# A Tale of Handmaidens: Deaconesses in the United Church of Canada 1925 to 1964

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"It belongs to the Deaconess to minister to the welfare of those to whom she is sent, at home or abroad; to assist the Ministers of the Word and Sacraments in feeding and nurturing the flock; to teach the truth as it is in Jesus; to seek, advise and pray with such as desire help in difficulties and perplexities; and to care for the sick, the poor, and needy . . .

Graciously regard these thy handmaidens whom we, in thy name, set apart to be Deaconesses in this Church. Send down thy Holy Spirit upon them, that they may worthily accomplish the work now committed to them; and may in all their ministrations be found faithful. Bestow upon them the gifts of wisdom and sound judgment, of simplicity and singleness of heart, and of sympathy with those among whom they dwell and work. Be thou their joy and gladness, their comfort in sorrow, their counsel in doubt, and at the last, their exceeding great reward . . ."

An Order for the Setting Apart of Deaconesses
The Book of Common Order
The United Church of Canada, 1932.

# INTRODUCTION

**Subject Explored:**

This thesis investigates the conditions of work of deaconesses in the United Church of Canada, from the time immediately following Church Union in 1925 until 1964, the time when deaconesses finally won the right to speak and vote in Presbytery, the court of the church which had oversight over congregations and made major decisions about their ministry, budgets, accountability and projects. The thesis discusses the work done by deaconesses and the conditions of their employment, and analyzes the ways in which their work was understood, interpreted and marginalized by others in the church. The material is organized into three time periods, identified because of major changes in deaconess work and in the United Church. The three periods are: the early years after Union (1925-1938), the years during World War Two (1939-1945), and the post-war years of expansion (1946 to 1964).

For each period, the material provided shows that deaconess work was both defined by and subtly limited to a sexist theological and functional understanding of professional non-ordained church women as servants or handmaidens, workers who were expected to meet the immediate and varied needs of a changing church, to do the low-status, behind-the-scenes and supportive work which would enhance the public, visible ministry of the male ordained. Though the specific tasks performed by deaconesses changed over the years, the image of deaconesses as handmaidens, the low status given to the position, and the separation of deaconesses from the power structures and processes of the church did not alter substantially. In fact, the church actively resisted every attempt made to raise the status of deaconesses or to expand their roles beyond that of servants. As a way of exploring the dynamics of institutional sexism in the church and its effects on this specific group of women, the practices, language and concepts used by the committees responsible for administering and promoting deaconess work are brought to light and analyzed. In addition, major contemporary studies or documents of the church that related generally to the work or treatment of women in the church are also referred to and their sexist biases and effects on women workers briefly discussed. In this process, the thesis explores the ways in which both the structures and the ideology of the United Church, with its liberal

tenets and its emphasis on cooperation and equality of the sexes (without an accompanying analysis either of patriarchy or of its own sexist teachings and practices), actually operated against the interests of women workers and served to maintain a status quo of powerlessness, oppression and invisibility for both professional and lay women.

While no attempt is made to analyze explicitly the sexism structured within the ideology of the church in a systematic form, the ways in which sexist ideologies, practices and structures interacted to severely limit one group of women's work lives and prevent any effective changes in their status are clearly revealed. In this way, the thesis is relevant to the current inquiries of feminist theologians, sociologists of religion, and historians of women's history into the complex interaction between religious ideology, social structures and practices, and the oppression of women. It explores how religious traditions and doctrines have consistently been used both as justification for the oppression of women, and, through a combination of naive analysis, superficial uses of psychology and sociology, and obfuscating notions of cooperation between the sexes, as a way of denying or silencing women's pain and exploitation. As such, religious ideology can actually serve to perpetuate the oppression which it claims to be against, and can be, as Matilda Joslyn Gage pointed out in 1893, "the bulwark of woman's slavery".[1]

In a more general sense, the study also examines the relationship of women to sexist institutions. Deaconesses were one of the three constant identifiable women's groups in the United Church of Canada, and the only one whose members were all paid workers in the church. As such, deaconesses both individually and as a gendered group faced all of the questions and problems plaguing other exclusively female groups fighting for their rights in society. Questions of strategy, of how to maximize their efforts for recognition and fair treatment, and how to make themselves heard within an essentially patriarchal institution became large issues for deaconesses, and continue to be for all groups of women working for justice. Should such women maintain their own separate organizations and strengthen them as a way of working for justice for all women? Or should they integrate into the male-defined and controlled structures and hope that their presence, in increasing numbers, will mediate change for other women who follow? Should individual groups of women emphasize their uniqueness and work on their own

specific experiences of oppression, or should they emphasize their shared experiences and work in larger collectives? While these are strategic questions at one level, they also link with the increasing body of feminist work being done on the relationship of women to essentially male-defined and sexist institutions.[2]

To look adequately at the relationship of deaconesses to the institutional church, another section of research needs to be done on the period from 1964 to the present. The effects of such developments as including men in the non-ordained work of the church, and of making deaconesses and Certified Churchmen (non-ordained male personnel) part of the Order of Ministry should be examined, with attention to the effects on women's working lives. Also the integration of all procedures for the screening, supervision and settlement of non-ordained personnel (normatively women) with those already in place for ordained personnel (normatively men) should be examined for their effects on women. Such an examination would provide valuable information on what happens when a group of women are integrated into structures and procedures which have been set up for and defined by men.

The effects of the amalgamation of the Woman's Missionary Society and the Woman's Association on women's work and status is also important as an area for research. Elizabeth Howell Verdesi has studied similar amalgamations in the Presbyterian Church in the United States, a denomination close in structure and theology to the United Church of Canada, and has concluded that amalgamations of women's work and restructuring are often ways by which women are forced to give up both power and identity.[3] Drawing on Verdesi's study, one realizes that it is not coincidental or unique that the number of committees set up between 1925 and 1964 to examine women's work in the United Church and to report to General Council, each with a different membership, each having to start the work over again, is phenomenal. Nor is it unique that it literally took forty years for one group of professional church women, deaconesses, to be "given the vote." Verdesi's work suggests that constant restructuring is inherent in a conciliar church.[4] All churches which are seemingly structured to facilitate participation and democracy have hidden centres of power, are affected by clericalism and subscribe to hierarchical understandings of truth and value. Thus, while appearing to be liberal,

progressive and tolerant, such churches are often structured to prevent change and the effective identifying of injustice within their own teachings and practices. A study of the evolution of the Deaconess Order in the United Church of Canada also gives insights into the constant tension between the potential for and resistance to any structural changes which is built into all conciliar systems.

**Starting where I am--A Theoretical Framework:**

The starting point for this thesis, and the frame of reference throughout it, is my own experience as a diaconal minister (the successor of a deaconess). Having worked within congregations in the United Church for a period of eleven years, I have faced many variations of the same restrictions, unfair employment practices and sexist attitudes which are discussed and illustrated in this thesis. I have come through a long and painful process which began with seeing all such experienced work difficulties as somehow my own fault, and ended with believing that many of the injustices in the lives of all professional women workers in the church have been and continue to be facilitated, justified and re-interpreted by a church which is essentially patriarchal and, as such, is at times both constricting and life-denying for women. The process of personal re-definition of my experiences began when I came into contact with many old-time deaconesses, strong mentors who again and again told stories of the "fight for the vote", as the period from 1945 to 1964 is referred to, of the work they did, of their low salaries, and of the endless demands on their time and energy which were all part of their working lives. In addition, they told stories of exciting people, of strong women who challenged the constrictions of deaconess roles and who did things that had never been done by women workers before. In hearing these stories and identifying with both the pain and the joy in them, and in sharing my own stories in return, I claimed both my identity and my solidarity with other women in a patriarchal church. Thus began my journey into feminism. I came to see that my experience, while in some ways uniquely mine, was also part of a larger "collective women's experience" which was both circumscribed by and in resistance to the patriarchal structures and ideologies of both the church and the secular world. I came to believe that feminism, with its analysis of patriarchy and women's oppression, its affirmation of women's worth, its commitment to using political action to bring about

change and equality for women, and its vision of a transformed world was both exciting and life-giving.

As a social and cultural entity, with a set of practices, ideologies and organizational structures, the church replicates the patriarchal organization of the secular world. In addition, it legitimates that organization by giving it some kind of sacred and timeless base. Church doctrine traditionally teaches that a patriarchal ordering of the world is not just a man-made invention, but was, rather, conceived of and created by a male God for the good of all, and is therefore not to be challenged or changed in any way. All religious groups, but particularly the Christian Church with its strong creation mythology, have served to make patriarchy sacred.

The attributes of patriarchal structures, including the church, have been identified by feminists. Among feminists the word patriarchy is used in a general way to summarize their experience of men as ultimately in charge of the world. The dominant ideology and social structures of all patriarchal institutions place and keep men in positions of dominance and power over women and children. Patriarchal institutions value qualities of rationality, abstraction, unemotionality, aggressiveness and activity, and identify all of them as masculine traits. Conversely, patriarchal institutions undervalue emotionality, warmth, receptivity and reflection, qualities which are associated traditionally with women. In addition, the spokesmen of patriarchy define women as essentially inferior, and, as Nellie McClung points out,

> quite cheerfully [declare that] women are illogical, frivolous, jealous, vindictive, unforgiving, affectionate, not any too honest, patient, frail, delightful, inconstant, faithful.[5]

All patriarchal institutions are based on the premise that men are innately superior to women, and are therefore the natural group to control and define the world. Within the church's teachings, the reason for men's "rightness to rule" is taken beyond a discussion of practicality and expediency and is portrayed as a moral imperative. Women, within the historical teachings of the church, have been continually identified as sinful, as the sexual embodiment of evil, and as morally tainted. Therefore, for the survival of the world, God has ordained that they must be controlled by men. Such teachings, presented by male

clerics, who demanded unquestioning acceptance from church members who were steeped in both clericalism and an understanding of faith which precluded criticism and analysis, have been very dangerous to women. As Matilda Joslyn Gage pointed out in 1893, such teachings have led to witchhunts, wife-beating and other physical attacks on women and have inculcated in women a strong sense of guilt and inferiority.[6]

In both the church and other patriarchal institutions all of reality is ordered and conceived of hierarchically, or as feminist theologian Sheila Collins has pointed out, it is assumed that everything that exists occupies a particular position in a "chain of command" or "line of authority."[7] God is believed to be at the top of this "global hierarchy". Immediately below the Supreme Being, in most religious traditions, are the "religious men" (priests, ministers, shamans, etc.). Next, in order, are laymen, women, children, animals, and, finally, nature. Such a hierarchical ordering of the world, made sacred by the Creation Story in Genesis and the creation myths of other traditions, is seen to be not only effective, but also natural and timeless, the only way in which things could possibly exist. Power and freedom, and the ability to both name and interpret reality, are believed to reside exclusively at the top of the hierarchy, first with the Supreme Being and then with men. Absolute powerlessness resides at the bottom of the hierarchy.

Within each level in the hierarchy other rankings are created, based on attributes such as physical strength, wealth, racial background and education. For such a hierarchy to continue to exist, each group within it must be kept in its proper place and socialized into a particular set of behaviours which will keep it neither too high nor too low. Any drastic change in position of a group within the hierarchy would threaten the existence of the whole structure. Therefore, the imposition of notions of sin, the use of threats of violence, ridiculing and silencing are all ways to control the dissatisfied and maintain the hierarchy at all costs. Each group within is encouraged to objectify and control those who are lower down. Individual men and groups of men come to see it as part of their role to define women's place in the world and to make sure that they stay there. In all fields of endeavour, groups of men define what is real, what is appropriate, and what is deviant or "sick". Thus, in all patriarchal institutions, the male view of the world comes to be seen as the only one; it is considered to be both objective and all-encompassing. The points of

view of those lower down on the hierarchy are not only under-valued; they are systematically discredited and silenced. Since a male deity, represented by "religious men" and then by other males, defines the world, no other viewpoint is considered relevant or necessary. In this way, all patriarchal institutions develop and maintain a skewed view of the world. What is "real" and important for men is considered to be important for all.

Within the world thus ordered, women's own unique experiences and perceptions get edited out, ignored or ridiculed, and women as individuals and as a class are advised in many subtle ways that, if they don't see the world in the way men have defined it, then there is something wrong with them. In the words of Elizabeth Dodson Gray, patriarchy becomes a "conceptual trap" and women and men are both caught in it in different ways.[8] Men define such wide-ranging things as what reality is, what women are "naturally" like, what women should do, who God is, what the rules for success and competence are, and what the punishment will be for those who don't fit in. Women's roles, as Nellie McClung astutely observed, are always defined in terms of service to men, and include within them "anything [men] did not wish to do [themselves]".[9]

It is with an understanding of the pervasiveness and complexity of the male-dominant sex/gender system that the role of deaconesses must be analyzed. Such women were originally referred to as "handmaidens" in the United Church's Order of Service for their installation, and though the term was gradually dropped from official church usage in the 1950's, the image which the word expressed continued to structure both the expectations and treatment of deaconesses as workers in the church. Deaconesses continued to be perceived as servants and their work was valued in terms of how well they fulfilled that role. While the word "servant" was also used to describe male ordained ministers, the term in that context was ideologically constructed in a far different way and actually acted to strengthen the men who occupied such positions of leadership and power in the church. As a masculine gendered term, "servant" conveyed the sense of being a prophet, an individual truth-teller whose authority rested on his separation from others. The understanding of handmaiden, in contrast, turned on being connected with others, always sensitive to and meeting their needs. The understanding of handmaiden

included all of the following aspects: direction towards the needs of others, limitless quantities of work, emphasis on responding rather than initiating, punishment for criticism, underestimation of the cost involved to the worker of doing the work, invisibility of the work, separation from decision-making processes, low status and remuneration, and external evaluation of the work.

Not surprisingly, many of these are the same attributes which feminists looking at women's work as essentially "care-giving" have identified and affirmed. Nel Noddings[10] and Carol Gilligan[11] have both shown that women structure their lives and are socialized by patriarchal institutions to see the world in terms of relationships and to make decisions on the basis of the inclusion and well-being of others. Ironically, patriarchal institutions undervalue such work, treat it as invisible, yet reinforce and monitor it strictly within women. Women within patriarchal institutions such as the church spend a great deal of time trying to learn the rules and to find places where they can be safe and happy. While patriarchal institutions always have their dissenters, people who dare to step outside of their socialized roles and either expose the unfairness of the system or show that its values and rules need not be embodied, such people are usually marginalized as either eccentric or mis-informed, and their work is quickly "lost". Such was the fate, for example, of Matilda Joslyn Gage, one of the first radical feminist theologians. Her brilliant critique of the Christian Church was published in 1893, but was subsequently "lost" until republished by feminist scholars seventy years later.

Similar acts of silencing and sabotage of critical writings, reports and works of art have proven so effective in destroying work critical of patriarchy that each group of questioners is forced to work alone, unaware that much of the critical analysis that is part of their work has been done many years before by others. It is only recently that most of the destructive capacity of patriarchal institutions has been analyzed in sustained and public ways. It is only recently that the pervasiveness and destructive results of patriarchy in the Christian Church have been documented. Such work is crucial, and provides the tools through which change and revisioning can occur. Counsellors such as Anne Wilson Schaef have concluded that women, whether they remain church-goers or not, are profoundly affected by the theological beliefs and practices of patriarchy.[12] She

believes that it is important for all professionals who work with women to become familiar with some of the damaging practices and beliefs which permeate organized religion. Only then can such people help women begin to counteract the effects of misogyny and work for structural change. Scholars such as Phylis Trible[13] and Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza[14] have been documenting the Bible's patriarchal bias and have counselled women to approach all masculinized scriptural interpretation with a "hermeneutics of suspicion". Carter Heyward[15] and Rosemary Radford Ruether[16] have uncovered an insidious misogynous pattern in theology and ecclesiology, and Dorothea Soelle[17] and Sheila Collins[18] have examined the links between theology and violence in the world. Together such women have made us aware of the ways the Christian Church reproduces within its own structures and practices the patriarchal arrangements present in society, at the same time that it protects and legitimizes patriarchy.

**Secondary Literature Review:**

No secondary literature is available on the history of deaconesses in Canada for the period 1925 to 1964. While Diane Haglund[19] and John D. Thomas[20] have both examined the work of Methodist deaconesses from 1890 to 1925, the period after the formation of the United Church has not been explored, with the exception of *Called to Serve*, a booklet which presents the work of diaconal ministers in story form throughout the years.[21] Haglund and Thomas' work provided background and an excellent starting point for my research. Their use of maternal feminism as a basic organizing principle and Thomas' portrayal of deaconess work as essentially providing an example for all women in the church of what were proper female roles are extremely helpful in establishing a framework for looking at the resistance and unwillingness of the church to allow deaconesses access to Presbytery and participation in the decisions of the church. Thomas' work gives a good summary of the division of labour and the structure of separate spheres put in place at the time when deaconess work was first constructed in the Methodist Church and argued for by men on the basis that it would not interfere with the work of ministers, but would instead complement and support it.[22] The struggles and issues documented in this thesis show how fiercely the church as a patriarchal institution worked to keep deaconesses in a separate subordinate sphere. Because there was no

secondary literature I have had to put major energy in terms of both methodology and content into telling the story, with some accompanying analysis of how specific decisions and interpretations of deaconess work affected women. More questions have been raised than answers given, and the areas for future research are many.

The lack of material on deaconesses in the church, particularly from a feminist perspective, is due to a number of factors. First, in many feminists' minds, the more interesting area of research is on the ordination of women. The amount of literature on this is impressive, both in its scope and its development of new forms of analysis. Of particular interest is Mary Hallett's article which discusses Nellie McClung's involvement in the fight for women's ordination in the United Church.[23] Caution must be used in generalizing the descriptions of the experiences of ordained women to deaconess work. In the case of ordained women, their work and the specific manifestations of sexism which confined and interpreted their working lives were structured by the fact that such women were entering an exclusively male profession which had been designed to utilize and preserve those perspectives and characteristics available to men. The task for women who wished to survive there was to learn how to behave like a man and still be a woman. In the case of deaconesses, they were a class or group whose work was originally constructed on the basis of both what men needed from women and what they saw as feminine characteristics. Thus the task for deaconesses was to learn how to expand the understanding of women's work to include what were seen to be and were protected as the characteristics and activities of men. Both deaconesses and ordained women's experiences were the result of the same dualistic framework imposed by patriarchy which operated and maintained itself through separate gendered spheres, but the particularities of their experiences of this dualism are quite different. While a feminist analytic framework can and should be created to encompass both groups of women's experiences, the experiences themselves cannot be generalized from one group to another.

Among feminist theologians and church historians, deaconesses have often been dismissed as archaic, traditional, or as too small in numbers to be taken seriously either historically or sociologically. In the United States, the three-volume set, *Women and Religion in America*, edited by Rosemary Radford Ruether and Rosemary Skinner Keller,

contains only four passing references to deaconesses, yet has major sections on lay women in the church, on women in religious education, and on the fight for women's ordination in mainstream Protestant churches.[24] In *Her Story: Women in Christian Tradition*, Barbara MacHaffie devotes less than one page to the discussion of the deaconess movement in her chapter on the nineteenth century, and virtually dismisses it in the twentieth century, describing it as merely an office for lay professionals in the United Methodist Church and as a less attractive option for women than ordination.[25] Such omissions or hasty dismissals of deaconess work are common in feminist and women's studies historical books.

Many of the issues deaconesses faced in their work, and many of the entrenched forms of discrimination which severely limited their lives were extensions of the general treatment of women in society. Therefore, there is some value in looking at the historical literature on women in other professions, and in particular the teaching profession. Deaconesses themselves saw their work as equivalent both in ethos and structure to that of teachers. In addition, many of them entered the Deaconess Order after careers in the educational system. Therefore, though the structural and ideological differences between the church and the secular educational system should not be ignored, there is some value in looking at the historical literature on women in teaching professions.

