

Church work

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WOMEN'S SERVICE
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WOMEN AND THE CHURCH.

A Statement and an Appeal
by the

Central Council for Women's Church Work.

(Formed in 1930, and seeking support from every Diocese in the Provinces of
Canterbury and York.)

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"Many women to-day hardly regard the Church as a possible
sphere for their gifts and capacities the primary need
on all sides is a larger vision of what Church-work is and
should be, together with a clearer sense of vocation."

—The Lambeth Conference of 1930.

THE STATEMENT.

The general education of women has advanced in a way that would
hardly have seemed possible fifty years ago. They take their place in
the life of universities, most careers are open to them, and in these they
have served with distinction. They sit in legislative and municipal assem-
blies. But we have to face the fact that while the door leading to the
higher general education of women has been flung open so widely, and
the incentive to enter and seek the way to fresh advantages, opportunities,
and indeed, adventures, is greater than ever before, the same cannot be
said with regard to religious education as such, or with regard to oppor-
tunities of work in direct connection with the Church. We would quote
with special reference to women the following statement of the recent
Lambeth Conference :—

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13.3.31. Given by Min. H. B. Paxton 24411

"But more significant is the increasing consciousness of thoughtful men and women that the emancipations which they have lately won do not yield deep or lasting satisfactions; that selfishness is self-defeating; that the heart of modern life, with all its exuberance of interest, is disquietingly void of conviction, and that once again experience proves personal happiness to be, in fact, and not merely in pious word, linked with spiritual ideals, and with moral standards and endeavours. . . . It is in view of such facts and circumstances, that we declare our belief that the Church is at this time being called to fresh effort to proclaim to all men, at once more thoughtfully and more ardently, the Gospel of God with which it has been entrusted."

And while this work of witness must be equally shared by men and women, it is with women and their qualifications and training for this great task that we are immediately concerned.

1. Every year a number of girls leave school, of whom a few live at home for a time, without having formed any definite plans for their future, while the majority take up some sort of work, in many cases without knowledge of the growing opportunities for service in the Kingdom of God. Some of these girls are in touch with the life of the Church, but many have small opportunity of securing direction in their reading, or of religious education in its fuller sense.

To meet this need, the Central Council has a scheme for directing the reading of such girls, with the object of helping them to gain the knowledge that will enable them to fulfil this work of witness in their home, their social, and their business life. Every diocese that is federated to the Central Council is asked to appoint a Correspondent to the Home Study Scheme, whose duty it will be to get into touch with those who would welcome this help, and in some cases the scheme may help to serve as a preliminary preparation for whole-time work for the Church.

2. Women are giving their services to Church and State in many ways, as Teachers, Welfare Workers, Health Visitors, Nurses, Club Leaders, Probation Officers, Social and Parish Workers; but only by thought, prayer, and study, can they be qualified to meet the questions on faith and morals which will confront them in their work, and be mentally and spiritually fitted to fulfil their vocation. To this end, wherever there is a Diocesan Board or Council for Women's Work, it will be their

aim to provide Courses of Lectures, Refresher Courses, Retreats and Conferences, and to organise the lending of books. The Central Council will encourage and assist this work in all possible ways.

3. There is an imperative need for women, both paid and voluntary, who will give their time to trained work for the Church. The Central Council has for its aim the raising of the whole standard of such work. The alert brain, the disciplined life, and the power to learn which comes of a trained mind are instruments as necessary to the Church's service as to any other. For the past ten years the Church has, through the Inter-Diocesan Council for Women's Work (I.D.C.), now the Training Committee of the Central Council, indicated certain lines on which intending workers may train their powers, according to the type of service they hope to give, and offers Certificates of Recognition to those who qualify.

The headings or Branches in which at present these Certificates are given to those who qualify in two or more of them are: Biblical and Theological Knowledge, Pastoral and Evangelistic Work, Social Work, including Rescue and Preventive Work, Club Leadership, etc.; Educational Work, and Health Work. Fuller information can be obtained from the Secretary to the Central Council.

The Central Council, through its Training Committee, assists Diocesan Boards of Women's Work by inspecting Training Centres, and much has been done to improve the status of the woman Church Worker and the general regard in which she is held.

4. The Central Conference on Women's Church Work, which was an outcome of the Women's Pan-Anglican Committee of 1908, has for more than twenty years provided opportunity for women Church Workers both at home and overseas to confer together about their problems, and to gain information about new developments and activities. The Central Council has made itself responsible for the continuation of this Conference.

THE APPEAL.

It should be abundantly clear that, in order to carry out so comprehensive a scheme of education as that outlined above, a definite income is required. We have to maintain an office at the Church House, with

Secretary and clerk. Printing and stationery are considerable, and certain expenses in connection with examinations have to be incurred. It is estimated that a sum of £800 a year is required. Towards this we receive about £200 from sixteen dioceses, and the discrepancy between the amount required and the amount received is very serious. It would surely be disastrous if this work that has been built up during many years by patient voluntary effort, should have to be abandoned through lack of funds.

WILL YOU HELP US TO MAINTAIN IT?

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Overseas Correspondent : Mrs. Henry Knight.

GENERAL SECRETARY.

Miss H. B. Paxton,
Room 25,
The Church House,
Westminster,

Telephone : Victoria 0309.

to whom all communications should be addressed, and who is always ready to give advice on training and qualifications.

Contributions may be sent to the Hon. Treasurer at Room 25, The Church House ; or at Barclays Bank, 95, Victoria Street, S.W. 1.