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Central Council for Women's Church Work, 1930.

A Short Survey of Beginnings, Growth and Work.

The year 1930 marks a new stage in women's service for the Church. In that year the Central Council for Women's Church Work was constituted, and thus there was in existence for the first time, a body representative of women's work in general that could present a statement to the Lambeth Conference. The Council was able to undertake this important task, and to deal with various aspects of women's work as a consolidating, representative and executive body, which owed its origin to three earlier and well-tested movements.

BEGINNINGS AND GROWTH.

These movements had their origin in 1908, the year of the Pan-Anglican Congress. The unity of the Church, both at home and overseas, was demonstrated by the Congress, and intercourse as a means of promoting this unity became both more practicable and of increasing value. A Central Conference on Women's Church Work was instituted, at which women representing activities at home and abroad met twice yearly to confer on matters of outstanding interest. Powerfully supported and encouraged, this Conference has continued its work for over twenty years.

In 1929 it became apparent that there was need for consolidation. Other movements had arisen which at first had run parallel, but, in their expansion, had begun to converge and even to overlap.

The first of these was diocesan in scope. Within the dioceses new life was stirring; attention was being concentrated on the diocese as the unit of Church organisation. Also, fresh importance and weight had been added to all diocesan enterprises, when, under the Constitution of the Church Assembly (1919), Diocesan Conferences were placed on a constitutional basis. New emphasis fell naturally on women's work in the dioceses, in some of which Boards of Women's Work had already been formed to secure that workers in the parishes were well-qualified to meet the requirements caused by the advance of education. Women so qualified were at last recognised as entitled to be given a satisfactory status and adequate pay.

To promote such aims the Inter-Diocesan Council for Women's Church Work was formed, whereby Dioceses were helped in a common effort to secure definite standards of training and to grade

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SECRETARIES OF
DIOCESAN BOARDS OF WOMEN'S WORK
CO-OPERATING WITH THE COUNCIL.

- London.**—Mrs. FORBES, 33, Bedford Square, W.C. 1.
- Winchester.**—Miss COLE, 21, Castons Road, Basingstoke.
- Birmingham.**—Miss D. W. GIBSON, 193, Portland Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham.
- Bradford.**—Miss M. C. LAW, 28, Victor Road, Manningham, Bradford.
- Chelmsford.**—Miss S. M. BABER, The Church House, Stratford, E. 15.
- Durham.**—Deaconess LUCY GIBB, 3, Palatine View, Durham.
- Liverpool.**—Head Deaconess FLORENCE TURNBULL, 8, Princes Avenue, Liverpool.
- Manchester.**—Miss GIBBON, Room 34, Church House, 90, Deansgate, Manchester.
- Newcastle.**—Head Deaconess ETHEL BOWDEN, Diocesan Deaconess House, South Ashfield, Gloucester Terrace, Newcastle-on-Tyne.
- Rochester.**—Miss G. WARNE, Stoke Cottage, Borstal, Rochester.
- St. Albans.**—Miss I. CÆSAR, Galleycroft, Hatfield, Herts.
- Southwark.**—Miss C. WILMOT, 129, Kennington Road, S.E. 11.
- Southwell.**—Miss M. STONEHOUSE, 87A, Forest Road W., Nottingham.
- Derby.**—Miss PENFOLD, Sterndale House, Litton, nr. Buxton, Derbyshire.
- Canterbury.**—Miss SCARTH, Charing, Kent.
- Chichester.**—Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Garry-na-Greena, Summersdale, Chichester.

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the qualifications of workers. Schemes of training were produced and existing Training Houses were invited to co-operate by submitting their syllabus and test-papers to the Council's Assessors. The Council undertook to visit such Training Houses, and over twenty Centres were "recognised" as suitable for training in different kinds of work.

Where existing examinations failed to meet the need, the Council instituted central tests in theology and pastoral subjects, to provide an objective for study for those who were already at work but wished to qualify for the Council's Certificate.

In a growing number of dioceses the Bishop now requires that a woman worker shall hold this Certificate before she is eligible for his Licence.


This work could not be carried on without organising and secretarial help, which gradually increased beyond the possibilities of part-time service, and at the end of 1927 a small central office was established, with a secretary and half-time clerk.

The second noticeable development was general in scope. The constitution of the Central Conference did not permit it to be more than a half-yearly Conference; yet as its work went on, the need for some permanent body, watching over the developments and exploring the needs of the whole range of women's work for the Church, seemed to be proved. The Inter-Diocesan Council had also encountered problems such as those of recruiting, pay, status and general care for the worker, with which as a Training body it was not constituted to deal.

Therefore, in 1927, the Advisory Council for Women's Service to the Church was formed. In a brief space of time the Council discovered a large field of activity outside the proper scope of the two other movements, and also collected and communicated much information.

These three movements, each originating in an explicit but not sectional need, moved towards fusion, and without loss of ideal in any direction, consolidation under one Council took place last spring. Simplicity of organisation, economy of time and money, and more efficient work have already resulted.

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Archbishop of Canterbury, having special reference to the Lambeth Conference Resolutions of 1920 dealing with the Ministry of Women. This report made a survey of the nature and organisation of women's work in the home Church, of the training, pay and scope available for women workers, and touched on the developments in the great Societies working among women and girls. (Copies of this Report can be had on application to the office.)

Another feature of the first year was the invitation given by the members of the Conference to the wives of the overseas Bishops to be their guests at a conference held at Westfield College during the Lambeth Conference. Forty-three were present, together with some of those who are doing expert work for the Church at home. The visitors expressed great appreciation of the help gained through the instruction and fellowship of those days.

A further outstanding event of the year was the invitation to the Council from the Diocese of Liverpool to hold its autumn meetings there. A special service was arranged in the Cathedral, a Civic Reception given at the Town Hall, and a Public Meeting held under the Chairmanship of the Bishop was addressed by Viscountess Bridgeman and Miss Sibyl Thesiger. At a luncheon given by Sir Benjamin Johnson the aims of the Council were explained to some of the leading clergy and laity of the Diocese. At the meeting of the Conference addresses were given on the Lambeth Conference Report by the Bishops of Lichfield and Middleton, and the Bishop of Liverpool indicated some of the plans for the extension to the laity of the work of the Way of Renewal. As a result of the meetings the work of the Council became known to a much wider public; and the Liverpool Board of Women's Work, in addition to the generous hospitality provided, has promised to raise the sum of £100 for the work of the Council in 1931.

Important as these events are, in the first ten months of the Council's life, they are only additional to the regular work for which the Council is now responsible as its inheritance from the three previous Societies. At present the heaviest part of this is the maintenance of the Training Scheme, and the Council owes a debt of gratitude to its Assessors, who have given generously of their time and expert knowledge in the matter of training schemes and