Alison M. Oram has analyzed the sexist assumptions behind the introduction of a marriage bar in teaching in the 1920's in England. She looks at the reasons given for its imposition and shows that such a marriage bar served to protect and further the interests of men individually and as a group within patriarchy.[26] In the church, the structuring of the argument against allowing married deaconesses and ordained women to work was remarkably similar, although the discourse used theological concepts and invoked patriarchal understandings of women's "special calling" rather than the "naturalness" and "expediency" referred to by Oram. Marta Danylewycz and Alison Prentice in their discussion of changing patterns in teachers' work have described the processes involved in deskilling women teachers' work in a way which is extremely relevant for conceptualizing the debate about lowering the admission standards and educational preparation for women workers in the church.[27] In constructing the discussion of professional church

women's work during World War Two, Ruth Roach Pierson's book, *They're Still Women After All* was particularly helpful. Her work impressively outlines the expectations and discourse which framed women's participation in the war-time labour force and shows that women's widespread entrance into jobs was seen as a temporary measure which would enable the nation to survive in an emergency and was phased out as soon as the men returned.[28]

**Primary Sources and Methodology:**

The primary sources used in this thesis were found in many places, some in traditional archives and some in the possession of individual women connected in some way with the Deaconess Order. Thus, the sources used were varied and not particularly well organized into categories which facilitated the answering of the kinds of research questions I had. My research methodology became, of necessity, somewhat like a grocery shopping trip. I gathered things from different places, read the labels and tried to figure out what was inside. Sometimes I put things back on the shelf because the labels were wrong or the language used was too foreign to me. Other women walked along with me and put things they had gathered into the shopping cart too. Eventually the cart was full and I went home to sort it all out and put it into some kind of order. The analogy of the shopping trip applies to much of the work being done in women's history. It involves working with categories, periods and issues that have been defined by men and therefore predominantly reflect their way of seeing the world. It involves trying to find source materials which have been lost or kept on the back of the shelves, and it involves working to reinterpret what has been devalued and written in a language foreign to women.

One important collection of material on deaconesses is available at the Centre for Christian Studies, the successor to the United Church Training School. The Centre has an archives room which contains minutes of all the committees related to deaconess work from 1926 onwards, a large selection of historical materials on the United Church Training School and its successors, and several files of recruitment materials and statistics related to deaconesses. In addition, it contains minutes and reports of the Fellowship of Professional Women and of the Deaconess Association, both of which were valuable sources of information concerning the reactions of deaconesses to some of the

sexist policies and theology of the church.

A second repository of source material is the United Church Archives in Toronto. It houses a complete set of the Annual Reports of the Woman's Missionary Society and all the records, reports, proceedings and agendas for General Council, the highest decision-making body of the United Church. Included in the agendas of General Council are yearly reports on deaconesses work and all of the reports of commissions or committees who investigated women's work in the church or discussed women's roles in society and the significance of marriage and the Christian family. The United Church Archives also has available several interviews with deaconesses and some biographical material on early deaconesses who are now retired or deceased. Much of the relevant material, however, is buried within other reports and is difficult to retrieve. Also, the format of the material provided is inconsistent over the years, with each successive committee responsible for deaconess work reporting in a slightly different way. Such a basic thing as a consistent yearly statistical summary, which would give an immediate sense of the changes in deaconess work when compared for a number of years, is not available. Some committee reports gave only the most cursory figures (for example, numbers of active and retired members). Others provided figures for each category of work and each employing group, and gave a retired/active ratio and a Canadian/overseas ratio. This meant that searching was sometimes long and difficult and demanded both patience and the ability to live with questions for long periods of time. Deaconess work, I discovered quite quickly, while praised and described by church officials as indispensible, was, in terms of record-keeping, very dispensible.

One valuable source of research information would have been the records and yearly reports of deaconesses which were sent to the Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers. However, when the Committee was dissolved in 1962, the decision was made not to pass on the individual reports and items of correspondence because of the issue of confidentiality. Unfortunately, this was the kind of material which would have provided an understanding of the texture of deaconesses' lives and of the obstacles they faced. The number of committees which administered, related to, or investigated the work of deaconesses over the first fifty years of the church's history is staggering, and

shows that the way the church often dealt with women's justice issues was to restructure and set up yet another new committee. Such superficial restructuring of committees served to hide many gender issues and to prevent women's working conditions from being radically improved. Another difficulty which affected the research was created by the Woman's Missionary Society's policy of not specifically identifying deaconesses who worked in their employ. Such women became listed as WMS Missionaries in all official reports, and because of this it is difficult to locate individual deaconesses during specific time periods or to develop statistics which show the types of WMS jobs in which deaconesses were most consistently employed.

Also in the United Church Archives is a complete run of *The United Church Observer*, containing several articles on deaconesses and other women church workers and on women's issues in general. It was through this magazine, for instance, that the debates on married women's suitability for work in the church, on the raising of salaries for women workers, and on the need for lower-educated women workers were informally conducted. Because of this coverage, the magazine provided valuable information both on the treatment of professional women in the church and on the theological discourse used to justify the maintenance of both lower salaries and status for women church workers.

In addition, as individual church women heard of my work, I was given access to the papers of K. Harriet Christie and Gertrude Rutherford, both of whom were former principals of the United Church Training School. Both collections of papers were valuable sources of information, particularly concerning the strategies used to fight for the right to vote in Presbytery and deaconesses' perceptions of the ordination of women debate. Both also provided evidence of the degree of discrimination being faced by deaconesses as a group and of the perceived sense of urgency for resolving the problems. Also, lists were given to me, many of them written on scraps of paper, of the names of women who had been disjoined from the Deaconess Order and who had kept the correspondence through which this had happened. All of these less-public sources of information were valuable and I saw them as gifts and symbols of the ways women work through networking. Because of their willingness to share in the work of others, women's history often emerges in the context of a supportive and caring community, and their invisible and devalued

experiences become visible and celebrated.

## Notes

[1]Matilda Joslyn Gage, *Woman, Church and State* (Watertown: Persephone Press, 1980), Introduction, xxviii.

[2]Kathy E. Ferguson, *The Feminist Case Against Bureaucracy* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984); Susan Schechter, *Women and Male Violence* (Boston: South End Press, 1982).

[3]Elizabeth Howell Verdesi, *In But Still Out: Women in the Church* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1973), 138-159.

[4]*Ibid.*

[5]Nellie McClung, *In Times Like These* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), 70.

[6]Matilda Joslyn Gage, *Ibid.*, chapters 5 and 6.

[7]Sheila Collins, *A Different Heaven and Earth* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1974), 65-68.

[8]Elizabeth Dodson Gray, *Patriarchy as a Conceptual Trap* (New York: Roundtable Press, 1983), 17-19.

[9]Nellie McClung, *Ibid.*

[10]Nel Noddings, *Caring* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

[11]Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982).

[12]Anne Wilson Schaef, *Women's Reality* (Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1981), 161.

[13]Phylis Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978).

[14]Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her* (New York: Crossroad, 1983).

[15]Carter Heyward, *.Our Passion for Justice: Images of Power, Sexuality and Liberation* (New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1984).

[16]Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk: toward a feminist Theology* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1983).

[17]Dorothea Soelle, *The Strength of the Weak* (Philadelphia: The Westminister Press, 1984).

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[19]Diane Haglund, "Side Road on the Journey to Autonomy: The Diaconate Prior to Church Union", in *Women Work & Worship* ed. Shirley Davy (Toronto: UCC, DMC, 1983), 209-227.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## TWO ORDERS BECOME ONE 1925 to 1938

### Introduction:

As Church Union became a fact, the new United Church was faced with the difficult task of merging three lively and dissimilar traditions--the Methodist, the Presbyterian and the Congregational. Within the former two, there were well-established deaconess groups with very different histories, self-understandings and educational centres. Yet both orders had shared from their founding a devaluation, marginalization and undermining of their work within the structures and practices of their churches. The work of uniting the three denominations into a new structure provided a perfect opportunity for the new United Church to remedy the well-known problems surrounding deaconess work. Instead, for a variety of reasons, old structures and sexist practices were perpetuated.

### Methodist and Presbyterian Deaconess Work:

Within the Methodist Church, the Deaconess Order had been in a state of crisis long before Church Union came about in 1925. In 1922, twenty-six of the forty-three active deaconesses had memorialized the General Conference by calling attention to the fact that, in comparison to other areas of work open to women, deaconess work was "steadily losing ground" and did not occupy the prominent place in the church's life that it should. Further, the Methodist deaconesses requested that, if Conference were not prepared to rectify the situation immediately, the Order be disbanded.[1]

Such deaconesses were speaking on the basis of long-standing experiences of poor working conditions, low salaries, no visibility and no recognition by or linkage to the official courts of the church. Expectations of their work were unusually high, and their duties were voluminous and only loosely-defined, usually oriented towards the endless task of social service and meeting the needs of the disadvantaged. Their activities included visiting the sick and bereaved; finding employment, housing and money for people; looking after travellers and immigrants; conducting Sunday Schools, clubs and domestic education classes for women and children; doing secretarial work; teaching

reading and Bible classes; and taking Sunday Services when necessary.[2] For all of this, Methodist deaconesses were guaranteed minimal living expenses and provision for old age, and received only a small spending allowance in lieu of salary, often as low as $8.00 to $10.00 a month.[3]

The General Conference responded to the deaconesses' memorial by appointing a commission composed of four men and one woman to research and report on the situation immediately. The Commission's subsequent report in 1923 confirmed the deaconesses' account of their experiences and attributed their dissatisfaction to an insensitive administration, poor salaries and unrealistic expectations by employers. In addition, the report suggested that many of the problems occurred because of the narrow way in which deaconesses were perceived as mere "servants" of the church. The lengthy document concluded with twenty detailed recommendations which would enable the diaconate to continue and to develop into "a well-educated, skilled work force enjoying more self-government, a broad mandate, and a greater degree of support from the church."[4] One concrete result was the establishment of a minimum annual salary of $780.00.

Evidence suggests that, although less tumultuous in its evolution than its Methodist counterpart, there were also problems associated with the salary, working conditions and status of deaconesses within the Presbyterian Church during this same time period. Deaconesses in the Presbyterian tradition had been working for salaries for many years and had more autonomy both in their choice of work and their personal living conditions, but they were still restricted to "servant" roles. They were expected to plan for their own futures and to provide for themselves in old age and, because of this, received a slightly higher salary than their Methodist counterparts.[5]

**Uniting the Deaconess Orders:**

Records show that the negotiations between the Methodists and Presbyterians which led to the amalgamation of the two deaconess groups began in 1924 at the direction of the Joint Committee of the Churches on Church Union.[6] Each denomination submitted to the first General Council of the United Church "a concise statement as to its history, assets, liabilities, income and expenditures for the past three years, persons employed,

equipment, present work and requirements."[7] In addition, each made recommendations concerning procedures for the coming year. Their recommendation that for the first year the two groups work separately but in close cooperation was approved.[8]

At the next General Council in 1926 the two groups gave a joint statement concerning their work and recommended that a committee be appointed to study the whole question of the place and treatment of trained women workers in the new United Church. The General Council responded by creating the Committee on Employed Women Workers in the Church and by approving the establishment of a Deaconess Association. At this time official approval was also given to continue the tradition of deaconesses within the uniting churches:

> These to be combined in one Order of which those already connected with the existing Orders shall be members as well as any who in the future may be designated to the office of Deaconess by the United Church of Canada.[9]

At this same Council, action was taken to merge the two former denominational training schools, the Methodist Training School established in 1893 and the Presbyterian Missionary and Deaconess Training Home established in 1897. The former Superintendent of the Presbyterian Home was appointed principal of the new United Church Training School and the former Principal of the Methodist School became secretary of the newly-created Inter-Board Committee on Women Workers. The location of the new school was in the former Methodist School in Toronto, and the Women's Department of United College in Winnipeg, which had traditionally been a second place for the training of Presbyterian deaconesses, was continued as an alternate educational centre.[10]

**Practical Training for Ladies:**

The curricula of the two schools proved relatively easy to amalgamate. The emphasis in the new school continued to be on training women for a variety of positions, including pastoral assistants, christian workers, missionaries, inner-city workers, church hospital nurses, secretaries, home visitors and heads of orphanages or church schools. Academic studies and practical work continued to focus on the development of the very specific skills and knowledge which would be needed to work in these helping, social-

oriented positions within the church. Thus, practical experience became an important focus of the training. On-the-job experience was provided through an extensive field education programme. Students worked in churches and Christian social service projects, and the opportunity provided to both practice and then reflect on particular skills needed for church work was far superior to that given to candidates for ordination.[11] The 1930 Calendar of the United Church Training School emphasized the importance of providing practical experience for all students:

> Care is taken in the assignments made and the School is under obligation to ministers who undertake supervision and who report at the end of the session on the student's work. The Church is being asked by the School to make a real contribution to the training of effective leaders.[12]

The academic component of the programme included mandatory courses in Old Testament, New Testament, Christian Doctrine, Church History, Sociology, Religious Pedagogy, Gymnasium and Recreational Leadership.[13] The School also had a very powerful hidden curriculum that involved teaching women to be gracious and to behave like proper ladies. "Learning to be ladies" included instruction in how to pour tea at formal occasions, how to socialize and engage others in light conversation, how to dress and move appropriately, and how to participate in a variety of "feminine" recreational and hobby activities. Students were required to live in residence, and formal evening dinners and afternoon teas with the Principal on Sundays and special occasions were an important part of the programme. The 1930-31 Calendar of the School described the educational programme and residential life in the following way:

> [It] should be a real family life; each is bound up in a whole, and affects the whole -- the whole re-acts upon each. Living graciously in harmony with others is a course of study and practice worthy of every resident.[14]

The effect of such a hidden curriculum on graduates was profound. One 1928 graduate, in reflecting back on her education, described it this way:

> We were taught to be ladies--to be amusing, helpful and always gentle--to listen endlessly to the ideas and moods of others.[15]

For her and her classmates, being a lady meant both exhibiting behaviour which was receptive, gentle and passive, and orienting their lives towards the needs of others.

In 1930 the Training School completed negotiations with Emmanual College and

signed an affiliation agreement which allowed staff from Emmanuel College to teach many of the courses at the School. At this time, the School also raised its entrance requirements and began an extensive assessment of its curriculum. The Board of the School expressed the hope that, as soon as possible, the School could be located close to Victoria University and Emmanual College as a very visible statement of its increasing interest in cooperation with the university. The Board saw its ideal new building as including:

> a residence to accommodate from forty to fifty students, with common room, reception room, library, assembly hall, a chapel and other necessary rooms.[16]

**Organizing for Deaconess Work:**

The new General Council Inter-Board Committee on Women Workers was given the responsibility of caring for and directing the Deaconess Order and "[for] studying the whole question of a permanent policy regarding the scope and supervision of the Deaconess Order and of other trained women workers in the United Church and to report back to the next meeting of the Council."[17] This meant that, for the first time, administration of the Deaconess Order was separated from the training of deaconesses, and an official committee of the church, with a paid secretary, was created to look after the welfare of the Deaconess Order. Though the intent of this was to integrate deaconess work and issues into the life and structures of the church, and to give increased visibility and importance to a marginalized group, what it actually resulted in was the loss of much of the autonomy, distinctiveness and identity of deaconesses within the church. The new Committee had minimal representation from deaconesses themselves, and had little direct awareness of the history or distinctiveness of deaconess work within Canada. Most of the members were either ordained men or lay women, and sat on the Committee as representatives from other committees and boards of the church. They came to the Committee with a variety of vested interests which sometimes conflicted with the interests of deaconesses, and were not in any sense chosen because of their commitment to the Deaconess Order.

**The Deaconess as Handmaiden:**

The Committee's first work was to approve a uniform for deaconesses and to prepare a special service for the designation or "setting apart" of deaconesses to be included in the Book of Common Order. Both of these early tasks and decisions of the Committee reflected and were influenced by the prevailing notions of women's nature and role as being ancillary, restricted to caring, assisting and remaining submissive, unobtrusive and obedient. The uniform chosen was a dark blue dress with white stiff linen cuffs and collar, a dark navy blue coat and a matching hat. The emphasis was on plainess, dignity and practicality. The term chosen to describe deaconesses in the service of designation was that of the handmaiden.[18] Drawing heavily on the scriptural account of Mary and the Magnificat[19] and the story of the Last Judgement in which Christ rebukes those who do not give assistance to everyone in need around them[20], the service included within its description of deaconess work a wide variety of "feminine" ministrations:

> To you are accorded peculiar privileges and opportunities. Released from other cares, you give yourselves without reservation, according to the will of God, to the service of the Lord and of His Church, wherever your lot may be cast . . . You are to go about doing good, ministering to the wants of a suffering, sorrowing and sin-laden world. You are to be angels of mercy to the poor, to visit the sick, pray with the dying, care for the orphan, seek the wandering, comfort the afflicted, save the sinning and ever be ready to take up any other duty proper to your calling. Such a ministry confers upon you a great honour, and involves a solemn responsibility.[21]

The service continued with a prayer for such "handmaidens" and "angels of mercy", invoking God's blessing and care for them in their work. The 1932 service in the Book of Common Order further elaborated upon the image of the deaconess as a handmaiden and asked that such women be given for their work "singleness of heart, simplicity and humility."[22] All of this terminology both drew upon and reinforced the tradition in which the church perceived and treated women as humble servants, constantly available and responsive to the needs of individuals and groups.

**Investigating Women's Work in the Church:**

The newly-created Committee on Employed Women Workers in the Church began its investigative work immediately after the Second General Council in 1926. This gave the Committee two years to gather information about the work of deaconesses and other

women workers, and to describe and analyze the problems which they encountered in the church. Though the Committee had guessed that there were many women at work across the church, and that some working situations were bad, the results they uncovered amazed them. Committee members discovered and reported at the General Council in 1928 that women were working in an endless variety of places and making an effective contribution, but were, in many situations, being treated unfairly.

In terms of numbers, the Committee located a total of nine hundred and fifty-one 951
women employed in the work and institutions of the United Church. Over one-third were employed by the Woman's Missionary Society and worked in other countries or in Canada in community missions, hospitals, Indian Schools, Oriental Missions and immigrant ministries. An additional one hundred and six women worked in clerical and secretary positions at Church Headquarters, and two hundred and twelve worked within educational institutions. Of the total, only thirty-one did congregational work (other than secretarial). Only one hundred and sixteen of the women were members of the Deaconess 116
Order. Twenty-four of the deaconesses worked in self-supporting congregations, their work ranging from church secretary to outreach worker.[23]

Other deaconesses, according to records of the 1920's and early 1930's, were employed in social service work in downtown areas, in hospital visitation programmes, at schools for girls, in the Toronto Strangers' Department, and in producing Christian Education and pastoral radio programmes for isolated communities.[24] Those who worked for the Woman's Missionary Society (WMS), the largest employer of all categories of women workers in the early years, worked in a variety of places. Though WMS records did not consistently identify deaconesses in its employ as such, annual reports show that in the 1920's and 1930's deaconesses worked in Chinese and European communities and in Indian missions and schools throught Canada, in French Canadian churches in Ontario and Quebec, in mission work in Nova Scotia, in social service ministry in Montreal, Timmins and Winnipeg, and in children's work in Vancouver and Toronto. Also, many were among the over one hundred women appointed annually for overseas work.[25]

All women workers for the Woman's Missionary Society came under the

organization's salary schedule, whether they were deaconesses or not. For 1927 the starting salary was $800.00, with $25.00 increases for each year of previous service, to a maximum of $1,000.00. Salaries for overseas workers varied from one country to another, but were, like the earnings of their counterparts in Canada, consistently lower than those of women in comparable occupations.[26] As well as an incredible variety of placements and jobs for women, the Committee also reported that there was a lack of adequate general educational background and specialized preparation among many workers, stating that "on the whole the standards have been low in light of the significance and importance of the tasks assigned."[27]

The report gave details of an incredibly varied level of salary and working conditions, some extremely bad. Individual employing bodies set their own standards for method of employment, salary, furlough (i.e., paid leave), and superannuation, and such groups rarely cooperated with each other. The result was that women were performing the same work under vastly different conditions and for radically varying rates of pay and there was no procedural or structural way that such inequalities could be monitored and dealt with.[28] Women were not only isolated one from the other, but also were totally on their own as a group, as far as securing justice and fair treatment by the church. Such a chaotic system made women the losers and kept isolated women in places where their contributions and skills were neither respected nor valued.

