes a careful preparation for life of children and girls in Homes, the giving of individual advice when it is desired, the holding of discussion groups on the subject of human relationships and social responsibilities, more especially for those concerned with the guidance of young people, such as parents, teachers, Club Leaders, Girl Guide officers and Scoutmasters. We are convinced that sex teaching, as a rule, should be given by parents, teachers, or

those who are in close touch with the young people, and moral welfare workers should have such knowledge as will enable them to help these people rather than to give sex education themselves. The opportunities for such educational work are increasing. Young people are aware of great perplexity and lack of leadership in these matters, and they are asking for definite teaching on the value and place of sex in life.

Overseas, too, the help of moral welfare workers is increasingly being sought. There are new problems in remedial work in the East, where women are being released from their age-long subjection to men. There are new problems and opportunities in those parts of the world where the regulation of vice is being given up, and the victims of that system are in dire need of help and advice. There is great scope for work in educating public opinion in those places where such regulation of vice still exists. The wonderful advance made in the last few years gives real inspiration and hope to all workers abroad.

As the scope and opportunities are great, so is the range of education and experience needed in women who will take up this work. Those who have been teachers or nurses; those who have done social work of any kind in Settlements, clubs, or with Girl Guides and other organisations; those who without much of this background have domestic gifts, with real sympathy and a desire to help; any of these may have a vocation to moral welfare work. Missionaries, too, find a knowledge of moral welfare work a real help to them in their work overseas.

The work is obviously specialised, and calls for training in the particular problems involved, and also in the knowledge of all those other branches of social work with which co-operation is essential. This training can be obtained at the Josephine Butler Memorial House, 6, Abercromby Square, Liverpool, or at St. Agnes House, 3, The Sweep, Clapham, S.W.4. The course is, normally, either for one or two years.

Conditions of work and rates of remuneration compare favourably with those obtaining in other forms of social work. The salaries attaching to resident posts vary from £60 to £100, and to non-resident posts from £200 to £300. The need is great, the opportunities are great, and the work, once undertaken, is found to be full of hope, interest and happiness.

S. E. PINNEY

(Warden of Josephine Butler Memorial House.)

CARE COMMITTEE WORK ON THE NEW HOUSING ESTATES.

For all those who are striving to build a new Jerusalem, work among children and young people on the New Housing Estates brings fresh hopes for the realisation of cherished visions. Voluntary Work on School Care Committees is one way of joining in this service that may well appeal to readers.

Children in the London County Council area have had the help of the Care Committees attached to each elementary school since 1908. These Committees exist to carry on, in co-operation with the teachers, such social work as the children in the school may require. This definition may sound wide, but the implications are wider still. With the recognition of the sacredness of the individual personality, however stunted and warped it may have become, we are compelled to attempt some understanding of the environment in which it has developed; in other words, we cannot deal with the child as a unit apart from his family group. Thus the Care Committee have their attention drawn first to specific difficulties that may concern the child, and, secondly, to the more fundamental problems that may be presented by his home. The main categories into which Care Work falls show the kind of introduction that the Care Committee is likely to have to a particular child:—the feeding of necessitous children, the following up of school medical inspections, and the guidance and social supervision of children who are on the threshold of industry. Space does not permit of much amplification here. Suffice it to say that the Care Committee is a considerable educational factor in the homes, and a source of friendship and constructive help for any child or parent that asks for this.

Turning, then, to consider Care Committee work on the new estates in the light of these wide possibilities, we find it a wonderful field for voluntary service under the Education Authority. For the educational aspect of the work is intensified here from the very nature of the case. On these estates we find families often migrated from thickly populated areas for reasons of health and overcrowding, trying to adjust themselves to conditions of life that are wholly unfamiliar to them. In their previous locality the man probably lived near to his work and paid a low rent for accommodation that was grossly inadequate, with no domestic amenities of any kind. Nevertheless, cramping as such an existence was to health and individuality, there were the compensations of the abundant life of the streets, the companionship of neighbours, and the fairly generous supply of spare cash with which to indulge in "extras." Transplanted to the comparative silence and spaciousness of the new estate, the family becomes the tenant of a pleasant small house of adequate size, equipped with labour-saving appliances. But the

rent necessarily absorbs a higher proportion of the income than formerly, the payment for heat and a satisfactory supply of light eats heavily into the budget, and fares to work become a more considerable commitment. The mother may find herself living between neighbours of a superior artisan class, who "keep themselves to themselves," and, in spite of the joys of the fresh air and the self-contained home, the family may feel a longing to regain the warmth and aroma of, say, Mile End, with its far more prolific social resources.

