

The United Church of Canada

RECORD *of*
PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

TWENTIETH
GENERAL COUNCIL

September, 1962

METROPOLITAN UNITED CHURCH
LONDON, ONTARIO

ISSUED BY

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA

GENERAL COUNCIL OFFICE

85 ST. CLAIR AVENUE EAST

TORONTO 7, ONTARIO

COMMITTEE ON WOMEN CANDIDATES FOR WORK IN THE CHURCH OTHER THAN THE ORDAINED MINISTRY

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A Brief Review

From 1946 until March 1960 the responsibility for receiving applications from and enquiring into the suitability of women candidates was in the hands of the "Personnel Committee for Women Workers", with representation from the Woman's Missionary Society, the Committee on the Diaconess Order and Women Workers, and the United Church Training School. In March, 1960, when the Executive of General Council formed the Inter-Board Committee on Recruiting for Church Vocations, the Personnel Committee went out of existence, and asked that some arrangement be made regarding the handling of applications. In response to this request, an Interim Committee on Applications was established.

A proposal regarding the receiving, supervision, designation, and settlement of women candidates for work in the church other than the ordained ministry was brought to the Executive of General Council in February, 1961. The Committee on Women Candidates was appointed and authorized by the Executive of General Council to study the Proposal and to report with recommendations to the General Council in 1962. The Committee was named as follows:

Dr. John R. Leng (Chairman)	Miss Margery Stelck
Rev. Allen R. Huband	Rev. Gordon Lapp
Miss Esther Highfield	Miss Anne Ward
Miss Harriet Christie	Mrs. W. J. Campion
Rev. Wesley A. Morris	Rev. W. N. Blackmore
Rev. F. G. Brisbin	Miss Lois Boast
Dr. H. W. Vaughan	Dr. A. J. Cooper
Rev. James Ormiston (appt'd Feb. '62)	Miss Wilna Thomas (appt'd Feb. '62)

The Committee on Women Candidates has met six times since September 13, 1961. A progress report was given to the Executive of General Council on Wednesday, February 7, 1962.

Terms of Reference

It is now true that most women who are graduates of the United Church Training School became Diaconesses. We recognize that there will always be those who prefer not to relate themselves to an Order or Church Court as a member of a body of trained women church workers. Our concern in this report is for those who are Diaconesses, and those who seek training to become Diaconesses and are willing to accept the discipline of the church as members of the Diaconess Order.

Training and Work

In our Canadian church life, the full-time work of trained women has been an established fact for at least sixty years. Prior to Church Union, training was given in the Methodist and the Presbyterian Churches and women were appointed to undertake various duties. Since 1926, women have continued to receive train-

ing at the United Church Training School—now the national School for this purpose—and have been appointed to serve the church in a variety of tasks.

Through the years the scope of this work has changed with the extension of the church's life and witness. The variety of service is represented in the following areas:

Church Extension	Hospital Visiting
Christian Education in an urban or suburban church	Downtown church work
Educational work overseas	Teaching in Indian Schools
Audio-visuals	Evangelistic work overseas
Port Work	Church Institutions
Community	Editorial
	Rural work in a larger parish community
Administration	Field Work in Christian Education

Because of the variety of work, the responsibility for selecting, training, and employing women candidates takes on a special significance.

Screening

Effective screening should be maintained. We are aware that the effectiveness of the screening procedure for candidates for the ordained ministry varies in practice now from one Presbytery to another. We are convinced that the whole church should be concerned with the receiving, training, and settlement of women candidates. We are agreed that future screening procedures should be similar to those now in use in the Interim Committee on Applications for Women Workers.

(Application, six references, a medical report, a transcript of the academic record, a recent photograph, and a statement of the applicant's growth in understanding of the Christian faith and life.)

We see value in maintaining three steps, involving the Session, a national Central Committee, and Presbytery.

1st step—The candidate presents her application to the Session in the church where she has her membership

2nd step—The candidate sends her personal application to a Central Committee (national)

3rd step—The summary of the application and references together with the considered opinion of the Central Committee about the suitability of the candidate is sent to the Presbytery Committee on Colleges & Students. The Presbytery makes the final decision.

Supervision, Designation and Settlement

If the woman candidate is received as a responsible participant in the life and work of the Church to train for leadership as a Diaconess, she should be responsible to and under the discipline of the Courts of the Church. In turn, it follows that the Courts of the Church should be responsible for her supervision as a candidate, and for her designation and settlement as a Diaconess. Furthermore, the Diaconess should assume responsibility in the Courts of the Church through membership in these Courts.