Because of this, the Committee recommended in its report that there be one set of standards for preparation and employment conditions for all women, stating that:

> this would result in the formulation of such a policy as regards the employment of women in the work of the Church as would place Church work as a vocation for women in an established and dignified position.[29]

The Committee also noted that women were remarkably absent from the Boards of most of the groups which employed large numbers of women. In addition, deaconesses and other women church workers were barred from membership in the hierarchical courts of the church, the places where major decisions were made about church policy, finances and various work issues which affected them directly. The first General Council, which had received reports from both deaconess organizations and had authorized the uniting of the

two orders, had only four female commissioners, two Methodists and two Congregationalists.[30] The General Councils in the early 1930's when the ordination of women was being considered, had on average only fifteen female commissioners out of a total of well over two hundred, and the Council in 1962, which approved the unification of women's work and the development of a new structure, had only fifteen per cent female delegates.[31]

The conditions which the Committee so clearly outlined--the variety of work and places of employment, the lack of representation on decision-making bodies, the lack of interest of employing bodies in looking at their employment practices and cooperating with others--were to continue to work against the interests of women until the 1960's and to keep them in low-paying, low-status positions in the church. An example of the kind of conditions which were allowed to continue is found in the description of deaconess work in St. James United Church in Montreal in 1925 and 1927. As Church Historian Nathan Mair writes:

> St. James was assigned two deaconesses, one to do the missionary work and the relief work and the other to work in Christian Education for her sponsor, the St. James Morning Sunday School. In another year, the second deaconess took over all the secretarial work assigned to the two so that the senior deaconess could devote more time to Christian Education . . . In 1927 St. James Montreal spent $9,150.00 for its two ministers, $1,309.00 for one and a half deaconesses, $3,897.00 for organist and soloists, $1,555.00 for a sexton. A part-time secretary received $720.00.[32]

**The Recommendation for a Diaconate:**

To solve what it saw as massive problems associated with women's church employment, the Committee recommended that a Diaconate be created as a second and lower part of the Order of Ministry. The essence of the Diaconate would be gender-related rather than defined by its function. It would, according to the Committee:

> include all those women who meet the required standards, regardless of the special form of service they are rendering. [The creation of a Diaconate] would be the means of giving fuller ecclesiastical recognition to certain ministries already exercised by women in the Church. The authority to preach and where necessary to baptize should be given to members of the diaconate, but their work should in no way be limited to preaching, nor should those who qualify but desire to serve the Church in other ways be denied this status.[33]

As well as responding to individual situations of injustice, some members of the

Committee also saw this as a way of satisfying the requests for women's ordination which were already being made on behalf of Lydia Gruchy by the Saskatchewan Conference. Dr. Ernest Thomas, the chairman of the Committee on the Ordination of Women, in an article in *The New Outlook* in 1928, spoke of the plan for a diaconate with great enthusiasm, maintaining that such a lower Order would satisfy women's desire for ordination. Though not stated explicitly, his words also suggest a sense of relief that such a secondary Order would leave unchallenged the continued restriction of the highest form of ministry to a male enterprise, and would perpetuate women's roles as the helpers, servers and assistants in the church. In stirring language, he stated that:

> the Diaconate or a separate, lower order for women is the best vehicle through which women manifestly called and adequately trained for the service of the Church [could] render their fullest service for the benefit of the Church.[34]

**General Council's Response:**

The report and the attempt to begin the process of elevating and unifying the work of women in the church, however, was turned down by the General Council of 1928. The deaconess organization was left as it was, and the bulk of women workers remained in individual work situations with no representation or direct link with other women workers. Instead, the General Council established yet another committee, the Inter-Board Committee on Women Workers in the United Church of Canada to recruit, promote the employment of, and to initiate and maintain standards of training and work for women workers.[35] Like its predecessor, the new Committee was made up of representatives of the various Boards of the church and its members were not chosen primarily because of their interest in or familiarity with deaconess work. Within its mandate, the new Committee was to support deaconess work, yet it had no power to legislate changes in salaries or working conditions. It was to work instead through consultation and persuasion. Thus, its ability to succeed in securing justice for deaconesses was severely circumscribed and it had an impossible job to do. At the same General Council a minimum salary was established for deaconesses. It was $1,000.00 with increases for experience to a maximum of $1,200.00, "the full remuneration to be paid to the Deaconess monthly, she being responsible for her own living expenses."[36]

Although the official records do not state why the recommendation for a diaconate was turned down, several reasons can be inferred. In the early years, when problems of merging and organizing the traditions and structures of three denominations were plentiful, proposals which had to do with the creation of new structures were always considered less important than the ordering of what already existed. Also, because it was women's work which was being spoken of in the report and General Council was primarily a male court, the problems of women workers, no matter how well documented or expressed, would tend to be trivialized and ignored. Since deaconesses were few in number and women workers were generally doing work which was hidden and undervalued, many of the delegates to Council would not be familiar with their work or perspectives. In addition, those who were vehemently opposed to women's ordination and who saw it as one more aspect of the feminization of the church, may have voted against the proposed diaconate simply because it had to do with justice for women. For them, it could have been interpreted as one more way that women were trying to step out of their "natural", secondary place in the hierarchy of the church and to change it. Such fears of change and of women's domination were evident in the response of H. A. Kent to the calls for Lydia Gruchy's ordination:

> What the Church needs at the present time is not more femininity, but more masculinity. Women's work in the Church is carried on with admirable zeal and faithfulness. What are the men doing?[37]

### The New Inter-Board Committee Begins Its Work:

The results of the Council's unwillingness to act on the proposal for a diaconate were devastating for all women workers. They were left with little assurance of adequate working conditions, no direct representation in the courts of the church, and no connection with the clergy. The new Inter-Board Committee began its work, with the help of an executive secretary, who devoted a great deal of her time to deaconess work. She interpreted church policy, screened applications, helped with the placement of new deaconesses and those wishing to change their work, and in general acted as a confidante for women across the country. She maintained contact with both active and retired deaconesses through frequent newsletters and advised them on such things as obtaining half-fare railway tickets, shared information about marriages, family deaths and other

significant events in the lives of her women, and referred to herself as a friend:" Be sure to drop me a note if you need a friend at any time."[38]

Such concern and careful communication did begin to break down some of the barriers of distance and eased the feelings of isolation which many deaconesses had. Although those who worked for the Woman's Missionary Society had a sense of belonging to a group of strong women and had opportunities to form friendships and get support, those deaconesses who worked in congregations or social agencies were often on their own and had little contact with other deaconesses. The correspondence from the Executive Secretary and the biennial meetings of the Deaconess Association provided their only contact with other deaconesses.

The new Inter-Board Committee consisted of representatives from all the church Boards, the Woman's Missionary Society, the Deaconess Order, and General Council. One of its first tasks was to review a number of the policies which had governed the supervision of deaconesses and which had been agreed to during the period 1926 to 1928. Regulations that they supported included one that deaconess candidates must be "not less than twenty-three, and not more than thirty-five years of age."[39] The Committee also established procedures for admission and withdrawal from the Order, and for methods of appointment, and reaffirmed the minimum salary of $1,000.00.[40]The reaffirming of the traditional age limits regarding eligibility for the Deaconess Order meant that older women who had raised families or had been in other kinds of work were effectively prevented from becoming deaconesses.

**The Disjoining Rule:**

The Inter-Board Committee continued a rule which had been previously in place, one which was a reflection of the cultural expectations of the times, but which would severely limit the recognition and opportunities for women in the future. The Committee reaffirmed the rule that deaconesses could not continue to work as deaconesses or maintain membership in the Order once they married. Made originally when Deaconess Orders were modelled on the organizational principles of sisterhoods, and included communal living arrangements, this rule proved incredibly difficult to displace, even

though deaconesses now had much more independence and were expected to provide for themselves and live in the secular community. The regulation affirmed by the Committee required deaconesses to resign from their positions and from the Order, by letter, previous to, or on, the day that they were to be married. The procedure involved was called "disjoining."[41]

This disjoining rule remained a part of the Manual and Constitution of the Deaconess Order until the late 1950's, although its effect on women was softened in 1953 when the Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers, the successor to the Inter-Board Committee, began to allow individual deaconesses who married to keep their positions and remain in the Order if both they and their employers wrote letters formally requesting it. Interestingly enough, the softening of the rule occurred at the time when women workers were scarce, and the rigid adherence to the rule coincided with an over-supply of clergy after Church Union and during the Depression.

The persistence of the rule over time suggests that it was more than just a remnant of a more communal and segregated past. It was supported by a theology and a societal expectation that women could not combine a role as wife and as paid worker outside the home at the same time. For all women, marriage was seen as the natural and legitimate primary commitment, and extra-domestic work was never to be permitted to interfere with it. The requirement of retirement after marriage was not limited to the profession of deaconess in the early years. It also applied to other care-taking professions such as teaching and nursing, though both of these professions won the concession that married women could work long before deaconesses did. Nevertheless, the dominant ideology in each proclaimed that women's nurturing, caretaking capabilities were, first of all, given for family care and maintenance, and only secondarily, in cases of spinsterhood or widowhood, could they be applied to wage-earning. Implied within this was an understanding that marriage and the accompanying role of motherhood themselves constituted a calling, a job of great challenge for women, and one which, by definition, included economic, social and emotional dependence on a man. The church's theology, made explicit in the 1932 report entitled "The Meaning and Responsibilities of Christian Marriage", enforced, legitimized and naturalized this particular understanding of

women's responsibilities and identity within marriage by making participation in the male-dominated, traditional nuclear family appear as God's will for women, as the only way in which the world could be ordered, and by equating deviance from this role with sin.[42]

The rule of disjoining was justified by some as the only practical way of dealing with women professionals in the church. The call system of the church, while not applied directly to deaconesses, did have a general ideology which equated faithfulness in professional church work with a willingness to be sent anywhere in the country.[43] While this was practical for male ordained ministers only because their wives were socialized and rewarded for following them without question, it would not have been possible for married deaconesses to present themselves as equally available and therefore "faithful" servants in a society in which it was almost unheard of for a husband to relocate himself for the convenience and job situation of his wife. Thus, in practical terms, married deaconesses could not be accommodated either within the current theology or practices concerning professional work in the church.[44]

Such a strict regulation requiring retirement immediately after marriage, while strange within the United Church today, proved extremely difficult to eliminate permanently. Calls for its continuance and, in the case of ordained women, for its enactment were both constant and forceful, and betrayed an unwillingness within church members and structures to see women's work as a career, as anything beyond a time of waiting, of preparation for marriage. For example, at General Council in 1962 the issue of married women's suitability for ordained ministry was hotly debated. One of the recommendations being considered by the Council was that ordination for women be open "only to those women who are unmarried or widows, and therefore not under the call of wifehood or motherhood at the time of their ordination."[45] Also, it was recommended that when ordained women married, they should "enter their special calling of wife and mother, and cease to be eligible for settlement as a minister of the Word and Sacraments." Such women could return to pastoral ministry only if their husbands died or "at that time of life when [they are] no longer required in the home as mothers and if a suitable ministry can be arranged which does not interfere with the stability of the marriage and

their position as wives."[46]

Because of regulations such as these, issues of workload and inadequate remuneration were not taken seriously since it was assumed that deaconess work was not a career or a long-term occupation in women's lives. It was assumed that in the short term poor working conditions and salaries could be endured because marriage, the real vocation, was not far ahead for most women. Also the lack of pension provisions was not taken seriously because the assumption again was that most women would marry and would have husbands to provide for their futures. Deaconess work became seen by many as some kind of preparation period for real life (i.e., marriage), and the women who were deaconesses were perceived as a group as young, immature, less experienced than their ordained colleagues, and less serious about their work. Because of this, many believed that deaconesses needed supervision and constant advice in order to do their jobs, and could be paid poorly and be given little autonomy or authority in decision-making.

In actuality, almost half of the deaconesses at any given period in the church's life did not marry and ended up spending their entire lives in church work.[47] Many times they worked for an ordained man who was much younger and less experienced, yet found themselves under his supervision. Questions of exploitation and inferior treatment were never raised because "everyone" knew that deaconess work was temporary and the domain of young women waiting to be married. In a very subtle way, the experiences and characteristics of some deaconesses conveniently became seen as the description and rule for all. The recruitment materials produced for women stated these expectations in a matter-of-fact manner, as in the following, produced in 1948:

> It will be noticed that on these lists [of workers needed] a larger number of women are called for than men. This is natural, as the replacements are inevitably more frequent. Marriage and other types of home responsibility tend to make the average length of service of women shorter than that of men.[48]

**The Blurring of Volunteer and Professional:**

The disjoining rule also benefitted the church directly. Most deaconesses who married ended up becoming involved in volunteer work in the congregations which they joined. They were actively encouraged to accept major leadership positions, particularly

in Christian Education programmes and women's groups, and were using their educational skills and experience in a way which congregations benefitted from yet paid nothing for. Because of this, deaconess work differed from other professions in which women had to resign upon marriage. Nowhere else were the lines between volunteerism and professionalism so blurred and the pressure to work for nothing so strong as in the church. All of this occurred within a context in which all women were expected to work for their church, and the variety of the tasks kept such work hidden and yet endless. Tasks included baking pies, sewing for bazaars, cleaning the sanctuary, sewing banners or curtains, catering for banquets, teaching Sunday School, babysitting elders' children, and planting gardens around the church building, to name only a few. Though the area has been largely unexplored, it is evident that women's volunteer work has been both exploited and unacknowledged by the church. Thousands of dollars have been saved and women have raised, in addition, thousands of dollars to balance budgets and support special projects within the majority of congregations.

The volunteer exploitation of women was at its greatest when deaconesses married ministers, as often happened from 1925 to 1955. In the early years many graduates of the United Church Training School did work for several years and then marry ministers. Others married clergy upon graduation, men they had met while studying at Emmanuel College. Others attended the Training School with the intention of preparing themselves for life as the wife of a minister.[49] Because of this pattern, in the 1940's and 1950's the Training School was consistently referred to as "the angel factory", "the clergy reserves" and "the marriage market".[50] All who married were expected to use their skills and training as volunteers in the church. The Woman's Missionary Society was well aware of the economic benefits of women's voluntary work, and clearly stated its expectation that, if a woman professional married a minister or missionary, two workers could be had for the price of one, and if a woman married a secular man, her volunteer work would be available in the church she attended. The following passage from an article on the WMS in *The United Church Observer* shows that such voluntary service by women was a source of great pride and was accepted without question:

[In the Woman's Missionary Society] the yearly casualty rate to the ranks

> through marriage is a continuing headache with which the organization's officers must cope. "We prefer" says Ruth Taylor--with an unmistakable twinkle in her eye--"that they marry some young man from the Board of Overseas Missions. The fact is that usually the husband and wife both stay and work together as a team; the Overseas Board pays the salary, and we are then in a position to send out another woman on the original salary."[51]

The Training School's own publicity in the 1930's and 1940's also showed the blurring between volunteer and professional work in women's lives.

> Many workers marry and serve their communities voluntarily with an effectiveness made possible by their special training. It is important, however, that one consider church work worthy of life-time service before choosing it as a vocation.[52]

The rule about disjoining at marriage also disadvantaged women in another way. It kept them out of the work force for long periods of time and made it difficult for them to get back into deaconess work if they were widowed or divorced. A number of women left deaconess work to care for members of their families, such as aging parents, a care-taking role which was expected of all single women in society. They too found it difficult to return to work, as one woman suggested in an interview with the author:

> I left to fill a need in my home and when my mother died five years later I was a back number and needed refresher courses. The change in our youth at that time made me reluctant to get back into youth work.[53]

The result of the disjoining at marriage and the caretaking for family members was a constant decrease in the numbers in the Order every year and the creation of an over-all impression that deaconess work was not long-term, not seriously a vocation, and definitely secondary in importance to the ordained male profession.

**The Probationary Rule:**

The second rule instituted by the Committee was the regulation that prospective deaconesses, before being received into the Order, must serve one year of probation at the end of which, if satisfactory reports had been given about their work performance, they would be recommended by the Committee for entrance into the Order.[54] This rule requiring a probationary period, not a requirement for ordained ministry or for any other type of work in the church, promoted the idea that deaconesses were people "in training" and that the hiring of one was, at best, risky. As the following letter from a deaconess who questioned the regulation suggests, there were a number of difficulties with the rule:

> Deaconesses should be given the same privileges as missionaries and ministers in the matter of designation. They are not any more of a risk (concerning whether they turn out all right or not) than either of the other two groups. But the big reason is one's relation to the Church in which one goes to work. It would have been much easier to establish myself if I had had my pin, uniform, etc. right from the beginning. Mr. McLeod didn't say a word from the pulpit about my designation because he thought the people would not understand. They had accepted me as experienced and trained, and it would make them think that I had just been practicing on them.[55]

**The Depression and the Loss of Jobs:**

Though in the years immediately after Church Union there had been well over nine hundred women employed within the Church, in the 1930's these job opportunities for women began gradually to disappear. With the combination of an excess of ministers as a result of the closing of several churches after Church Union, and the beginning of the Depression years, women's work opportunities decreased. Deaconess Boards, autonomous organizations within the Methodist Church which employed deaconesses to do social work, were also forced to disband in the early 1930's, curtaining even further the opportunities for deaconesses to do traditional types of community and benevolent work. In 1930 the Hamilton Conference Deaconess Board, with two deaconesses doing city mission work in Hamilton, and the Toronto Conference Deaconess Aid Society both closed their doors.[56]

Under the impact of the Depression, the whole church was having serious financial difficulties, and projects and salaries were cut drastically. The church had to struggle to hold the line in relief work, to continue the social work which was vital, and to keep open as many as possible of the Home Mission fields across Canada. There was no immigration, no church expansion and no frontier development at all.[57] Though the Woman's Missionary Society managed to keep most of its projects going throughout these years, many of the other employing boards did not. Many large congregations cut their staff to one ordained man.

By 1932 the job situation was considered critical, and the Committee, which had produced a new recruiting folder two years earlier, stopped actively recruiting candidates for the Deaconess Order, stating that:

> The number of candidates recruited [must be] determined by the number of

> openings in the general work of the church rather than by the number wishing to enter this form of service.[58]

By 1936 the admission process of the United Church Training School included writing to prospective candidates, even those who were most qualified, and informing them that "the prospects of any appointment [after graduation] are not very great".[59] The staff of the School was cut back and the Principal remained the only full-time member of the academic staff during the Depression and the Second World War.[60]

The Inter-Board Committee recommended that its own work be temporarily adjusted so that the secretarial duties could be carried by a secretary who would work one-third of the time. She would continue to supervise deaconesses, to assist in appointments when they could be found, and to interpret policy, but all correspondence and interviews with prospective candidates would be handled through the United Church Training School or through the Woman's Missionary Society, the largest employer.[61]

**Pensions for Methodist Deaconesses:**

Despite the decrease in staff time and the lack of job possibilities, the Inter-Board Committee continued its work on job conditions and remuneration for women workers. In 1934 it turned its attention to the situation of retired Methodist deaconesses, of which there were thirty-five who had inadequate funds for living.[62] Having done most of their work for the church at a time when deaconesses were paid only living expenses but were promised care in their old age, they had not had the chance to save money for their retirement years and were now being supplied with a pension which did not provide even basic living expenses. The Committee brought the situation to the attention of the church and worked for pension raises.

**Deaconesses as Ministerial Assistants:**

In looking at the job situation for deaconesses, the Committee saw a potential for women's jobs within local congregations as ministerial assistants. Thus, in 1933 the Committee began the task of finding out how it could convince the church of the value of deaconesses as congregational workers. After much deliberation, the Committee decided that there were possibilities for promoting deaconesses as Christian Education specialists, as Secretary-Deaconesses and as social ministry assistants. As a way of

pointing out the value of women in these jobs, the Committee set out in an organized way "to endeavour to discover the mind of some of the foremost men of the Church in regard to the question, 'Is a deaconess valuable in the service of a local congregation?'".[63] The answers to this question were included as part of the Committee's report to General Council in 1934 and were used within all publicity on the work of deaconess over the next decade.[64]

The responses given by these prominent ministers indicate both the traditional way in which women's work was perceived and the wide range of tasks deaconesses were actually expected to perform in local congregations. They hint at the endless nature of women's work and reflect popular ideas of what women were good at and should be directed to do. One testimonial from a minister in Eastern Canada is particularly telling:

> My experience has been unique, for I was prejudiced against deaconesses for reasons I need not enumerate. But after seven years' association with my deaconess, I am a complete convert. I simply could not have covered anything of the ground I have covered, had it not been for the always ready help and generous cooperation of her. I think that in two ways in particular the deaconess can supplement the minister to great effect, in a ministry to young women away from home, in dealing with adolescent girls and in being a kind of liaison officer between the Sunday School and the homes from which the children come.[65]

Such a statement echoes notions of the "handmaiden" image, of deaconesses as assistants, as deriving their worth from the minister, as doing the hidden work auxiliary to his, and of constant and endless availability. It also demonstrates a belief in a kind of specialization based on gender, an assumption that women's proper work is with other women and with children, work which, as recent feminist studies have shown, is consistently undervalued and marginalized by society.[66]

Another testimonial confirmed the subsidiary, yet indispensible role of deaconesses, clearly placed under the direction of the ordained minister.