So it may happen that the Care Committee visitor, paying a first call because Tommy's teeth want treatment, or Mary keeps on being late for school with a variety of improbable explanations, will find, as he or she makes friends with the mother, that the real problem in the home may be one of actual adjustment to the new environment, and the weight of the Care Committee must be thrown into helping the family to face up to the possibilities of their new existence, strengthening their determination to rise to the level of their surroundings, instead of bringing the slovenly ways of the old home into the new.

Although only a brief reference can be made to the claims of adolescent boys and girls, the need to devote more time and thought to their manifold problems is one which confronts every school Care Committee under the heading of "After-Care." The need for more workers among these young people either in clubs or among individuals cannot be exaggerated.

If this brief survey can attract new voluntary workers to join the Care Committees, particularly on the new estates, it will indeed have justified its place in this Bulletin. Here is a real opportunity for members of the Church to co-operate in serving the children whom God especially commends to our care. Their reward will be a deeper sense of fellowship, both with the human family and with God.

A. M. MAY

(*Care Committee Visitor, Eltham*).

C. E. YOUNGMAN

(*Chairman of Downham Care Committee*).

(Names of volunteers will be welcomed by the Education Officer, County Hall, Westminster Bridge, S.E. 1, or will be passed on by the Secretary, Room 25, Church House, Westminster, S.W. 1.)

OVERSEAS REPORT.

We have heard from our correspondents in the dioceses of Alabama, Arkansas, Atlanta, Cape Town, Colorado, Eastern Oregon, Fond du Lac, Kansas, Long Island, Milwaukee, Mississippi, Newfoundland, New Jersey, New Westminster, North Carolina, Ohio, South Dakota, South Western Tennessee, Western Massachusetts and Western New York. A new correspondent, Miss Florence Hyde, has been appointed for Washington.

U.S.A.—The numerous and interesting reports that we have received from the Women's Auxiliary in the United States tell of many activities, and, in common with the rest of the world, of grave anxieties. The Triennial Convention of the W.A. was evidently felt to be a real source of inspiration. Our correspondents write of it with enthusiasm. The United Thankoffering presentation marked a high point of the whole convention. Over 2,000 women attended the early Eucharist, at which their offering, amounting to \$1,059,575 for the missionary work of the Church was made. It is interesting to know that the golden alms basin was given in 1852 "to the Church in America by members of the University of Oxford in connection with the Jubilee of the S.P.G." It was used to receive the first thankoffering of the W.A. in 1889, when one woman missionary was supported and one mission church in Alaska built. In 1931 nearly 200 women missionaries are supported, and churches and schools in all parts of the mission field.

ALABAMA.—From Alabama we hear of a joint effort for inter-racial work, undertaken by the W.A. at the suggestion of the Presbyterian Synod, with other Christian bodies. The aims are "to assist in establishing in Negro communities well conducted Bible Classes with white teachers; a community project to employ caretakers for pre-school age and primary Negro children while their mothers are employed in our homes; that we encourage special Negro clinics to suppress and control diseases which are increasingly dominant in our Negro population; that we learn to spell Negro with a capital 'N,' and that we avoid any substitute for that word."

ATLANTA has celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary. Among much excellent work being carried on in the diocese by the W.A. it mentions "especially the co-operation with welfare organisations and the work in the prisons and jails, juvenile courts, detention homes and related institutions. This type of Christian social service is growing tremendously."

LONG ISLAND is carrying on a very active campaign in the distribution of books, magazines, pictures, music, by its Church Periodical Club, not only in the States, but in Japan, China and other parts of the mission field.

NORTH CAROLINA has had the happiness of keeping its Golden Jubilee. It coincided with the 82nd birthday of the much loved Bishop of the diocese, Dr. Blunt Cheshire, who for nearly forty years has been the directing hand of all the charitable and benevolent work carried on.

WESTERN NEW YORK has also celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. Fifty-four of the original members were alive when the jubilee meeting at Rochester was held, and thirteen of them were present. This diocese in a later report says, "It is an interesting fact that there were more women enrolled in the groups studying 'Religious Thinking of To-day' than in any other, showing that we really do want to think about our religion in order to interpret it to ourselves in terms of modern thought, to discover ways to help others, and to find practical suggestions for making more effective that 'beloved community' which we know as the Church."

NEWS FROM THE CENTRAL COUNCIL.

ARCHBISHOPS' COMMISSION ON THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH.

At the request of the Council resolutions were moved in the Upper Houses of the Convocations of Canterbury and York asking that the theological principles governing the Church's development of the Ministry of Women might be defined. As a result the Archbishops' Commission on the Ministry of Women in the Church has been appointed, and is now at work. The Commission consists of the following members: The Bishop of Carlisle (Chairman); the Bishop of Rochester, the Bishop of Blackburn, the Bishop of Southwark, the Dean of Exeter (the Very Rev. W. R. Mathews, D.D.), the Archdeacon of Auckland (the Ven. A. E. J. Rawlinson, D.D.), Canon L. W. Grensted, D.D. (Oriel Professor of the Philosophy of Religion, Oxford), Canon J. K. Mozley, D.D., Mr. Cyril Bailey (Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford), Deaconess Margaret Wordsworth, Lady Hoskyns, Miss Christine Burrows and Miss Dorothy Swayne.