Recommendations

We therefore recommend:

1. That the Courts of the Church assume responsibility for receiving, supervising, designating, and settlement of women candidates for work in the church other than the ordained ministry;

2. That applications from women who seek to be fully trained and designated as Deaconesses be

(a) sent to the Session of the congregation in which the applicant has her membership,

(b) to a national Central Committee for inquiring into the suitability of the applicant, and

(c) thence to the Presbytery for final decision regarding the applicant's suitability for work in the Church and for her reception as a candidate for training to become a Deaconess;

3. That the procedure for supervising and designating women candidates and their settlement as Deaconesses follow the procedure for supervising, ordaining, and the settlement of candidates for the ordained ministry;

4. That the necessary steps be taken in order that Deaconesses may become members of the Courts of the Church.

Appendix re Screening

The main purpose of careful screening is three-fold:

A. To insure that the specific tasks assigned to Deaconesses by the Church are carried out only by persons who are best qualified for the work.

B. To make provision for a compassionate, objective, and careful consideration of a candidate's suitability—from the point of view of commitment, physical fitness, training and experience, maturity and other qualifications.

C. To assist candidates to discover their vocation.

There are risks if the screening is done only by a Central Committee. The candidate may not be known to the Committee except through correspondence. At the same time, members of this Committee would have an intimate knowledge of the work for which she may be trained.

Further, if the screening is done only by the Session and Presbytery, the candidate may be well-known, but her potential may be over-rated or under-rated and objectivity may be limited. There may or may not be a clear understanding of the work for which she may be trained.

We envisage the three steps in screening as follows:

1. The candidate presents her application to the Session in the congregation where she has her membership. However, she may be away from home, and in affiliation with a church where she is training or working or attending university. If the candidate is a non-resident member, her Session would consult with the Session of the church where she attends worship to conduct an examination on their behalf.

2. The candidate sends her personal application to a Central Committee (National). The Session sends a completed reference form to the Central Committee. The Session notifies the Presbytery Convener of the Committee on Colleges and Students that they have entered into correspondence with the applicant and have given a reference to the Central Committee. In the meantime, the Central Committee obtains additional references and considers the application together with the references, in the light of qualifications as stated by the church. These qualifications are business or professional training and experience after completion of university entrance requirements in High School, or preferably a university degree. Personal qualifications include Christian commitment, maturity, a sense of humour, compassion, etc. Qualifications are determined from time to time by the General Council on recommendation from the Committee on the Deaconess Order.

3. The summary of the application and references together with the considered opinion of the Central Committee about the suitability of the applicant is sent to the Presbytery Committee on Colleges and Students. The Presbytery makes the final decision.

Numbers of Deaconesses—by Presbyteries

The list below indicates the number of Deaconesses and Presbyteries where they are employed as of June, 1962:

Avalon	1	Toronto West	3	Assiniboia	2
Twillingate	1	North Bay	1	Cariboo	1
Truro	1	Simcoe	1	Battleford	1
Moncton	1	Muskoka	1	Calgary	3
Saint John	1	Halton	3	South Alberta	1
Halifax	1	Hamilton	5	St. Paul	1
Cumberland	1	Niagara	1	Edmonton	3
Sydney	1	Perth	1	High River	1
Miramichi	1	Middlesex	1	Fraser	1
Montreal	9	Oxford	1	Westminster	1
Ottawa	2	Winnipeg	7	Prince Rupert	3
Belleville	1	Prince Albert	2	Vancouver South	2
Oshawa	1	Regina	2	Vancouver-Burrard	6
Toronto East	9	Estevan-Arcola	1	Victoria	1
Toronto Centre	10	Yorkton	1		
					99

Deaconesses at work in 44 Presbyteries	99
Deaconesses on Leave	10
Deaconesses in Educational Work & National Appointment	19
Deaconesses serving with the Y.W.C.A.	2

J. R. LENG,
Chairman.

LOIS BOAST,
Secretary.

+ Committee on Women Candidates for Work in the Church Other than the Ordained Ministry

The report of the Committee on Women Candidates for Work in the Church Other than the Ordained Ministry was presented by the Rev. J. R. Leng. (Page 411)

On motion, it was agreed that the introductory paragraphs and the appendix be received.

It was moved, seconded and agreed, that Recommendations 1, 2, 3 and 4, be adopted.

It was moved, seconded and agreed, that the Executive of General Council be authorized to prepare the necessary remit to be sent to the Presbyteries according to the regular procedure.

It was moved, seconded and agreed, that the report as a whole be adopted.

The Very Rev. H. A. McLeod assumed the chair.