> The difference which the deaconess has made in my church is the difference between ineffectiveness, and a thoroughly organized and effective organization. She is indispensible. This is not merely my opinion, it is the opinion of the whole church. We have tried different kinds of assistants in the church. We are convinced that a good deaconess is the best assistant that a church or minister can have.[67]

How deaconesses themselves felt about being perceived as handmaidens or assistants is

difficult to tell. Evidence shows that many preferred social service work or Woman's Missionary Society jobs (where their freedom was greater) to roles and circumscribed positions within congregations. Congregational jobs had a slightly higher vacancy rate than other areas of employment,[68] but whether this was directly attributable to the desire for more autonomy is difficult to judge. Some deaconesses saw their role as assistants as unproblematic and as prescribed by the attitudes they had towards their own identity as women. They saw their work as assistants in a positive way, in terms of their ability to sense and meet needs. Thus, Stella Burry, who graduated in 1926, worked for four years in a New Church Development Project and then ten in a downtown Toronto church where she counselled, organized camping for the children from poorer homes in the inner city, and did many other things which today would be associated with traditional congregational ministry. She described her role and her work by saying she was an "assistant to the minister who could do a lot of things. It was easy for me to organize. If I saw a job that had to be done, and the need was there . . . well, my dear, that was my job."[69]

While undoubtedly in many cases such an arrangement worked well, it also left many deaconesses subject to the whims and evaluation of one person, an individual with very different training and an understanding of the church which was in opposition to that of deaconesses. Ordained ministers often had little understanding of the deaconesses' work in Christian Education and social service, and little appreciation of deaconesses' enabling and supportive leadership styles. Yet they were the deaconesses' supervisors and represented them on the church committees and boards. While deaconesses could be official members of committees and the Official Board if asked, there was nothing in the Manual of the United Church which would guarantee their direct access to any of the structures of the church. Those women who helped with Christian Education programmes and were not present for Sunday worship because of duties elsewhere were not visible or known to many people in the congregation, and in some churches there were few church members who had direct knowledge of the work of deaconesses.

**The Establishment of Deaconess Committees:**

Several congregations dealt with the problems of lack of both visibility and connection with official structures by establishing their own deaconess committees, and by 1940 official publications on the Deaconess Order advocated the formation of such groups in every congregation which employed a deaconess. Most of the committees created helped to assist deaconesses in their work, and worked hard at developing strategies to publicize the work in the congregation, but their influence was limited by the fact that most of them consisted strictly of women, who were themselves often removed from the hierarchy and decision-making groups of the congregation. Thus their very make-up reinforced the idea that deaconess work was gender-defined and that it was natural for such women to restrict their sphere of influence to the women and children of the church. As one publicity item stated:

> Such extensive and intensive work requires many assistants, and a valuable contribution of the Deaconess is the development of an efficient board of volunteer workers. When, in addition, there is a group of women behind the Deaconess who keep in touch with her, support her, and assist her in her manifold tasks, the contribution of a Deaconess to the whole life of the congregation is invaluable.[70]

Such deaconess committees acted as support and advisory groups, helped to fight for raises in deaconesses' salaries on occasion, and raised money to buy supplies needed for their work. In return, deaconesses were often honorary members of all the women's groups within congregations. A sense of the extraordinary amount of work that could be expected in return from an individual deaconess is conveyed in this 1934 tribute by a minister from the west:

> We have a very loyal deaconess. Her work is quite diversified. Among her many tasks she directs our church school work in general (Sunday and Mid-Week). She teaches a Bible Class; she is convenor of the Missionary Department of our school; she has secretarial duties in the church office; she visits the homes; she cares especially for the women and children of the congregation; she gives her evenings over to church and committee meetings; she welcomes people to our church services;--all of which to my mind is of tremendous importance in the life of a church.[71]

**The "Secretary-Deaconess":**

The mention of church secretarial work as part of a deaconess' duties is important to note. It had always been there as a possible component of deaconess work, but during the

Depression, giving greater emphasis to deaconesses' secretarial expertise and duties became a way to save many a deaconess' job by assigning to that position clerical work which was both visible and indispensible in the eyes of the congregation. Though the college in Manitoba had taught secretarial skills as a part of its curriculum for deaconesses since before Church Union, it was not until jobs became scarce that clerical work was formally incorporated into descriptions of deaconess work and given official recognition with the title of "Secretary-Deaconess."[72]Though the creation of this position did save some jobs for women, it also led to the overwork of many who were expected to accomplish a complete range of traditional deaconess duties plus a whole new set of secretarial duties. In many cases, it was not the creation of a new job; it was merely a case of adding on a whole new set of responsibilities to a job which was already too large. Because of this, only four years after the Committee began to promote the idea of the Secretary-Deaconess, it had to add a cautionary note to its description of the position:

> Clerical work should be kept at a minimum; major responsibilities should be in the field of Christian Education and Pastoral Care.[73]

Such a statement would not have been necessary had the Committee not been fully aware of the fact that congregations expected women workers to be willing to do anything and everything associated with "serving" the church.

The dangers of including clerical and secretarial work within the publicity on deaconesses involved more than the possible creation of situations of overwork. Such combining of secretarial and educational functions also led to a blurring of the congregation's perceptions of what a deaconesses did and was. In some cases, it led to the perception that a deaconess was a glorified secretary, very expensive and not particularly qualified, rather than a skilled professional with specific and highly-developed skills in Christian Education and social ministry. Although it helped to save many a job in the 1930's, it later became a serious impediment to the recognition of both the professional nature and specific skills of deaconess work. In the publicity folder "Ready to Help Your Church" of 1940, the task of the Secretary-Deaconess was outlined in detail, and clearly reflected an emphasis on the record-keeping and office work rather than on the Christian Education or outreach work:

> The Deaconess spends the mornings in the office. She attends to the correspondence, mimeographs the weekly calendar and the letters that are sent out to the congregation. She prepares lists for the elders and for the every-member canvas and receives the Church notices. The files are an endless responsibility; each death, marriage, birth or change of address requiring an entry on each of four or five cards, and in the midst of this office work there are even more tasks. A sunday School superintendent comes for help.[74]

Secretarial work, which was in a large part a form of assistance to the minister, reinforced the congregation and clergy's perceptions that deaconesses were assistants and could only function under the direction of others.

**Deaconesses and the Ordination of Women Debate:**

During 1935 and 1936 much of the attention of the church concerning women's work focused on the remit which had been authorized by the 1934 General Council concerning the possibility of ordaining women. Each Presbytery had been asked to vote on the following question:

> Are you in favour of the following legislation? That the Basis of Union be amended by adding the following new clause under the general heading: 'The Ministry' in the section: 'Pastoral Office, including Term of Service': 'The ministry shall be open to both men and women'?[75]

Presbyteries were required to vote 'yes' or 'no', and could attach no qualifications or explanations to their vote. The debate on the issue was heated and rigidly polarized. Articles appeared in *The New Outlook*, the United Church Newspaper, both for and against it. Fears were expressed that women would take over the church, that the quality of ministry would suffer, and that men would leave the church in droves. Some people, in the midst of the controversy, were persuaded to support Lydia Gruchy's ordination only though seeing Lydia Gruchy herself as an unusual case, as removed from the "nature and failings of most women." A particularly persuasive article in *The New Outlook* clearly developed the "pro" argument on the basis of the notion of Lydia Gruchy as a "special case":

> There is not the slightest possibility of women ever displacing men in this calling--not that that would be a terrible calamity even if it did come. Those who urge this change in our polity do so, no doubt, with the thought that it would only be in most unusual cases, something like Miss Gruchy's, that ordination would ever be asked for or thought of and that the dangers that some people see are never likely to exist anywhere else than in their own imaginations.[76]

Others were persuaded by Lydia Gruchy's properly "feminine", modest and unassuming manner, by the fact that she was willing to let prominent males plead her case and speak on her behalf. In many people's estimation, the credit for her ordination was in fact due to the combination of her modesty being overshadowed by her articulate male champions. Thus *The New Outlook* of November 18, 1936, in describing the historical event, said:

> We have come tonight to mark a step in our church's history--a development which we owe, not to the intransigent demand and agitation of women, but in the first instance, perhaps to our revered and affectionately esteemed Dr. E. H. Oliver. His knightly and chivalrous attitude and advocacy have finally prevailed.[77]

The results of the remit were announced at the General Council in 1936. Out of the 114 Presbyteries of the church, eighty voted in favour of amending the Basis of Union, twenty-six voted against it, and eight gave no report.[78] Therefore, it passed and the way was opened for the ordination of women.

Members of the Deaconess Order and its accompanying administrative Committees watched the debate on the ordination of women with great interest. While there is some evidence that individual deaconesses, particularly in Saskatchewan, actively worked to secure the ordination of women, the Deaconess Association and the Inter-Board Committee made no separate public statements on the issue to General Council, but instead stated that their opinions had been given to the Committee on the Ordination of Women and were reflected in their report. Some deaconesses saw Lydia's ordination as signalling major changes for women's work in the church. For example, Gertrude Rutherford, Principal of the Training School, in correspondence with Mary Eadie, secretary of the Inter-Board Committee, said the following:

> Apparently Ordination of Women went through without a flutter. This is not a very encouraging sign, unless I misread it. The trouble is that women are not clamouring at the gates and for this reason the 'brethren' have little reason to be greatly excited. But there is no knowing what may develop in the next few years. In any case, the decision of the Council has, I think, a direct bearing on the whole question of the place of women in the church--training, qualifications and the job of the United Church Training School.[79]

One can only speculate as to what she specifically meant, whether she was talking about the scarcity of jobs for women, whether she was afraid that women would now apply for

ordination and ignore the Deaconess Order, or whether she saw ordained women as yet another division in the work of women, a division which would only increase their exploitation and isolation within the church.

During the first few years few women entered ordained ministry and Lydia Gruchy did in fact remain the "exceptional" woman. From 1936 to 1947 only seventeen women were ordained, and there was only an average of two ordinations of women per year for the following ten years.[80] Also, few deaconesses went on to request ordination. The first one to do so mentioned in the minutes of the Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers was in 1950.[81] Therefore, while the church could now point to ordination as an example of its practice of equality for women and describe itself as open to women's gifts and ministry, most women in 1936 were still concentrated in less-recognized, poorly-paid and marginal work within the church.

The ordination advocates' strategy of having women remain silent while men presented Lydia's case to the church was one which deaconesses would evaluate as effective and use in their own later attempts to work for recognition and justice. They learned quickly that women were most successful when they didn't act as their own advocates, when they instead remained non-assertive, humble and gracious. The chances of success increased when women's claims were legitimized and expressed by prominent men. Many times in the future, deaconesses would use testimonials from male clergy to advance their claims and would ask men to speak for the need for better representation, more adequate salaries, and better working conditions in the church.

**Restructuring the Administrative Committee for Deaconess Work:**

At the same time as it was discussing the question of ordaining women, General Council also considered a recommendation from the Inter-Board Committee on Women's Work which, if accepted, would radically affect the organization and nature of deaconess work. The crucial nature of the report was indicated in a letter from Gertrude Rutherford, the Principal of the Training School, to Mary Eadie, the Secretary of the Committee:

> I have been waiting anxiously for a report from General Council which would indicate consideration of the Deaconess Order. Have you made your speech yet? I hope it was a good one and that the 'brethren' took some concern for the question that is so important to us.[82]

The "question" referred to was the recommendation for the disbanding of the Inter-Divisional Committee and the establishment of a standing committee of General Council within which would be lodged considerable power concerning recruitment, policy-making, and supervision of the working conditions of all deaconesses. The new Committee was to consist of a Chairman and Executive Secretary, appointed by General Council, six men and six women appointed by General Council from the six central conferences, and one representative from the Boards of Evangelism and Social Service, Home Missions, Christian Education, and from the Woman's Missionary Society, all of the main employing bodies for deaconesses and other women workers, and two representatives from the Deaconess Order. In addition, there was to be a corresponding member from each conference of the church. There was to be a sub-committee which would specifically look after deaconess work and would report to the whole Committee regularly.[83] It was hoped that this new and more powerful Committee would help to bring the concerns of deaconesses to the whole church through the linking of the Committee membership with existing structures and groups. What was lost in the restructuring was the specific voice and experience of deaconesses, who were now minimally represented on the Committee. Out of a membership of approximately thirty, there were only two members who were themselves deaconesses.[84] The new Committee was approved, but as Mary Eadie suggests in her description of the session to Gertrude Rutherford, not without some controversy:

> I got on the agenda on Saturday and did my darndest. I wish you could have felt the electric shock when I read our recommendation that the Inter-Board Committee disband. Their jaws seemed to fall. It was quite dramatic. Thought you would like a line from the battle field.[85]

The new Committee began immediately to search for a full-time secretary and to publish a manual on the Deaconess Order which would both interpret the history and self-understanding of deaconesses and print all of the regulations concerning their candidacy, work and retirement in an official document of the church. At this time, the Committee put into place a number of structures and rules which would result in closer contact with deaconesses in their working situations and which would keep the Committee informed about difficulties which individual deaconesses were encountering

in their work. Deaconesses were expected to consult with the Committee concerning all appointments and transfers, to submit yearly reports of their work, to undergo yearly medical examinations, and to seek the Committees' advice on all job-related problems.[86]

A job description was created for the Executive Secretary which focused on recruitment, administration, representation of deaconess' interests on committees and boards of the church, liaison with church women's associations, and production of publicity and press releases related to deaconess concerns.[87] For the first time, the Secretary was to sit on all of the boards and groups which employed deaconesses. It was hoped that this direct representation and communication would allow for more effective work on salaries and employment conditions and would increase the opportunities available for deaconesses in the church. In the area of recruitment, the job description included regular visits to universities, Presbyteries, normal schools and high schools. Also, there were the necessary office responsibilities.[88]

In 1938 Lydia Gruchy, the first woman to be ordained in the United Church, became the Executive Secretary of the Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers, and contributions towards her salary were solicited from women's groups across the country. People involved in promoting the Deaconess Order saw this formation of the new Committee and its subsequent financing by the women of church as a vote of confidence in their work and as signalling the beginning of a new and much stronger movement for justice for women workers in the church. It was reported to General Council in Winnipeg that:

> [Women's Associations] support the Committee financially, thus taking a vital part in the invaluable work being done by deaconesses and other employed women workers. In the year 1939 the sum of $1,022 was received from them in donations ranging from $1.00 to $25.00.[89]

The appointment of an ordained minister as the head of an organization specifically concerned with the regulation, working conditions, recruitment and support of what were almost exclusively lay professional women appears to have been largely unchallenged. Perhaps the advantages of having someone who could represent them and speak for them in the official courts of the church far outweighed the disadvantages of having someone who was not herself a deaconess. Nevertheless, the impression was given that

deaconesses and other women workers could not "run their own show" and that they needed the expertise of an ordained minister to give their organization credibility.

An editorial in *The Christian Century* in March, 1938 praised the decision to hire Lydia Gruchy:

> The United Church decided to reorganize and develop the deaconess order and other forms of women's work. For the presentation of this project to the people from the pulpit and for the enlistment of high grade workers Miss Gruchy seemed specially suited, and her appointment, having now been announced, is received with cordial approval.[90]

But the article went on to suggest that her appointment was tied to the treatment of women in ordained ministry, stating that her willingness to accept the job, only two years after her own ordination, raised questions about "some issues involved in the inclusion of women in the pastorate." Of her previous work, the editorial suggested:

> Three pastorates proved fruitful in good works, though they were carried on under exceptional circumstances of strain due to the continuous drought in that area and the demoralization which had to be overcome on all sides. Extensive travel on each field under such circumstances demanded strength of every kind, which even a stalwart man might covet, and the tension proved too great. Fortunately she was then called to be assistant minister in a city church charged with directing religious education. But this barred her from anything more than the occasional use of the pulpit. Thus the two fields which seemed to be opened by ordination yielded disappointment but not defeat.[91]

Though unfamilar with the specific workings of the Deaconess Order, Lydia Gruchy brought with her a concern about the absence of women from leadership and policy-making positions in the church and about their over-representation in positions where policies were carried out and direction was received from others. In a 1939 editorial in *Women and the Church*, she observed:

> What we find is that women are active in the work of the Church but not to any appreciable extent in the formulating of its policies. Sunday Schools are staffed preponderantly by women. Yet while women are on the committees dealing particularly with Children's and Women's Work, the general boards which consider the principles governing Christian Education are composed mainly of men. The same is true of community work. All churches have deaconesses or social workers, and women are of necessity on the committees that direct the actual work as it affects the homes of the underprivileged and oppressed members of society. But we do not find them conspicuous in the committees or assemblies that give direction to the thinking of the Church constituency concerning the basic changes needed in our economic life in order to remedy the ills they are trying to alleviate.[92]

Such observations were to be confirmed again and again in her work over the next five years on behalf of deaconesses and other women workers in the United Church.

**Conclusion:**

For a number of reasons, the first thirteen years of the United Church's existence were difficult ones for deaconesses. Their work continued to be administered, as in the earlier Methodist tradition, by committees whose members had little direct involvement in deaconess work and no power to effect permanent changes in their status or working conditions. Deaconesses were officially described as handmaidens, and their responsibilities were limited to traditionally prescribed feminine functions of care-taking, assisting, nurturing and responding to the needs of others. Several administrative rules, such as the probationary and disjoining ones, were put in place and served to deprofessionalize and give a temporary appearance to deaconess work. In addition, jobs for deaconesses began to disappear gradually as the economic situation in Canada worsened.

## Notes

[1]UCA, *Journal of the Proceedings of the Methodist General Conference*, 1922 [Journal], 331; Commission Inquiry of the General Conference, Methodist Church: Report to the General Board of Management of the Deaconess Society [Commission Report], 2-3.

[2]For a comprehensive discussion of this period see: John D. Thomas, "Servants of the Church: Canadian Methodist Deaconess Work, 1890-1926", *Canadian Historical Review*, LXV, 3 (September 1984): 371-395.

[3]*Christian Guardian*, 29 November 1911, 24-5; *Agenda of the Ninth General Council 1940*, UCC, 298.

[4]UCA, Commission Report (1923), 4-13.

[5]*The Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada*, 1921 to 1924.

[6]*The First Fifty Years 1895-1945: The Training and Work of Women Employed in the Service of the United Church of Canada* [*First Fifty*] (Toronto: CDOWW, UCTS and WMS, n.d.), 14.

[7]*Ibid.*, 14.

[8]*Handbook of the Deaconess Order of the United Church of Canada* [*Handbook*] (Toronto: CDOWW, 1944 edition), 8-9.

[9]*Agenda of the Second General Council 1926*, UCC, 38-41.

[10] *First Fifty*, 14.

[11]Calendars of UCTS from 1926 onwards all had extensive statements on the purpose and practice of Field Education as part of the over-all programme of study.

[12]CCSA, Calendar of UCTS, 1930.

[13]*Ibid.*, 8.

[14]*Ibid.*, 19.

[15]Mary Anne MacFarlane, *Educated Ministry: Diaconal Ministry* (Toronto: MPE, UCC, 1987).

[16]Quoted in *60th Anniversary: The United Church Training School 1895-1955* (Toronto: UCC, n.d.), 17.

[17]*Agenda of the Third General Council 1928*, UCC, 160.

[18]*Forms of Service for the Offices of the Church* (Toronto: United Church Publishing House, 1926), 132.

[19]*Ibid.*, 128.

[20]*Ibid.*

[21]*Ibid.*, 130-1.

[22]*The Book of Common Order of the United Church of Canada* (Toronto: The United Church Publishing House, 1932), 187.

[23]*Agenda of the Third General Council 1928*, UCC, 160-172.

[24]*First Fifty*, 19.

[25]UCA, *Annual Reports, Woman's Missionary Society*, 1926 to 1935 (Toronto: The United Church Publishing House, 1926-1935).

[26]*Ibid.*, 1927; By way of comparison, in 1929 the salaries for deaconesses were

$1,000 to $1,200, while nurses in Ontario were paid $1,090 to $1,597. Salaries of women teachers in Toronto in 1930 were $1,000 to $2,400 while deaconesses were paid $1100 to $1300. Comparative statistics from nursing and teaching reported in *Women at Work 1850-1930* (Toronto: Women's Press, 1974), 147 and 194.

[27]UCA, "Report of the Committee on Employed Women Workers", *Agenda of the Third General Council 1928*, 163.

[28]*Ibid.*, 165.

[29]*Ibid.*

[30]Grace Lane, "G. L's Listening Post" *The United Church Observer*, September 1962, 24.

[31]Grace Lane, "As Women See the Church", *The United Church Observer*, September 1962, 25.