THE LICENSING AND COMMISSIONING OF WOMEN WORKERS.

The Council has repeatedly been asked for guidance in regard to the practice of giving Bishops' Licences and Commissions to women. It has therefore issued suggestions as to the conditions under which women could, in its opinion, suitably be Licensed or Commissioned, and as to the use of various terms such as "Recognition," "Authorisation," and "Approval." This paper may be obtained from the Secretary free of charge.

PAMPHLET ON OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICE.

A pamphlet entitled "Opportunities for Service" (price 1d.) has been published by the Council, in order to give in a concise form some particulars of the various kinds of work in connection with the Church of England which are now open to women. Brief notes on the training necessary, and the salaries offered, are given under each head.

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COUNCIL.

When the Inter-Diocesan Council for Women's Work, the Advisory Council for Women's Work for the Church, and the Central Conference on Women's Church Work were amalgamated in 1930, a proportionate number of members were appointed by each body for a period of two years, at the end of which time the permanent constitution of the Council was to come into operation. The present membership will come to an end on December 31st, and the first meeting of the new Council will be held in March, 1933. According to the new Constitution the membership of the Council will in future be as follows:

Two Bishops from each Province, appointed by the Archbishops; two representatives, appointed by each Diocesan Board or Council of Women's Work; one representative, appointed by the Bishop of each Diocese in which no Board or Council exists; fifteen of the Council's Assessors, appointed by the whole number of Assessors in office at the time of election; co-opted members up to twenty, chosen so as to include representatives of any departments of women's work which are not sufficiently represented by the above.

CONFERENCE WITH HEADS OF TRAINING CENTRES.

The Training and Examinations Committee held a Conference with the Heads and members of the staffs of training centres, on June 9th, to consider the selection of students for training in relation to the needs in the dioceses. No "recognised" training centre was unrepresented and the discussion was both interesting and useful. A good number of the Assessors were present as members of the Training Committee, and the luncheon interval gave them an opportunity for meeting tutors and lecturers.

WEEK-END AT SOUTHWELL.

By kind invitation of the Bishop of Southwell and Mrs. Mosley, eleven secretaries of Diocesan Boards of Women's Work met for an informal week-end Conference at Bishop's Manor, Southwell, from May 27th to 30th. A variety of subjects was discussed and the opportunity for pooling experience and for unhurried discussion of problems was welcomed by all those present.

NOTES FROM THE DIOCESES.

BIRMINGHAM.—The Birmingham Diocesan Board of Women's Work, in common with the Diocesan Council of Youth, has for several years been conscious of the fact that many people to-day, though wishing to devote their spare time to the service of their city or parish, do not know how to set about doing it. Information is often desired as to where service can be of most value, and where training for such service can be received. To help these people a joint committee, consisting of representatives from both the Councils referred to above, together with one or two co-opted members, has published a booklet (price 6d.) containing many practical suggestions, and showing how many varying forms their work can take. As the pamphlet has been compiled by members of the Church of England the scheme has been evolved on Church lines, but it is capable of expansion. A Central Bureau has been established where those willing to help are given opportunities for service. The joint secretaries are the Secretary of the Board of Women's Work and the Secretary of the Council for Youth, and the Bureau functions largely at present through the office of the Board of Women's Work, because of its central position. There is close co-operation between this "*ad hoc*" committee and the civic committee dealing with the follow-up of the Prince of Wales' appeal for social service. The response both parochially and centrally has been promising, and it is clear that not only the younger people but older ones also, with definite talents to offer, are glad to find some channels of service hitherto unknown to them. Those who have almost ceased to hope for additional volunteers have been encouraged by fresh offers of help.

BRADFORD.—An important step forward affecting the work of the Bradford Diocesan Advisory Council for Women's Work was taken at the Diocesan Conference on June 8th, when the Church Assembly scheme for pensions for Deaconesses and salaried Lay Workers was formally adopted. In future, therefore, all women workers under 40, holding the Bishop's Licence, will be eligible for pension, and one great source of anxiety for their future will be removed.

ROCHESTER.—A Diocesan Association of Women Lay Workers has recently been formed in conjunction with the Diocesan Board of Women's Work. All women Lay Workers holding the Bishop's Commission or Licence are members of the Association, of which the Bishop is President, and the Rev. O. Hardman, D.D., Warden. On July 16th the Bishop of Rochester held the first service of Admission and Licensing in the Cathedral, when one woman received a Diocesan Commission and nine others received Licences.

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