[32]Norman Mair, "Notes on Women's Diaconal Ministry: Montreal", unpublished paper, March 6, 1984, 5, a copy on file in MPE, UCC.

[33]UCA, "Report of the Committee on Employed Women Workers", 162-3.

[34]*The New Outlook*, January 18, 1928.

[35]UCA, "Report of the Committee on Employed Women Workers", 163.

[36]*Ibid.*, 167.

[37]*General Council Proceedings 1928*, UCC, 25.

[38]Personal files of Harriet Christie, letter from Mary Eadie to all deaconesses, April 1931, seen by courtesy of Shelley Finson.

[39]UCA, "Report of the Committee on Employed Women workers", 166.

[40]*Ibid.*

[41]*The Manual of the Deaconess Order* (Toronto: UCC, 1940), 18.

[42]*Agenda of the Fifth General Council 1932*, "The Meaning and Responsibilities of Christian Marriage", 44-54.

[43]*The Manual of the United Church of Canada* (Toronto: The United Church Publishing House, 1981) 84-87.

[44]The Settlement system later provided a problem for ordained women and illustrates the difficulty of integrating women into systems and procedures which have been designed exclusively for men.

[45]Grace Lane, ""G. L's Listening Post", 24.

[46]*Ibid.*

[47]CCSA, File on Membership Records of APW.

[48]*The World Church Needs Canadian Christian Youth for its Post-War Advance* (Toronto: UCC, 1948), 3-4, a recruiting pamphlet for BFM and WMS.

[49]CCSA, Membership Records of FPW and DA.

[50]"Covenant College", *The United Church Observer*, January 15, 1963, 10.

[51]"She Views a Changing World," *The United Church Observer*, September 1, 1958, 18.

[52]*Women Serve the Church* (Toronto: UCC, 1944), 1, recruitment pamphlet for CDOWW.

[53]Mary Anne MacFarlane, *Educated Ministry: Diaconal Ministry.*

[54]*The Manual of the Deaconess Order*, 14.

[55]CCSA, Quoted in the Minutes of CDOWW, November 13, 1940, 2.

[56]*Agenda of the Fourth General Council 1930*, UCC, 262.

[57]*First Fifty*, 19.

[58]*Agenda of the Fifth General Council 1932*, UCC, 297.

[59]CCSA, Papers of Gertrude Rutherford, Letter from Rutherford to Mary Eadie, September 28, 1936.

[60]UCC, MPE, "Tribute to Gertrude Rutherford", Minutes of the Nineteenth Annual Meeting of BCSS, May 10-11, 1962, 11.

[61]*Agenda of the Fifth General Council 1932*, UCC, 295; *Agenda of the Ninth General Council 1940*, UCC, 298.

[62]*Agenda of the Sixth General Council 1934*, UCC, 319-322.

[63]*Ibid.*, 321.

[64]Each recruitment piece or publicity folder printed had, at the beginning, an endorsement by the Moderator of the United Church and four or five quotes from prominent male ordained ministers who had worked with deaconesses. This was then followed by a summary of the duties of a deaconess.

[65]*Agenda of the Sixth General Council 1934*, 321.

[66]One particularly valuable book on the marginalization and invisibility of women's work is Rachel Kahn-Hut et al., *Women and Work: Problems and Perspectives* (New York: Oxford, 1982). Also important is Janet Finch and Dulcie Grove (ed.), *A Labour of Love: Women, Work and Caring* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983) which looks at caring as work.

[67]*Agenda of the Sixth General Council 1934*, UCC, 321.

[68]CCSA, "Report of the Inter-Board Committee on Women Workers in the United Church of Canada", 1930, 1932.

[69]Quoted in Nancy Elizabeth Hardy, *Called to Serve--A story of Diaconal Ministry in the United Church of Canada* (Toronto: MPE, UCC, 1985), 17-18.

[70]*Ready to Help Your Church* (Toronto: UCC, 1940), 14-15, recruitment pamphlet of CDOWW.

[71]*Agenda of the Sixth General Council 1934*, UCC, 321.

[72]*Ready to Help Your Church*, 8-11.

[73]*The Manual of the Deaconess Order*, [*Manual*], 11.

[74]*Ready to Help Your Church*, 8-11.

[75]*Agenda of the Seventh General Council 1936*, UCC, 36.

[76]*The New Outlook*, June 23, 1935, 76.

[77]*The New Outlook*, November, 18, 1936, 1059.

[78]*Agenda of the Seventh General Council 1936*, 36.

[79]CCSA, Papers of Gertrude Rutherford, letter from Rutherford to Mary Eadie, September 28, 1936.

[80]WIM, UCC, MPE, "Women Ordinands 1936-1985".

[81]CCSA, Minutes of CDOWW, April 20, 1950, 1.

[82]CCSA, Papers of Gertrude Rutherford, letter from Rutherford to Mary Eadie, September 28, 1936.

[83]*Agenda of the Eighth General Council 1936*, UCC, 275.

[84]*Manual*, 27-28.

[85]CCSA, Papers of Gertrude Rutherford, letter from Mary Eadie to Rutherford, September 28, 1936.

[86]*Manual*, 18-20.

[87]CCSA, "Appraisal of the Work of the Committee on the Deaconesses Order and Women Workers of the Church and Recommendations as to Future Policy," Minutes of CDOWW, April 10, 1944, 1.

[88]CCSA "Report of the Special Committee at the United Church Training School", Tuesday, September 28, 1943, 1-2.

[89]*Agenda of the Ninth General Council 1938*, UCC, 300.

[90]*The Christian Century*, March 2, 1938, 9.

[91]*Ibid.*

[92]Lydia Gruchy, "Women and the Church", *YWCA Notes* 21, 9 (December 1939): 1.

# CHAPTER TWO

## WORKING FOR GOD AND FOR CANADA: 1939-1945

### Introduction:

Beginning in 1939 the employment prospects and the type of work done by deaconesses and other women workers in the church changed dramatically. This was partly because of a general shortage of male ordained personnel, created by the enlistment of church personnel in the Armed Forces, and by an increasing number of resignations from the ministry during the period 1925 to 1939. Both of these factors resulted in a dramatic shortage of ordained personnel and a willingness to employ women in jobs which had previously been restricted to male clergy. Such substitutions were agreed to not because of a newly-discovered belief in the competencies of deaconesses and women workers or an awareness of the false barriers which surrounded ordained ministry, but because of an understanding that the war years were a time of crisis and required the use of creative, albeit temporary, measures to keep the church functioning effectively. The hiring of large numbers of women was seen as the only way in which the crucial work of the church could be maintained. In addition, the chaotic social and work conditions created by the development of massive, centralized war industries created a need for more church workers and church services than ever.

### The Shortage of Ordained Ministers:

With respect to the shortage of ordained ministers, the situation was identified as critical as early as 1940. The statistics told a grim tale:

> Since Union [1925] up to December 31, 1940, 1501 ministers of the United Church have withdrawn from the ministry, retired from active work, or died, and in the same period 1004 new ministers have been ordained.[1]

By 1942 the situation has worsened so much that the Executive of General Council was asked to stop the resignations of ministers, to prevent clergy from taking secular jobs, and to enlist women as assistants who could serve in large congregations (instead of a second minister) and perform specialized work. Further, the Executive was urged to:

> Declare that the [United] Church is in full sympathy with our war effort and is absolutely convinced that the preservation of such institutions as the Christian Church is of supreme importance, and therefore asserts that its ministry is as

> vital to the well-being of the nation as any war industry for which man power is needed.[2]

Despite General Council's efforts to equate the importance of the church's efforts and well-being with that of the military and the war industries, they were not successful in stemming the tide of ministers who wished to resign. By 1945 the shortage had worsened, as reported in the *Montreal Gazette*:

> When all the Conferences of our church have finished their work, there will remain more than 200 fields without an ordained minister. This does not include many fields that have already been amalgamated, nor does it include many fields served by lay supply.[3]

As early as 1939 individual churches were solving their problem of not being able to secure an ordained minister by hiring deaconesses as lay supply ministers. Such women were asked to do all of the same kinds of work that an ordained minister would do, yet were given none of the privileges of the clergy. They could not vote in Presbytery or be involved in any decisions the church made. Nor could they administer the sacraments during worship: for this an ordained supervising minister had to be called in. Moreover, many lay women were expected as volunteers to supervise the Sunday School, lead women's groups, and develop a social outreach programme, all duties normally associated with deaconesses. Though many of the women employed in these positions performed admirably and were respected by their congregations, they were still seen as exceptional, as temporary, as "less than" an ordained minister. Though they were praised in publicity materials for "holding down the fort" while the men were away and the shortage continued, little recognition was given in either the publicity or the Courts of the church that their work had an integrity within itself and was making a distinct contribution to the way ministry was practiced. The assumption was always clearly stated that when the war was over, things would return to normal, every church would want a "real" minister, and deaconesses would quickly be replaced. One woman who had exercised an effective ministry within a church for three years was officially described as:

> taking the place of an ordained minister on a Canadian pastoral charge, which would be vacant and unattended if she were not there.[4]

Other women worked as "assistant ministers" in large congregations which would normally have two male clergy on staff.

**Recruiting for Women's Work:**

The shortage of ordained ministers and the rapid development of new churches in war-industrial areas led church officials to both re-activate their recruitment policies and strategies and to create new programmes and training models which would recruit, train and place women workers quickly into both established and new places of work. The Committee on the Deaconesses Order and Women Workers, which had stopped all of its recruitment activities years earlier, quickly authorized the production of folders and posters, and set up meetings across the country in high schools and universities. Both in print and in speeches, promoters of work for women used images which both militarized women's work and appealed to women's patriotism and faith. Thus, the Executive Secretary of the Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers, in a radio broadcast in 1944, urged women to:

> Be a part of the spearhead of the attack against existing evils and play your full part in winning Canada for Christ.[5]

The assumptions behind much of the recruitment material patronized women by presenting the need for loyalty and hard work from women as if such qualities were rarely displayed by females and were available to them only in emergencies and extremely rare circumstances. Little doubt was left in the mind of the reader that what was being asked of women in wartime was considered unique. The 1941 recruitment folder *A Full-Time Vocation for Christian Women* stated that:

> Many of these women [are now in] difficult and responsible positions which offer inducements, not of high salaries or easy hours, but of opportunity to do real work, interesting and worthwhile, with scope for vision and initiative--work which is concerned with people and their relationship to one another and to God. The present war emergency accentuates the need for a rigorous and courageous faith and offers unusual opportunities for leadership both now and in preparation for the post-war world.[6]

Another recruitment strategy which was quickly developed involved asking former graduates of the United Church Training School to publicize deaconess work and to write testimonials about the excellent training they received. Testimonials were printed in Conference and Presbytery materials, and a typical story invited women to

> see the work of the church as a whole, discover answers to many of the questions young people are asking, and get a vision of the Church of the future and the

part that [those] who are now young should be prepared to play in it[7]

**New Work in Military Training Camp and War Production Areas:**

One of the new areas of work created for deaconesses and other women workers during the war was work in military training camp and war production communities. Early in 1942 the United Church set up a Committee on Camp and War Production Communities to establish or direct the religious programmes in new camp and war industrial areas. The Committee began its work in the midst of the incredible migration and uprooting of families as people moved into factory and production jobs, and into training centres for the Armed Forces. In assessing the need, the Committee estimated that over 750,000 young people had moved from their homes to new forms of employment and an additional 600,00 had joined the Forces and were moved to training camps across the country.[8] The result was a chaotic concentration of people in previously small places. The Annual Report of the Committee on Camp and War Production Communities pointed out some of the problems:

> In the last two years Wartime Housing Limited has built, or is in the process of completing, over 17,500 houses across the length and breadth of Canada. These new houses are located in 64 towns--sometimes as additions to the already existing area; other times they are built on virgin soil. If only a few families arrive they are easily absorbed but if they come by the hundreds every facility is taxed--houses, stores, theatres, and, not least, the Church. From such an area comes the call for the war-time workers.[9]

By 1942 requests for such workers had come from all of the new war production centres in Ajax, Belleville, Brantford, Prince Rupert, Red Deer, Fort William, Galt, Hamilton, Kingston, Orillia, Peterborough, Sarnia, Welland and Windsor.[10]

The majority of the people hired by the United Church to work in these centres were women, many of them deaconesses with a wealth of experience in Christian Education and social outreach work. Seven women were hired initially in 1942, with an additional five in the first months of 1943. Their salaries were paid by the Woman's Missionary Society and, as stated at General Council in 1944:

> The success of this special wartime ministry [was] due to a large degree to the co-operation and support of that organization.[11]

By late 1943 there were ninety women at work in such communities across Canada.

Initially, their work was investigative and involved:

> Surveying the situation, informing the clergy of the newcomers in the area, guiding the women's groups in visiting, in home hospitality and in recreation in relation to the migrant population.[12]

Later on, as it became obvious that such communities would be in existence for a considerable length of time, the work took on a more educational and recreational focus, and included the establishment of Sunday Schools, Church Vacation Schools, Fresh Air Camps, Boys' Groups, Girls' Programmes, leadership of women's groups, as well as cooperation in such community projects as war-time day nurseries, day care for school children, home hospitality for men and women in the Forces, and recreation for young people in war industries.[13] The Committee also began to anticipate the need for work among war brides. In 1944 work began to provide welcoming programmes, social groups and cultural events for the thousands of women who would come to Canada with their new husbands, Canadian soldiers returning from war. In 1944 the Committee also reported to General Council that there were "approximately 40,000 women in the Armed Forces" and that cooperation with the government was needed to appoint women as assistant chaplains, "where there are large concentrations of women."[14] In the summer of 1944 a request came from the Federal Government that the Inter-Church Committee on the Church's Work among the Women in the Forces, of which the United Church was a member, name two women to take the training for chaplaincy work. Wilma Thomas of the United Church was one of the first two women appointed as assistant chaplain. In 1945 nine more women were appointed, including three from the United Church.[15]

**Work with Japanese Canadians:**

Boards which had traditionally employed large numbers of deaconesses also increased their work during the war, creating a demand for more trained women workers. The Woman's Missionary Society increased its work in many areas, but one of the most important, according to its annual reports, was its work with Japanese Canadians. Women's organizations, both in the Methodist and Presbyterian traditions, had a long history of work with Orientals, particularly on the West Coast and in large centres such as Toronto and Montreal. Such work included leadership in Bible Study programmes,

Women's Associations, children's groups and youth rallies.[16] Woman's Missionary Society reports during 1939 and 1940 were filled with details about the involvement of people of Japanese descent in the church and in the community, yet reflected an increasing awareness of the hatred and racism of Canadians which was making Japanese Canadians' lives extremely difficult. They stressed the loyalty of such people to Canada in accounts such as the following:

> Every Japanese community organization, young and old, has contributed to the defence of Canada fund, also to the Red Cross generously...Each group has pledged its loyalty to Canada and to democratic ways...The young men are bending every effort to be given a practical share in the defence of Canada.[17]

Reports such as these persuaded the Woman's Missionary Society of the need to increase its staff in Japanese work immediately. Though criticized by some church members for neglecting critical needs in war industrial areas in order to continue work with Japanese Canadians, the Woman's Missionary Society continued its commitment to Oriental Work. At the time when such decisions were being made about the deployment of workers, missionaries were being recalled from Japan, and the money budgeted for their overseas support was diverted into work in Japanese Canadian communities.

When war was declared on Japan, women workers were already well established in Japanese communities in Canada, and moved with the people when they were forcibly evacuated from their homes. In the places where the Japanese Canadians were incarcerated, WMS missionaries worked to set up kindergartens, hospital visitation programmes, women's groups and, in some locations, high schools.[18] Such workers observed first-hand the agony and alienation which Canadians of Japanese descent faced as their economic and family life was destroyed by the actions of the Canadian government. WMS reports were full of descriptions of the suffering of the Japanese, such as the following one of the instantaneous destruction of a Japanese Canadian fishing village in 1941.

> Stevenson, the largest Japanese fishing village on the west coast, was seriously affected. Immediately precautionary steps were taken by the R.C.M.P. officers, and the fishing fleet of 1,200 boats was immobilized. Almost overnight our village changed from one of activity to one of uncertainty and restlessness. Though the Japanese language schools were closed and many local organizations were restricted from holding public meetings, we are happy to

> continue our kindergarten and all the work and organizations of our Japanese United Church.[19]

Yet never did these WMS workers, who were observers first-hand of the tyranny of the government's forcible evacuation policy publicly protest the government actions or the racism behind them.

Instead, as Mona Oikawa documents in her thesis on the forced resettlement of the Japanese Canadians in the southern part of Ontario, WMS workers tried to make the conditions of the enforced evacuation less painful and by doing this actually aided the government in its dispersal of Japanese Canadians.[20] Steeped in a tradition which defined service solely in terms of the meeting of needs and the comforting of those in pain, the white middle-class WMS missionaries neither identified nor confronted the racism and institutional violence which was at the heart of the treatment of the Japanese.

**War-Time Missionaries:**

With the escalation of the war in the Atlantic and within Europe, the Woman's Missionary Society was forced to recall many of its overseas missionaries. At that time, slightly less than half were single women. As enemy submarine fleets started destroying Allied ships, it became a probability that some of these missionaries would find themselves captured or killed by enemy attacks. To avoid this, WMS administrators plotted new and circuitous routes to and from the mission stations, and tried to keep all travel routed well to the south to avoid the main concentrations of U-boats. In addition, the WMS arranged for neutral shipping firms to transport missionaries. At the time of Pearl Harbour fifteen missionaries were still in the Pacific Area.[21] Because of the careful work of the WMS officials all of them were transported to safety, and other missionaries continued to come and go by very indirect routes:

> To go to West China via Argentina, to fly into West China over the Himalaya Mountains, to reach India by way of New Zealand, or to travel from South America to Africa on a sailing vessel--all these were experiences of Canadian women during the war years.[22]

Towards the end of the war it became increasingly difficult to find any shipping companies who would transport missionaries. They saw mission work as of little importance and, as the Woman's Missionary Society itself recorded, they saw single

women passengers as a liability:

> With Germany, Italy and Japan all firing off at the Allies, war-neutral sea captains were fast growing wary of single women travelling aboard their ships: how could a single woman manage herself in case of torpedoing?[23]

Other critics felt that, with such a shortage of trained church workers in Canada, missionaries' work was needed at home, not in foreign countries. As such critics became more and more vocal, the pressure was on to limit the work of missionaries, and particularly single women, to Canada.

**Short-Term Training and Work Programmes for Women:**

As the need for immediate skilled church workers increased, the Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers began to identify specific groups of women and to develop publicity materials which would appeal particularly to them. At the Eleventh General Council the Committee reported that the need for women was urgent:

> The need for consecrated young women, fully trained, to render either full time or voluntary service in the Church is most imperative at this time. The number of requests for trained workers exceeds the available supply. Never before in the history of our Committee have we been in such a position.[24]

Four Boards of the church jointly developed special recruitment programmes. In 1943 women university graduates were inundated with promotion materials inviting them to give "one year of war-time service to the work of the Church" and offering them a shortened training time, scholarship assistance and an exciting year of professional work in the Church.[25]

The year of service such women were being asked to give included six weeks of training at the United Church Training School, three weeks of holidays and ten months of work. Travelling expenses, a war allowance and remuneration of not less than $800.00 were provided for all acceptable volunteers. Fifteen women were recruited, trained and placed, many of them in new congested war production communities.[26] A second and more extensive plan involved an offer of scholarships at the Training School to short-term workers who pledged to give three years of service to the church. In 1944 seven such scholarships were awarded, and in 1945, six.[27]

These were the first of many appeals for short-term workers who would receive

concentrated, very specialized training in order to meet an emergency need for personnel in the church. While very effective in staffing urgent programmes, such recruitment programmes also created specific problems for long-term women workers in the church, women such as deaconesses whose whole careers were dependent on recognition and fair treatment by the church. The introduction of massive short-term programmes for women tended to devalue the work of deaconesses and other long-term workers. The short-term training programmes and the very specific work responsibilities of these specially-recruited workers tended to get generalized, as representing all women's professional work in the church. Within a short period of time all women's work was perceived as secondary, short-term and emergency-specific, and women's contributions were framed in terms of the meeting of immediate needs and as including a hasty educational programme of preparation. Also, such special recruitment and training programmes, while designed to meet very specific needs, became precedent-setting and were referred to many times later by ministers who wished to secure minimal, poorly-trained assistance for their congregations at minimal expense. Thus, these war-time programmes resulted in a challenge to the professional status of women and led to the devaluing of much of their work within the church. Though not tied in directly to deaconess work, such recruitment schemes directly affected the perception and acceptance level of such work in the church. Notably, there were never any similar programmes offered for men, even though the labour of ordained ministers was, at this particular time, equally scarce.

The United Church Training School, the place where deaconesses and other non-ordained women workers were trained, continued to operate with a skeletal staff and with few full-course students. For deaconesses, the preparation course continued to be one year for those who were university graduates and two years for all other candidates. In 1941 the number of graduates from the preparation course for deaconesses stood at four.[28]

The majority of students at the School during the war years were participants in the special scholarship programmes and were in the short training courses. Eventually the School became a home for many workers who had been displaced by the war, including a number of missionaries who had been evacuated from the Far East and were unable to return to their work. Shelter was also given to some English mothers and their children,

and to a European Jewish refugee student. Late in 1942, the School gave over the use of its entire building to the Canadian Women's Army Corps, rented two houses to use for its own residences and offices, and transferred all its classroom work to the United Church's theological college in Toronto, Emmanuel College.[29]

**Pensions and Furloughs for Deaconesses:**

Though women's work in the church was in greater demand than ever before, the remuneration for such work was still very low. The Committee on the Deaconesses Order and Women Workers continued to be aware of the need for a concentrated effort to improve both salaries and pensions. In 1940 it began to work for adequate pensions for deaconesses. After studying a number of possibilities for action, the Committee recommended to General Council that all deaconesses and their employers be required to sign up for a Government Annuity to which both would contribute. In a statement issued to the Ninth General Council the Committee pointed out the seriousness of the situation for deaconesses who were near retirement.

> A canvass of the Boards employing Deaconesses reveals an awareness of the need of a Pension Plan, particularly for new entrants into the Order. However, many Deaconesses are employed by Churches that are trying to meet the needs of an encroaching "down-town" problem and in a situation which means decreasing revenue. Others are employed by the general boards of the Church which have no appropriation at present for such payments.[30]

The pension situation also continued to be critical for those women who had been deaconesses in the Methodist Church and were now retired and looked after by the Methodist Rest and Relief Fund. Even after the appeal launched earlier for donations, this Fund did not have enough money in it to support the increasing number of former Methodist deaconesses who were now past retirement. Many of these women were living in poverty situations, having worked for the Methodist Church for spending money and the promise that their needs would be looked after in old age. Appeals went out a second time for donations, particularly from women's organizations and individuals who had benefitted directly from the work of deaconesses over the years. The materials produced to explain the appeal for donations praised the work of deaconesses, pointed out their self-sacrificing ethos, and reminded the church of its responsibility to care for them.

Deaconess work holds an affectionate place in the regard of men and women who

> know the self-sacrificing zeal of the early group of women who dedicated themselves to it with no thought of remuneration but with utter confidence in the promise of the Church that they would receive maintenance care in sickness and provision for old age.[31]

The Fund, the Committee soon discovered, was even more inadequate than it had estimated, and was actually being subsidized by a number of retired deaconesses who were convinced of the importance of sharing limited financial resources and taking responsibility for the welfare of their sister workers. Several deaconesses who had married after retirement had become aware of the financial problems, and were refusing their pensions, leaving the money in the Fund for distribution to others. The Minutes of the Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers contained several notations of this, such as the following:

> Mrs. Mary Burwash has forgone her pension for the entire year and the amount credited to Deaconess Rest and Relief Fund. Letter of appreciation had been sent to Mrs. Burwash for this generous act.[32]

In other cases single women also returned their pensions for several years only to find themselves in situations of desperate need when illnesses or accidents brought unexpected medical expenses. Thus, almost twenty years after her retirement, the family of a deaconess was forced to write to the Committee on her behalf, asking if she could begin to receive her pension. The minutes of the Committee recorded the details:

> The letter asked if Miss Lake could receive a pension which the family understood was available for her. Miss Lake had agreed to forego receipt of [her] pension in order to help build up the Deaconess Rest and Relief Fund. Miss Lake had had heavy medical and hospital expenses, and as a result her resources have been completely used up. The Committee took immediate action to have Miss Lake receive her April pension.[33]

Also in 1940, the Committee began to look at furlough policies for women. It became obvious that deaconesses who were employed by the Woman's Missionary Society had fewer benefits than WMS employees who were not deaconesses, and deaconesses who were in other positions had no possibilities for furlough and study leave at all. In an attempt to equalize the situation, the Committee reported to General Council in 1940 that it had adopted a policy of urging employers of all deaconesses to provide furloughs for their workers. The furlough policy recommended by the Committee would parallel that in use by the Woman's Missionary Society. Though it could not legislate its implementation,

the Committee would take a stronger role in requesting furloughs for all deaconesses and would monitor their implementation on the following basis:

> When a Deaconess has served seven years in one place of work, and when the Emergency Fund warrants it, the Committee [will] initiate correspondence with the Deaconess and her employing Board, with the view to enabling her to have a three-month furlough . . . and the furlough allowance [will] be $200.00.[34]

**Making a Constitution for the Deaconess Order:**

The Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers continued to work on the rules of the Deaconess Order. Their work was published within a Constitution which summarized all of the conditions for training, entrance, work and disjoining of members of the Order. Eventually, it would be included in a section of the Manual (or rule-book) of the United Church. Qualifications for women wishing to become deaconesses were listed in a section at the beginning of the Constitution and included aspects of character, academic and work experience, and community and church involvement. In an effort to affirm the importance of practical experience and training in other than academic disciplines, the Constitution included an equivalence for the required university degree which had to do with other professional training and work experience. This equivalency section has remained as part of the Constitution until today and has allowed for the recognition and admission of women who have not followed traditional academic routes. It has recognized the varieties of experience which are part of women's lives and has challenged the church's over-reliance on academic qualifications within its leaders. Its disadvantage is that it has led to the perception, in a society which often equates academic qualifications with value and competence, that deaconesses are inferior, have inferior training and therefore should both be paid less and given less recognition in the church.

Qualifications listed in the Constitution were "a university degree or Grade XIII plus professional or business training and at least two years of successful experience in that profession."[35] Personal qualifications were summarized as:

> A rich and growing Christian experience, good health, capacity for leadership, interest in bringing out the gifts of others, concern for people and the ability to work with them. Patience, stability, resourcefulness, and sense of humour are essential.[36]

**Describing The "Work of a Deaconess":**

The Constitution contained a large section entitled "Work of a Deaconess" which outlined in detail places and types of work done by deaconesses both within Canada and around the world. It reflected the increasing emphasis on congregational work for women. The information was categorized not so much by the type of work done, but by the type of employer. It had sections on work in congregations, employment by Boards of Christian Education, work in social service institutions, and work under the Woman's Missionary Society or other mission groups both within Canada and overseas. The section on work within a local congregation was given prominence and was the most detailed in its description of responsibilities and areas of work. It clearly stated what had been common knowledge and practice for many years, that the deaconess was to serve as the assistant to the minister. In practical terms this meant, as the Constitution and publicity materials stated, "She must share the viewpoint and aims of the minister and further them in every possible way."[37]

As an assistant to the minister, the deaconess was to carry out any combination or number of the following duties: development of programmes of Christian Education for all ages and days of the week, recruitment and training of all leaders, assistance with camps and vacation schools, supervision of Junior Congregations, assistance with the minister's visitation, welcoming of newcomers, organization and supervision of all welfare work of the church, assistance with all correspondence, records and files for the church, preparation of the Sunday bulletin.[38] Such work, the Constitution and other materials were quick to add, was new for many church committees and congregations, and deaconesses were still perceived by many congregations as oddities. Many of the duties listed for deaconesses had previously been done by volunteers; therefore the tendency in churches who were unfamiliar with the work of deaconesses was either to see the performance of these duties as not worth a great deal of money or, equally damaging, to see the deaconess as the person to whom all tasks could now be assigned, regardless of the amount of work required or the specific skills needed to perform them.

As pioneers and the first of their kind, many deaconesses had to do their jobs, work

hard at setting boundaries and defining what was to remain as tasks for volunteer workers and what could legitimately become part of their responsibilities, and actively promote themselves as valuable workers and "worth the money" that congregations were now paying them. Deaconesses were for many an "unknown quantity", and were doubted both because they were women, and therefore thought to be weak and inferior to the minister, and because their work was different, less visible, and less removed from the laity than that of the ordained minister.

Though some congregations deliberately chose a deaconess rather than a second ordained minister because they thought that, as a woman, she would know her place as an assistant and would be less competitive and dissatisfied with a secondary role than a man would, others had many questions about their value, questions which forced the deaconesses being hired to justify and explain themselves constantly:

> There had always been assistants ministers--fine young men, but men who brought to the work the same aptitudes as the senior minister, rather than a diversity of gifts and outlook; young men also whose assistantships were temporary and regarded as preparation for the real tasks that lay ahead of them when they would take charge of Churches of their own. The next time a vacancy occurred, the congregation decided to appoint a Secretarial-Deaconess instead of a minister. There were some misgivings. Would she be accepted by the congregation and uphold the dignity of the Church? Could she be expected to have an insight into the deep spirituality of her tasks? One man shook his head dubiously but within a month he said, "Aye, lassie, you've proved to us you could do it and we have tae give credit tae ye.[39]

Work under the direction of the Woman's Missionary Society continued to attract large numbers of deaconesses. In 1939 out of a total of sixty-nine employed deaconesses, twenty-nine worked for the Woman's Missionary Society.[40]Five years later there were sixty-eight active deaconesses, and thirty-one were employed by the WMS.[41] The Constitution of the Deaconess Order listed six possibilities for work: work with New Canadians or in a downtown church or mining area, educational or worship work on an Indian Reserve, social work or teaching among Orientals, evangelism and Christian Education in outlying areas and new communities, lay supply work on a pastoral charge without a minister, and superintendency or assistance in a social service institution.[42] Most of this work, with the exception of duties in a social service institution, was educational in focus, including establishing children's groups, training and counselling

leaders, leading Bible Studies and adult educational programmes, visiting and leading worship groups.

Social Service work, listed as another important area of work for deaconesses, either within a congregation or on behalf of the WMS, was described with words which contrasted the goodness, patience and purity of the deaconess as "woman" with the evil and suffering of her surroundings. She was portrayed in images which reinforced the understanding of her as an angel of mercy or handmaiden who brings comfort and help to those in need and who somehow both transforms her surroundings and the people she helps.

> "I never saw so many evil-looking faces in all my life" were the words of an authoress as she and the Deaconess were refused admission to one of the doubtful, cheap rooming-houses of the district. The family she was seeking had moved when a police raid had revealed the character of the house . . . The Deaconess visits in such rooming-houses--she goes down in the little basement rooms--she goes up to the attic rooms where people freeze in the winter and swelter in the summer. She goes to the homes of dirt--physical, mental and moral. She goes to happy homes--sometimes to rejoice with those who have found a job--sometimes to have tea--sometimes to admire the new baby--and to share the happiness of that house. She goes to the home where there is tragedy, sickness and death--always with a prayer in her heart and the knowledge that God will make her a channel of blessing and comfort and things will change . . [43]

As well as visiting in homes, work in social services, as described in the Constitution, also included interviewing and investigating calls that came into the office, distributing clothing, administering an employment service, developing mothers' clubs, teen programmes, lunch and recreational events for unemployed women, collecting and distributing food, organizing summer camps for women and children and one-day outings for those not able to go to camp.[44] The characteristics required for such work were spelled out clearly in the publicity materials of the 1940's and such descriptions were an interesting mixture of a traditional view of women as those who naturally nurture and care for relationships and the immediate needs of others, and an emerging awareness of the difficulty of doing this on a long-term basis:

> [She] needs to be a woman of deep spiritual insight and experience, and one who, besides this, is trained to understand the forces that play upon human behaviour and that influence it . . . The Deaconess needs insight, patience and experience, and skill in dealing with difficult situations, as well as character that will commend her faith to those under her care, and lead them to open their lives to

the redeeming grace of God.[45]

The Constitution, with its elaborate description of the work of deaconesses and its itemized list of all the regulations pertaining to the Deaconess Order, was approved and circulated in 1942. It spelled out for the first time in detail the conditions of employment of deaconesses and the tasks of the Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers. Unlike ordained ministers, who were guaranteed positions according to the Manual of the United Church, deaconesses had no guarantee that once they were designated as deaconesses they would be employed.[46] The only guarantee given to them was that the Committee would try to assist them by seeking openings and recommending individual deaconesses for suitable positions. Employment, once found, was to be on a yearly basis and was to continue from year to year "unless at least two months prior to the expiration of any year of employment either party shall give notice to the other of intention to terminate the employment at the end of such year."[47] Thus, deaconesses had little job security and were still perceived, in terms of the structures and understanding of "Church," as extras, as frills, as "other".

**Criticizing the Administration of Deaconess Work:**

Frustration with the lack of progress in securing better working conditions for women and in raising the status and visibility of the Deaconess Order began to emerge in the 1940's. Much of the dissatisfaction with the church's unwillingness to change what were essentially sexist and clergy-oriented practices was deflected onto the Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers. By the time Lydia Gruchy resigned in 1943 from her position as Executive Secretary of the Committee to go to a pastorate in Saskatchewan, the frustration and anger were so great that a total review of the work of the Committee and the rules of the Deaconess Order was undertaken.[48]

The Committee, in many people's opinion, had not fulfilled the function for which it had been created. Plagued by constant divisions in the church, by disagreements within the groups and Boards which hired women, the Committee, because it had no power to legislate, was usually unable to agree on or implement policies which would ensure fair treatment for women. With no mandate to enforce policy, the Committee lacked the

power to do anything significant and gave to many onlookers the impression that there was really "nothing left for this Committee to do."[49] Others questioned the membership, claiming that the Committee was in no way representative of the whole Church, or in touch with the areas of the country where most deaconesses worked. Others believed that the problem lay with the description of duties for the paid employee, the Executive Secretary. They saw her job description as far too general, and, as one critic suggested:

> I really cannot see how an Executive Secretary of the Committee could feel very free to act when the duties as outlined are so lacking in specific direction.[50]

The result was a general feeling of despair, both within the Committee and among deaconesses across the church. Both groups were aware that things were little better than in 1928, when the first report on women's work was made to General Council. Like its predecessor, the Committee had been able only to consult and recommend policies to others. Thus, the situation continued to be one in which some women were treated reasonably well while others were isolated and exploited. As the Committee reflected after its own detailed and harsh self-assessment:

> [There are] great inconsistencies and disparities now obtaining. For example, we have the situation in which there is only one salary scale and employment basis for the Woman's Missionary Society. Further, all Boards of the Church, at Headquarters or in the Offices of the Superintendents of Missions and Field Secretaries, employ women on their staffs. There appears to be no uniformity of policy regarding employment. Salaries, salary increases and promotions follow no rule endorsed by the Church. No provision is given for the retirement of women who have given all their years of service to the work of the Church. Such a situation seems unworthy of a great Church like ours.[51]

**Low Salaries for Non-Ordained Women Workers:**

As well as being totally unenforceable, the regulations for women's salaries placed them far below men's. Though comparable statistics are not available and equal education and qualifications can't always be claimed, adjustments for these would still place women's salaries much lower than men's. Well over half the women workers who were trained at the United Church Training School had previous university degrees. Many others had professional training and experience in nursing, teaching or business.[52] Yet in 1944 the salary for women congregational workers was in the range of $1,000 for beginners to $1,500 for experienced workers.[53] Minimum salaries for single ordained

ministers four years earlier, in 1940, had been $1,600.[54] The Committee had had constant discussions about what to do about women's salaries. In 1945 the Committee decided not to state the salary within the Constitution in the United Church Manual, but to contact all groups who employed deaconesses and inform them of the Committee's opinion that salaries for deaconesses were too low. The Committee further stated that a fair minimum salary for 1945 should be $1,500, and that all church Boards should increase this, wherever possible, having "due regard to years of service, experience and cost of living", to a maximum of $1,800.[55] Though endorsed by General Council, this recommendation was seldom put into practice, with most deaconesses remaining at or below the minimum recommended salary.

During the succeeding years individuals and groups of deaconesses wrote to the Committee many times asking that steps be taken to legislate fair salaries for women. Though such requests never claimed that women's salaries should be equal to those of the ordained, they did ask that women church worker's salaries be in line with those for women in comparable professions such as teaching. The most extensively-documented requests came from the Montreal Unit of the Fellowship and stated that the salary offered to workers should always be comparable to other professional workers in an area, and should be backed by a suggested scale of increments which reflected years of service. Also, the group suggested, it should be pointed out to employing bodies that pensions are always geared to salaries and therefore some workers on low salaries are not only being penalized now but will also have an inadequate pension.[56]

**How Are Deaconesses Unique?:**

Dissatisfaction with the Committee also involved a concern about the uniqueness and the future of deaconess work within the church. What was it, people were beginning to ask, that made deaconesses distinctive? How were they different from other professional women? Behind this was a fear, articulated by the Committee, that deaconess work was being taken over by the religious education specialists at theological colleges and by the increasing number of well-qualified social service workers who were beginning to offer their services to the church. In analyzing the situation, the Committee made the following observation:

> Much of the social service work which in modern times is no longer associated strictly with the Church and is done through Social Agencies was formerly done by Deaconesses.[57]

Were deaconesses now merely pseudo-social workers or pseudo-ministers, with no identify or integrity of their own? The Committee spent many hours asking difficult questions about the possible obsolescence of deaconesses and about the need to abolish the Order.

> Has Deaconess work become obsolete? Should the Church, wanting a Social Service Worker, go to the Social Service Department of the University; or the Church, wanting a Religious Educationalist, to the theology Department?[58]

Also, the Committee perceived that much of the work at present being done by deaconesses had been made available to them, not because it was believed that they were the most qualified for the job, or because they had proved their worth in particular areas of work, but because of the special circumstances created by war and the need to accept women's work as a temporary way of dealing with a shortage of ordained personnel. The report asked more difficult questions:

> The present war emergency period does not give a true picture [of the work of women in the Church]. Will the situation be definitely changed when the days of peace come? When the chaplains return to their pastorates? When candidates for the ministry now in the Services resume their studies? And when there will be a definite increase in the number of students for the ministry, thus producing a larger supply of ministers? Will these conditions mean that the employment of Assistant Ministers and Directors of Religious Education will greatly reduce the demand for Deaconesses? There is a shortage of workers now, but will that be true when the men return from the militia?[59]

After considerable discussion and assessment the Committee decided that deaconess work did continue to offer something unique to the church and that its distinctiveness had to do partly with the way in which such women worked and with their different perspective and understanding of their calling in the church. The Committee agreed to continue its work for the present time, but to press for clarification by the Boards of the church of their understanding of the Committee's authority and duties, and to ask General Council to "make the necessary changes, thus enabling the Committee to function without the handicap under which it now operates."[60] In the meantime, there was to be no new appointment of an Executive Secretary, but merely an interim appointment.[61]

A group of deaconesses from Montreal raised the question of the uniqueness of deaconesses in a different way, making links between the issues of visibility, identity, networking and self-leadership. In a letter to the Committee, they asked that the next Executive Secretary chosen be a deaconess, and that all deaconesses be involved in appointing Lydia's successor, just "as the ministers appoint one of their own members."[62] They also raised the recurring problem of lack of visibility and identification of deaconesses. Pointing specifically to the practice in the Woman's Missionary Society in which an employed deaconess was referred to as a missionary and not a deaconess, the Montreal group asked that "in any publicity, where the person is a Deaconess, that fact be made known."[63] As a result of such requests, the Committee passed a regulation that stated:

> Should a Deaconess be employed by the Woman's Missionary Society the term "Missionary-Deaconess" be given to her in reports and when introduced to speak at all meetings.[64]

The Committee also reaffirmed the importance of the deaconess uniform as a way of keeping deaconess work before the public. In a reversal of a previous decision which made the wearing of the uniform completely optional, the Committee informed deaconesses that it was to be worn by all members at all public and official gatherings.[65]

**Founding a Fellowship:**

One of the most interesting results of the discussion of deaconess identity was the development of an awareness among deaconesses that they had much in common with other women workers as well as some essential differences, and that one of the major things which prevented their recognition and fair treatment was their lack of unity as women workers. When individual groups of women saw others as rivals and as more "different from" then "similar to" themselves, those who wanted to exploit them and keep them structurally isolated were the ones who benefitted. Thus, in 1939 deaconesses and other women workers began to speak of the need to form a new organization which would be national, separate from the official committees of the church, and would enable them to share concerns, have fellowship together and work for better working conditions. Others saw the forming of an organization as necessary because the Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers had not been able either to unite women workers or to see that

they had better working conditions and greater status. As part of the official church structure, the Committee was limited in what it could do, and a separate, professional organization was needed to bring about any significant changes. These women raised the strategic question of whether women were better off by being integrated into the official structures of the church or by building up their own separate organization and making demands from a separate political base. Though deaconesses were by no means united in their estimate of the value of a separate organization, they did greet its formation with considerable enthusiasm.

At the Winnipeg Conference of the Deaconess Association in 1940 the founding and Constitution of the Fellowship of Professional Women in the United Church of Canada were approved. Though the Deaconess Association would continue as a separate group, both organizations would have their Biennial Conferences together and would share information and tasks. The new Fellowship would unite all women workers and its purpose was to be fellowship, study of the field of women's work, promotion of the work of women, and the critique of policies and practices of the church hierarchy towards women. Membership was open to all trained women, including ordained women, and organization and communication were through regional groups which met on a regular basis. National Biennial Meetings would include the election of officers, the receiving of reports from the National Executive, and speakers and discussions on employment, and theological and social issues affecting women.[66] As recorded in its minutes, the Fellowship also had lengthy discussions about many of the specific concerns of deaconesses, including the format and wording of the designation service, the field activities of the Executive Secretary, the new design of the uniform and the need for set salary levels. The newly-created Fellowship also had lengthy discussions about the place of women professionals, particularly deaconesses and missionaries, in the church, and was later involved in the study of the World Council of Church's materials on the cooperation of men and women in the life of the church.[67]

**"After Victory, What?":**

In 1944 the Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers began to make plans for the continued work of women after the end of the war. In a promotion pamphlet geared to women who were now working in the Armed Forces and would be looking for another profession after the war, the Committee asked the crucial question for such women: "After Victory, What?" and invited military women to consider a career in the church. Using militaristic language, it asked them to "Re-Mobilize for Full Time Service in the Church", and suggested that the church would be at the forefront of the impending battle to maintain peace in the world.[68]

> After Victory, What? The young women of our Armed Forces, as they look forward to demobilization, are facing this question. How can the energies so long devoted to winning the war be diverted to the no less imperative duty of maintaining the peace? The struggle must go on if the great ideals for which we have been sacrificing--righteousness, justice and brotherhood--are to be established in the post-war world.[69]

The visuals supporting the text portrayed three military women standing in front of the tower of the Parliament Buildings and suggested that they were part of the "new army of workers, dedicated to the tasks of tomorrow."[70]

**The Archbishops and Women:**

In 1943 the first of a series of studies on the role of women in the protestant church in the English-speaking world was published. Prepared by a committee which had been appointed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York in England in the late 1930's, the final report, "Women's Work in the Church", was circulated widely in both Europe and North America and was paid close attention to by deaconesses of the United Church of Canada. Surveying the involvement of women in paid and voluntary work in the Church of England, it argued for greater recognition and inclusion of women's leadership in the Christian Church, yet within very narrow limits. Based on the limited goal of increasing the numbers of women in leadership positions, the report spoke, first of all, of the ignorance of church people about what women could do and were doing in the church. Then it claimed that clergy were guilty of not making full use of the voluntary service of women. Referring more than once to the responsible work of women in both civilian life and in the Armed Services, it called the church to account for its poor treatment of women:

> At the present time, the contrast between the position and function of women in the Church and in secular society has become very marked. It is provoking an increasing criticism and discontent, not only among women, but also among men and women of the younger generation when they become aware of the contrast.[71]

In addition to dealing with lay women's involvement in the church, the report also had specific sections on recruitment, selection and training of women workers, on the background and functioning of the Deaconess Order, and recommendations on salaries and working conditions for all women in the employ of the church. Yet nowhere did it directly link the absence of women in church leadership to specific structures, theology or church practices which actually worked against women's interests and undermined their leadership. Nowhere did it examine its own hierarchical practices which, as Virginia Woolf had pointed out years earlier in her scathing criticism of the work of the Committee's predecessor, a commission on women's work, allowed salaries for English deaconesses to be 150 English pounds while those for archbishops were 15,000 English pounds.[72] Instead of looking at discriminatory practices such as this, the report was full of general statements such as the following: "woman is constantly made aware that her sex is a handicap and a limitation."[73]

The report based its arguments not on issues of the injustice of excluding or penalizing women, but rather on notions of practicality and efficiency. Supporting an understanding of males and females as different yet complementary in their roles and talents, the report claimed that both were needed for effective, "whole" work within the church:

> Modern Society will not be won to the Christian allegiance and drawn into the fellowship of the Church by the activities, however heroic and devoted, of one sex alone. If, however, the Church officially is willing and able to provide openings of service, both paid and voluntary, for women as well as men, there is a more certain prospect of a revival in our time of allegiance to the Church and of effective witness by its membership in the world.[74]

The implication clearly was that the church was not using all of its resources, and that everyone's work would be needed to rebuild the world in the future. This document had a profound effect on the protestant churches in North America and was studied and quoted widely as providing both a judgement against the current church and a vision of what it

might become. Yet its weakness was that it ignored the differential power base between men and women, glossed over issues of injustice for women, and assumed a mutuality which ignored the perspective of women and defined their work purely in terms of its benefit to the church and to the men who ran it. This document was followed in 1945 by an equally controversial report which looked specifically at the training of women for work in the church.[75] Both reports were used by the United Church Training School in its subsequent work on curriculum and educational standards during the late 1940's.[76]

**Conclusion:**

During World War Two women church workers moved into many new job areas, some of which were created because of the emergency situations of the war. These new jobs included work in war production communities, in military training camps and in Japanese Canadian forced evacuation centres. Women also moved into jobs which were traditionally held by ordained workers in local congregations. However, an examination of recruitment materials and programmes, salary scales and pension provisions show that the increased participation of women in the church's labour force did little either to change the perceptions of women's work as ancillary, temporary and restricted to service and care-giving, or to secure better working conditions. Women's contributions to the church's war work, no matter how outstanding or innovative, were seen as temporary, that is, as beneficial only until the war was over and the special war programmes could be phased out and additional ordained ministers secured.

## Notes

[1]*Agenda of the Tenth General Council 1942*, UCC, 87.

[2]*Ibid.*

[3]"Returning Padres Present Problem" *Montreal Gazette*, June 6, 1945.

[4]Helen Burlton, "The Church as a Vocation for Women", *The United Church Observer*, February 15, 1950, 19.

[5]CCSA, Transcript of a Radio Broadcast by Mrs. W. J. Campion on CKCL, February 27, 1944, 3.

[6]CCSA, *A Full-Time Vocation for Christian Women* (Toronto: UCC, 1941), 3, Recruitment pamphlet for CDOWW.

[7]CCSA, Marjorie Mann, "Would you Make the Church Your Vocation?" *The Quinte Broadcast*, August, 1945, 2.

[8]CCSA, *One Year of War-Time Service To The Work of the Church: June, 1943-June, 1944* (Toronto: UCC, 1943), 2.

[9]UCA, *Eighteenth Annual Report of the Women's Missionary Society* 1942-1943 (Toronto: The United Church Publishing House, 1943), 14.

[10]UCA, The Committee on Camp and War Production Communities, Correspondence File #3, 1941-1942.

[11]*Agenda of the Eleventh General Council 1944*, UCC, 176.

[12]UCA, *Eighteenth Annual Report of the Woman's Missionary Society*, 13.

[13]CCSA, *One Year of War-Time Service To The Work of the Church: June, 1943-June, 1944*, 2.

[14]*Agenda of the Eleventh General Council 1944*, 173.

[15]*The First Fifty Years 1895-1945: The Training and Work of Women Employed in the Service of the United Church of Canada* (Toronto: CDOWW, UCTS and WMS, n.d.), 28.

[16]*Handbook* (Toronto: CDOWW, 1944 edition), 15.

[17]UCA, *Sixteenth Annual Report of the Woman's Missionary Society* 1940-1941, 116.

[18]UCA, *Nineteenth Annual Report of the Woman's Missionary Society* 1943-1944, 147.

[19]UCA, *Seventeen Annual Report of the Woman's Missionary Society*, 1941-1942, 111.

[20]Mona Oikawa, "'Driven to Scatter Far and Wide': The Forced Resettlement of Japanese Canadians to Southern Ontario, 1944-1949", 8-9.

[21]*First Fifty*, 29.

[22]*Ibid.*

[23]M. B. Pengelley, "She Views a Changing World" *The United Church Observer*, September 1, 1958, 18.

[24]*Agenda of the Eleventh General Council 1944*, 406.

[25]CCSA, *To University Women Graduating in 1945: Will You Give Three Years to Church Work?* (Toronto: UCC, 1945), Recruitment pamphlet of the WMS, The Home Mission Board, UCTS and CDOWW.

[26]CCSA, *One Year of War-Time Service to the Work of the Church: June 1943-June, 1944*, 2-3.

[27]*First Fifty*, 28.

[28]*Agenda of the Tenth General Council 1942*, UCC, 332.

[29]*First Fifty*, 28.

[30]*Agenda of the Ninth General Council 1940*, UCC, 299.

[31]*A Friend of Deaconesses* (Toronto: UCC, 1943), Information pamphlet published by CDOWW.

[32]CCSA, Minutes of CDOWW, November 29, 1946, 2.

[33]CCSA, Minutes of CDOWW, May 8, 1958, 6.

[34]*Agenda of the Ninth General Council 1940*, 298.

[35]*Handbook*, 15.

[36]*Ibid.*

[37]CCSA, *Ready to Help Your Church*, (Toronto: UCC, 1940), 11.

[38]*Handbook*, 14-15.

[39]*Ready to Help Your Church*, 8.

[40]*Agenda of the Ninth General Council 1940*, 298.

[41]CCSA, "Statistics of the Deaconess Order", March 15, 1944.

[42]*Handbook*, 14-15.

[43]*Ready to Help Your Church*, 18-19.

[44]*Ibid., 14-15.*

[45]*Ibid., 16-17.*

[46]*Handbook, 12.*

[47]*Ibid.*

[48]CCSA, "Appraisal of the Work of the Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers of the Church and Recommendations As To Future Policy", April 10, 1944, 1.

[49]CCSA, Minutes of the Policy Committee, a Sub-Committee of CDOWW, March 17, 1944, 1-2.

[50]CCSA, "Appraisal of the Work of the Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers of the Church and Recommendations As To Future Policy", 1.

[51]*Ibid.*, 2.

[52]CCSA, "Interesting Facts for Reports to Conferences", CDOWW, April 27, 1950, 1.

[53]CCSA, *Women Serve the Church* (Toronto: UCC, 1944), 1.

[54]*Agenda of the Ninth General Council 1940*, 79.

[55]CCSA, "Recommendation for the Meeting of the General Committee of December 7th, 1945 to the Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers", 1.

[56]CCSA, Correspondence File, CDOWW, October, 1961.

[57]CCSA, *Re-Mobilize for Full-time Service in the Church* (Toronto: UCC, 1945), 4.

[58]CCSA, Minutes of the Policy Committee, a Sub-Committee of CDOWW, March 17, 1944, 1.

[59]*Ibid.*

[60]CCSA, "Appraisal of the Work of the Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers of the Church and Recommendations As to Future Policy", April 10, 1944, 3.

[61]*Ibid.*

[62]CCSA, Minutes of the Policy Committee, a Sub-Committee of CDOWW, March 17, 1944, 1.

[63]*Ibid.*

[64]CCSA, Minutes of the Meeting of the Policy Committee, April 4, 1944, 1.

[65]*Ibid.*

[66]CCSA, "Constitution of the Fellowship of Professional Women in the United Church of Canada," June, 1940, 1-2.

[67]see: Nancy Hardy, *Called to Serve: A Story of Diaconal Ministry in the United Church of Canada* (Toronto: MPE, UCC, 1985), 22.

[68]CCSA, *Re-Mobilize for Full-Time Service in the Church*, 2-4.

[69]*Ibid.*

[70]*Ibid.*

[71]CCSA, *Women's Work in the Church*, The Report of a Committee appointed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York in 1942, (Westminister: The Press and Publications Board of the Church Assembly, 1943), 6.

[72]Woolf, Virginia, *Three Guineas* (New York: Penguin Books, 1977 reprint), 142.

[73]CCSA, *Women's Work in the Church*, 30.

[74]*Ibid*, 6.

[75]CCSA, *Training for Service*, The Report of a Committee appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury and York in 1944, (Westminister: The Press and Publications Board of the Church Assembly, 1945).

[76]See: CCSA, Inaugural Address Given by Miss K. Harriet Christie at Her Installation as Principal of UCTS, April 24, 1954, 2.

# CHAPTER THREE

## THE FIGHT FOR THE VOTE: 1946-1964

### Introduction:

Following the war, the types and numbers of jobs available to women workers in the church changed dramatically. The focus shifted from work in special short-term projects and jobs sponsored by the Woman's Missionary Society to Christian Education work within local congregations. The number of churches requesting women workers rose dramatically in the years between 1945 and 1960. The plethora of jobs available for women, particularly deaconesses, was caused by several factors. First, there continued to be a shortage of ordained men after the war. Trained women continued to be hired by congregations who could not find ordained personnel. Also, the United Church entered a period of unprecedented growth, with new building programmes and forms of ministry being developed on a regular basis. As early as 1948, forty-two trained deaconesses were being requested by congregations who were involved in new programmes of social outreach and Christian Education.[1] By 1957 there were eighty new jobs available for the twelve deaconesses who were free for appointment.[2] As deaconesses moved into congregational jobs they became increasingly aware of the problems caused by their exclusion from the courts of the church. Because of the ways in which their separation from the decision-making processes handicapped their work, they began to fight for the right to be members of Presbytery. They also challenged several attempts by the church to deskill women's professional work by creating a new category of hastily-trained younger, short-time workers called "girl Fridays".

### Post-War Church Expansion:

In 1947 the United Church embarked on a church extension programme, called by church historians the "building boom". With the war well over, immigration beginning to rise and new housing developments starting to appear in urban areas, the United Church appointed a staff person to supervise and promote its vast church-construction programme. He set up regional extension committees to assess the needs of new communities for churches and to begin building programmes, sent out divinity students to

survey new housing areas about the types of recreational and Christian Education programmes required, and supervised fund-raising drives across the country.[3] In the years between 1947 and 1962, 2,000 new United Churches were built, all requiring professional staff to provide programmes for their members. In 1957, the peak year for new church construction, new foundations were being poured at the rate of four per week.[4]

Membership kept pace with the building of facilities; from 1941 to 1951 the United Church "grew more rapidly than the nation itself, and its rate of growth surpassed that of the Roman Catholic Church."[5] The membership statistics from 1939 to 1958, a twenty-year period, showed a gain of adult members of 39.78 per cent.[6] With these adult members came a large number of children, all requiring Sunday School programmes, confirmation instruction, mid-week groups and vacation Bible schools. At the same time, the national church was expanding its programmes of community work to include more extensive port and immigration work with new Canadians, the provision of worship and educational facilities for French Canadians in northern Ontario and Quebec, the production of several foreign language publications, and work on mission boats on the west coast. All of these new ventures required trained staff, many of them women.[7]

The most rapidly-expanding of these new areas of work was the ministry with immigrants. Between 1945 and 1959, 1,816,000 people immigrated to Canada.[8] Many of them ended up in large cities and were attracted to large downtown churches; others settled in scattered rural communities. Where ethnic communities were large enough, special immigrant ministries were established by the United Church. Thus, Kitchener became the centre for work with Hungarian Christians, downtown Vancouver became the site for Dutch and Slavik work, and Montreal was an area for ministry with Serbian New Canadians. By 1959 worship and Christian Education programmes were happening in over thirty languages in the United Church every week.[9] The stated purpose of such work was to provide a bridge for immigrants, a style and type of worship and education which would emerge from the language and forms of their old life, yet would help to integrate them into a new culture and world. A typical description suggested that:

> The children of immigrants [were] given religious and cultural activities to enable them to integrate the new and the old, and all [were] gradually linked to

> the regular established Churches as they moved from one community to another.[10]

Thus, the goal of much of the immigrant work was assimilation, a goal which is highly problematic because, as Mona Oikawa points out, it both presumes a willingness on the part of, and assigns responsibility to, "those deemed racially or ethnically different to change themselves in order to be socially accepted."[11] The dynamics of a white middle-class church, with WMS women workers engaging in immigrant work, need to be explored further. How did their identity as white women affect the way they worked, and what did they communicate to immigrants both about christianity and about "being Canadians"?

**Churches for Rebuilding Society:**

Many of the new churches and forms of ministry became symbols for people of the rebuilding of society and involvement in them was part of the process of recovery from the horrors of war. Churches and faith were believed to be fundamental to stability, democracy and "the good life". Belief in God became central to morality and was clung to as a way of ensuring that the horrors of war would never occur again. As early as 1943, editorials began to appear which talked about the church as both the symbol of and vehicle for transforming the world:

> The World Church has stood the test of war. It has emerged as the one strong, united world movement. Leaders in both religious and secular thought see it to be the hope of the future, and recognize in it a powerful agency for creating a new order and a better world . . . Our future programme calls for cooperative effort in fellowship with and under the direction of a living Church in every land . . . We must prepare now by thought, prayer and study that we may be ready when the doors open again.[12]

In 1945 the United Church was employing approximately four hundred and fifty women, fifty-nine of them deaconesses. This was considered to represent a "greatly reduced programme which must be extended immediately. The minimum requirement will be from 30 to 40 new workers a year."[13] This situation was parallelled by a shortage of ordained clergy. By 1956 the shortage of ordained ministers was creating a severe hardship on small rural congregations who could not attract experienced ministers. General Council in Windsor heard the story of a terrible shortage:

> When the Conferences rose in June, 105 fields were left vacant; 172 fields have lay supplies; 63 retired ministers are serving charges; 105 students for the

> ministry are filling church pulpits. 195 ordained men could be sent to fields immediately if we had them. 300 in all are needed. Overseas Missions wants 40 men in the next few years. The Church Extension programme indicates that scores of men will be pulled off charges to start new work.[14]

**Recruiting New Women Workers:**

Recruitment programmes for women began immediately following the war. In 1946 General Council set up a special committee to study the recruiting and training of women church workers. In addition, the secretary of the Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers continued to put much of her energy into the recruitment of women workers. Her efforts included field trips across Canada. In 1946 she reported that one such field trip made to western Canada had included: "16 visits to centres, 37 public meetings, 7 Church services, 3 Presbytery meetings, 1 Presbytery Young People's Rally, and 14 visits to Young People's groups".[15] In addition to focussing on church groups, she also visited universities and colleges, as the following report suggests:

> At four University centres there was provision made for meeting with those interested in Church vocations. At one University centre the secretary addressed the women in residence, at one spoke at Chapel--at two centres there was an opportunity to address student nurses on the needs of the Church--and at two centres met with the Vocational Guidance Committee of the school and at one centre with the Student Council.[16]

In the same year the Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers agreed to prepare pamphlets on church work for women and to make them available to every Vocational Guidance Committee in the high schools of Canada. One of these pamphlets, "The Calling of the Christian", was prepared in 1947 and outlined all types of work being done by deaconesses and other women workers. Similar in format to its predecessers, it also contained elaborate testimonials from prominent male ordained ministers on the value of deaconesses to the church. While the pamphlet also contained a description of the requirements for ordained ministry, its importance was downplayed and the impression was clearly given that women's "normal" work in the church was still "other than" preaching and administering the sacraments. The language and images used in publicity during this period related to the family and the home, with the church being described as both structured and functioning like a nuclear family, and the woman worker as "the wife". Her work and her position in the church were compared to the

interests and position of the typical wife, and the suggestion was made that she came to her work with a "wifely" natural affinity for nurturing, for working with women and children, and for supporting the work of others. As the publicity pamphlet said, in discussing the work of the rural Presbytery worker:

> The rural missionary at large is indeed "at large", not only in her area of supportive work but in opportunities of service . . . and because in her are combined the minister and the minister's wife, she has need of good health, sound training, adaptability, an ardent spirit--and a sense of humour.[17]

Women, because of their perceived natural affinity for home life and ability to support and accommodate others, were also seen as particularly valuable for inner city work. The comparison of deaconesses with dedicated wives continued later in the publicity when deaconesses' spheres of influence were described as centering in the homes of the members of their congregations. Like the wife, the description suggested, theirs was the responsibility for maintaining relationships, interpreting behaviour, and providing love and nurturing to those in need.

> The Deaconess will have to tackle family problems of unemployment, drunkenness, poor housing, improvidence and delinquency. She may use the accepted Christian Education programs of the United Church of Canada, but always there will be other groups needed to meet educational and social needs of her special area. Her striking point will be the home. Hers is the task of interpreting what the Church offers, encouraging participation and bringing opportunity and love into restricted lives.[18]

In 1947 the Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers, the United Church Training School and the Woman's Missionary Society agreed to cooperate in promoting a united programme of recruiting women for the full-time work of the church. This reflected both an increasing awareness that each group often worked at cross-purposes to the others and ended up competing for the small number of interested women available, and a realization that recruiting programmes were becoming far too expensive for each group to handle alone. Under the cooperative programme they hired a full-time Personnel Secretary who began the work of simplifying the procedures for recruitment by removing any competitive or redundant steps. In speaking of the reasons for the new cooperation, each group stated, "None of us are in a position to see or present the whole picture of the Church's need unless we work closely together.[19] The position of Personnel Secretary lasted for ten years and included field trips across the country, often in

cooperation with other Christian organizations such as the YWCA and SCM. Though the upper and lower age limits for the Deaconess Order remained in place, the age requirements for other groups such as the YWCA were much more varied. Therefore, because of its cooperation with such groups, the Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers was able to provide information about deaconesses to a much wider range of people. As an article in *The United Church Observer* suggests, such recruitment trips included a variety of approaches and involved the cooperation of both local groups and visiting speakers.

> This journey is aimed at interpreting to Canadian women from 16 to 60 the wide career opportunities open to them. . . In addition to the United Church staff person, members include the Executive Secretary of the Women's Auxiliary of the Anglican Church, representatives of the national YWCA, the regional secretaries of the Presbyterian Church and area representatives of the YWCA and the Student Christian Movement . . . They interview as many prospects as possible, interpreting job possibilities and informing them of available assistance towards necessary training. They give newspaper, radio and TV interviews and address interested groups.[20]

By 1955 recruitment programmes also included strategies for interesting women already heavily involved in the church and used graduates of the United Church Training School to promote church work and its training programme for women. Radio broadcasts and newspaper articles by recent graduates were common during the late 1950's. The Conference representatives on the Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers took responsibility for identifying graduates who were working in their area and made the arrangements for speeches and articles. They also sponsored recruiting teas for university women, and asked all church youth groups to have speakers and discussions on church work as a vocation. Materials were provided for all camps and summer schools across Canada, materials which portrayed church work for women as an exciting extension of their recreational and voluntary involvement in the church. Presbyteries were requested to have dinner meetings or week-end conferences, and to hand out literature prepared by the new Personnel Committee.[21]

Yet despite the massive recruitment programmes and the urgent calls for trained women workers, particularly deaconesses, recruits for this work remained disappointingly few. There were barely enough new workers to replace those who retired

or resigned because of marriage or family commitments. In 1957 the Board of Colleges and Secondary Schools declared that the shortage of women workers was an emergency and spent considerable time discussing what could be done to remedy the situation. In the Secretary's report, promise was made that the issue would be dealt with immediately.

> The whole Church is concerned over the small numbers of students in attendance at UCTS. This year, apart from overseas scholarship students and one or two other specials, the total enrolled is 26 and the number expected to graduate this spring is 12. The whole matter of recruiting, and particularly of the recruiting of women workers, is to be under study before the spring is out. It is clear that something drastic must be done if young women are to be attracted to the service of the Church in numbers that will even begin to meet the Church's need.[22]

The "drastic" action referred to turned out to be the production and distribution of more recruiting materials. In 1957, 3,000 copies of recruiting folders and posters were mailed to ministers in congregations, with the request that they seek out suitable women and talk to them about a vocation in the church. This initial mailing was followed by the preparation of six more fliers, booklets and folders, with a total of over 79,000 pieces of promotional material being prepared and distributed in 1957 alone.[23]

**Deaconess Work: The "Natural" Place for Women:**

While all the materials listed what were believed to be the exciting and rewarding features of women's work in the church, they still portrayed the Deaconess Order as the traditional place for women to offer their services in the church. Proof of this could be found, it was noted by the Principal of the United Church Training School in 1954, in the persistently low number of women seeking to enter the ordained ministry:

> The fact that after 20 years of ordaining women only 32 have accepted this call seems to indicate that large numbers of women are not likely to flow into this part of the Church's Ministry.[24]

Thus, the myriad social and eccelesiastical structures inhibiting women's will to seek ordination were glossed over.

Another unexamined assumption still in operation was that deaconess work would appeal to women precisely because it was temporary, had a shorter and less demanding preparation time than ordained ministry, and therefore was thought to provide an excellent and satisfying few years for women who, it was still believed, had as their

primary goal marriage and the raising of a family. Though a careful study of the statistics showed that many women worked for twenty years as deaconesses and had as much educational training as their male ordained colleagues, such information was never presented in official descriptions or publicity materials on the Order. The official statement given at the General Council in 1954 on the Deaconess Order showed that, despite thirty years of struggle for recognition and for professional status, deaconess work was still perceived as "less than" ordained ministry and, because of this, the appropriate niche for "normal" women who wanted to work in the church.

> The Deaconess Order provides an opportunity for women, for those who may not be prepared to assume the binding life-long obligation of the ministry in Word and Sacrament or who may find it difficult to devote the long period of six or seven years preparation for entrance upon it.[25]

**The Rise of Christian Education:**

During the 1950's Christian Education became a priority for the United Church and a source of many jobs for women within congregations. Education was seen as an important tool for doing the church's work of rebuilding society and putting the horrors of the recent war to rest. Education, church experts during the 1950's believed, led to moral behaviour and good citizenship within a democracy. Christian Education programmes would lead the way in the creation of a new way of life for Canada:

> To the work of the Church, Christian Education is basic. It is through Christian Education that we pass on our Christian heritage to succeeding generations. Such teaching is done chiefly in Church Schools since day schools have deleted Christian teaching from their curriculum, and the home seems to make no serious attempt to accept responsibility but is willing to leave it to the Church School. Through Christian Education the Church deliberately and purposely passes on the Christian heritage to succeeding generations, makes her solid advance and makes her permanent advance with the constant opportunity to reach out to claim the new generation in the community.[26]

Considerable emphasis was put, during the 1950's and 1960's, on both the content of what was taught and the methods used in Christian Education programmes. Church leaders began to appropriate secular educational theory and to apply the insights of Biblical scholarship to the material taught in Sunday School and mid-week programmes. They found the materials available in the early 1950's sorely lacking both in educational sophistication and Biblical content. Articles began to appear in church publications,

outlining the crucial nature of the task of Christian Education and presenting the need for expertise, for sophisticated methodology and for updated materials. The following passage from an article in *The United Church Observer* is typical of many:

> In these days of awareness of the striking lack of Biblical knowledge and Christian content among people everywhere, the task of Christian Education becomes of crucial importance in Canada and overseas. [Women with training in this field] help to select and train lay leadership, develop an awareness of the need for using the best methods of education in relation to a content which contains the truth about the meaning and purpose of life, and prepare hearts and minds for the reception of the Word of God as proclaimed in preaching and sacraments. Christian Education is no longer doing nice things with boys and girls to keep them occupied during church in a healthy environment after School. It is using every available means of imparting to children and young people the knowledge of our Christian heritage and providing the experience of Christian fellowship and responsibility through which they may 'grow in grace and the Knowledge of God!'[27]

Thus, Christian Education programmes, within a period of ten years from 1950 to 1960, became more rigorous, standardized, in need of new curriculum materials, and, most important, in need of experts or specialists to ensure their success. Based on the model of the successful school, every valuable Christian Education programme was defined as needing a detailed curriculum, a programme of leadership training, and a director or leader. In many cases, these directors or leaders were paid positions filled by deaconesses.

During the 1950's work began on a new Sunday School curriculum and a massive plan for the training of Sunday School teachers was developed. Both initiatives had been authorized by General Council in 1952. At that time, plans were approved for a three-year cycle which was to be graded into Nursery, Kindergarten, Primary, Junior, Intermediate and Senior materials. Writers and approximately 1500 readers were involved in the project, as well as illustrators, Biblical scholars and professional educators. The whole project took twelve years to complete, and involved the whole church in a study of the importance of the education of children in the Christian tradition and an awareness of the need for specialists trained in and working exclusively in the area of the Christian Education of church members, adults and children.[28] While the new curriculum was being developed, enrolment in the Sunday School, the major Christian Education programme in most congregations, continued to climb. Throughout the 1950's

enrolment increased yearly by 25,000 to 30,000 students.[29] In churches in new housing areas it was quite common for Sunday Schools to have enrolments of 700 and to be held at several different hours in order to accommodate all of the children who wished to come. HI-C and Young People's Union, two organizations for youth, also had huge membership increases, as did women's groups and Bible Study programmes.[30] A report in *The United Church Observer* credited the increases to several developments in the church:

> Determining factors include the strengthening of interest in Christian Education; the appointment of local committees of Christian Education; and the fact that more families are responding to their own need for support in the Church. The United Church as a whole is taking more seriously its responsibility in the area of Christian Education. This is shown by the large number of new centres, with greatly improved facilities; the summer camping programme; the increased vacation school enrollment.[31]

Women as Christian Education Directors:

The expansion of Christian Education programmes and the development of the New Curriculum created an incredible demand for women trained in Christian Education. Congregations began to write both to the United Church Training School and to the Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers requesting Christian Education Directors and Administrators. At the local level, it was automatically assumed that such work would "naturally" appeal to women as it belonged to their "natural" sphere. While some ordained men took positions as directors of Christian Education during this time, it was usually because the function of administering the Christian Education programme was part of the larger job of "Assistant Minister". Also, most such male assistants were only temporary and moved on to become senior staff in their own churches as soon as they gained some exerience in the ministry. Thus, Christian Education at the local level remained largely in the hands of women, in both its professional and voluntary aspects. Most Sunday School teachers were women, particularly in the Nursery, Kindergarten and Primary grades, and most requests sent out for workers were for deaconesses. At the national level the situation was the opposite. Most positions which involved writing curriculum, establishing and directing Christian Education in the National Office were held by men. This concentration of women in local education positions and under-representation in administrative and decision-making jobs paralleled the placement of

women within the secular teaching profession.[32]

The position of "Christian Education Director" became an established part of the church's life very quickly and easily, and in the next revision of the Book of Common Order a service was added for the installation of a director of Christian Education, a deaconess or an assistant minister. Though the educational work of the church was entrusted to women, such workers were in no way autonomous or able to make their own decisions about the educational life of the church. Education was seen to be second in importance to worship, and was described as serving the purpose of both preparing children and facilitating their involvement in the worship life of the congregation. In cases where there were conflicts between educational programmes and worship events, in terms of finances or scheduling, it was usually expected that worship concerns would take precedence. Thus women workers were again in a situation where their work was under the direction of someone else, and their authority was limited to a very specific sphere, that of the education of children and youth.

The assignment of church space often became a symbol of the low status given to the Christian Education work of deaconesses. In older churches deaconesses' offices were often in dark basements or up several flights of stairs, away from the offices of the minister, organist and secretary. In some churches, separate offices for deaconesses were unheard of. Such women frequently used a desk stuck in the corner of a choir room or a Sunday School office. They had no privacy, no place to leave things undisturbed, and little sense of connection with the other professionals of the church. The politics of space clearly indicated the unclarity and lack of status attributed to their work.

Promotional materials prepared during the 1950's began to highlight the deaconess as Christian Education director and expert. Images used portrayed the typical deaconess as a benevolent nurturer, knowledgeable in the development and teaching of children and youth, supportive of the voluntary leadership of others, and able to provide resources and advice for problems encountered in all the educational programmes of the church. Within this broad framework, three more specific images began to emerge in descriptions of the work of deaconesses in Christian Education. The first was that of the "interpreter", as

someone who took the beliefs and practices of the church and explained them and made them accessible to the people she worked with. As such, she was portrayed as a personable intermediary between the church and the community, inviting outsiders to become part of the church's programmes. An article in *The United Church Observer* developed the image in an interesting way:

> Because of the nature of their training and responsibilities women are free from the ongoing administrative responsibilities of the organized church, and are therefore able to work 'at the cutting edge of the church's life'--to help the church reach out to those not now within her fellowship. They visit in the homes of children of the Sunday School whose parents do not attend the church and help to bring them into the fellowship of the church. They organize new types of work to meet the needs of people who are, or could be, part of the fellowship of the church . . . They go out to meet people wherever they are and by friendliness, counselling and invitation help to extend the fellowship and influence of the church. Their work is personal. It is also creative and dynamic for a growing church.[33]

The second image common in descriptions of deaconesses was that of the youth and children specialist and expert. Assumptions were often clearly stated that because deaconesses were women they would naturally be interested in the nurture and support of children and youth, and would have natural skills in that area. In one testimonial to the value of deaconesses, they were praised for filling in a gap, for knowing how to communicate the faith to youth in ways the young could understand and appreciate:

> One task not well done previously is that of helping children and youth to understand our Christian faith. Definitions of yesterday will not do. They have lost their meaning, their relevance and their life. We dare not let our youth go out from the Church without the Christian faith as an intelligible body of truth which they can understand and express.[34]

Closely related to the idea of the deaconess as the specialist was the image of the deaconess as a supervisor. Conceived of as an overseer who was responsible for one section of the church's life, one which was secondary in importance to worship, she recruited workers, trained them, had oversight of their work, and dismissed those whose performance was not adequate. She also chose resources, determined leadership strategies, handled problems of attendance and discipline, and set budgets and schedules. As the 1947 Recruitment Folder, "The Calling of the Christian", described her role:

> [Her] task centres around large groups of business women, students, young people, CGIT [Canadian Girls in Training], Junior Church and Fireside Hour. Some of the Church's services were initiated by the deaconess to meet an

> obvious need, but as she trained voluntary leadership, hers became a supervisory capacity. She monitors work, looks for gaps, and accepts responsibility for all the educational programmes of the congregation.[35]

Such a description contains assumptions about power, the need for hierarchies and the separation of the professional from the laity, and minimizes the role of the deaconess as herself an educator.

The problems associated with the job of Christian Education director were numerous. In situations where new jobs were created for deaconesses in churches previously staffed by one professional (the ordained minister), personnel committees often expected the addition of a staff person to double the size of their congregations. They often judged the value of the new deaconess' work by the number of programmes she started and the number of new families she attracted to the church. There was little recognition that the quality of her relationship with people and the hours spent in counselling and in educational support could not be translated directly into immediate increases in membership or into larger financial givings. People in the congregation and the ordained clergy frequently had little understanding of the amount of work involved in maintaining a large Christian Education programme. In some situations, the facilities for Christian Education were inadequate and Sunday School and mid-week programmes were faced with problems of over-crowding, inadequate budgets and inferior supplies.

Few Christian Education workers were members of the Boards of the church, the places where decisions about budgets, priorities and facilities were made. Typically, they were members of the Christian Education Committee, the women's groups and the Social Outreach Committee, all of whom traditionally had little power within the structure of the church. The work of providing programmes for all ages throughout the week often proved endless, and the work was invisible or privatized compared to the public, well-defined role of the ordained minister in worship and administration.

Appearing in *The United Church Observer* in 1959, this description of one deaconess' work schedule indicates the impossible demands of the job:

> At 9 a.m. every weekday, a trim little Japanese Canadian deaconess of the United Church slips into her office in Olivet Church, Hamilton. She spends the morning planning the church's Christian Education programme. Then in the

> afternoon she moves into the second phase of her work . . . she visits, recruits, comforts among the church's people, or attends women's meetings. Four nights a week she is back at the church again with youth groups or committees. Saturdays are spent on further visiting, and Sunday involves participation in the children's Christian Education programme.[36]

The photograph accompanying the article was particularly revealing of the image of the deaconess being projected at that time: it showed the ordained minister seated at his desk in his study, with the deaconess seated at a corner of his desk. The woman was clearly to be seen as his helper. His job, his perceptions and his space were central; she was portrayed as taking direction from him. Thus, the previous understanding of the deaconess as the "handmaiden" was still being promoted; it had merely been transferred to another set of tasks, a new sphere of activity, Christian Education. As Rev. Melville Aitken's address to the 1948 Annual Meeting of the Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers showed, the roles of ordained as leaders and deaconesses as assistants and helpmates were to be seen as a crucial embodiment of the church's general teachings on women's place in the world. Subsidiary roles for women were ordained by God and were unchangeable and necessary for the proper functioning of the church and the world.

> Just as we read that God made the woman to be the helpmate of the man so I believe our Deaconess Order can be most adequately developed along the line of a diaconate, not in terms of a miniature ordained ministry, but a helpmate to a busy ministry too crowded to give needed leadership in certain fields of effort, particularly related to women and children . . . We need a diaconate for women trained in the problems of home-building, child developing, youth guiding, organization building, keeping in mind particularly women, children and girls, so specialized in their training that when they go out they will know where and how to begin and not become chore girls of a busy minister.[37]

Thus, women were to be given training which would enhance what were believed to be natural, God-given traits and which would enable them to carry out tasks which ordained ministers were either unwilling or too busy to do. Once trained, such women were to see their work as both validated by and defined by the male clergy around them. They were indeed still the "handmaidens" of the church.

**The Shortage of Deaconesses:**

The requests for such workers were never-ending during the 1950's. They came both to the Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers and to the staff of the

Training School. In the Secretary's Report to the meeting of the Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers in November 1953, the projection was made that the church needed at least 160 deaconesses immediately to fill existing vacancies.[38] In the first four months of 1955 urgent requests came from 30 churches, all of them with Sunday Schools of over 700 children, and all stating that it was "absolutely imperative to provide assistance for the minister."[39] By 1957 the Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers had given up trying to keep track of requests for deaconesses beyond the current year, stating that:

> The number of requests for Deaconesses from congregations are so far in excess of the number available that the situation is tragic. This year no attempt was made from the office to follow up on requests for Deaconesses not met last year, yet 27 urgent calls for assistance were received. Some were new this year and some were made previously and renewed this year.[40]

Many congregations eventually gave up making requests for deaconesses and turned instead to graduates of the lay-oriented Christian Leadership Schools which were becoming popular at the Lay Training Centres across the country. While such programmes were originally designed to provide leadership training, Biblical Studies and personal enrichment events for lay leaders in the church, they were increasingly being used as a source of potential Christian Education professionals by desperate congregations. The recruitment of Christian Leadership graduates created a number of problems for the graduates themselves, for the congregations who employed them, and for deaconesses who were still struggling for recognition within the church. Graduates of the Christian Leadership Schools who were employed in the place of deaconesses quickly found that their training was inadequate for the work of a professional within the church. Congregations sometimes became quickly dissatisfied with the work performance of such women and were quick to generalize this to the work of all women professionals. The effect of this was to lower the confidence of congregations in the work of deaconesses and to provide a justicifation for low salaries and for close supervision of women's work by male clergy. In 1953 the Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers discussed the emerging problems associated with the hiring of unqualified workers and issued a statement to remind congregations that Christian Leadership Schools did not provide training for professional service. In addition, the Committee decided to

investigate the possibility of setting up a summer course for such workers at the United Church Training School.[41]

Because of the severe shortage of deaconesses, graduates were faced with an endless variety of job possibilities and were beseiged with job offers. Such women, as a result, had a sense of excitement about their vocation and tended to ignore issues of payment, working conditions and status, thinking instead that because they were in such demand they would be treated fairly. One graduate, who began her work in 1951, commented several years later on her feelings as a new worker:

> There were strong feelings of self-worth in us old girls when we were new graduates. There was no way we could fill all the requests for missionaries and deaconesses, and we really started off feeling that we had a contribution to make to the life and work of the church. I think that's why we didn't become concerned about low salaries--we knew that there wasn't enough money in Canada to pay what we were worth.[42]

Yet in spite of the obvious need and the concentrated recruitment efforts , recruits for the Deaconess Order did not appear in numbers approximating the vacancies. Active membership in the Order varied between a low of fifty-nine in 1945 and a high of 147 in 1963.[43]

And the majority of those women who did train for the Deaconess Order did not choose congregational work until the late 1950's. In 1953 for example, nine deaconess candidates graduated from the United Church Training School and none of them chose congregational work.[44] In 1954 fourteen women joined the Deaconess Order and only four entered congregational work.[45] But eventually local congregations did replace the Woman's Missionary Society as the main employer of deaconesses for the first time in history. By 1958, thirty-one out of seventy-four women in full-time work were employed in Christian Education positions in local congregations. Most were concentrated in large urban areas, in congregations which were large enough and affluent enough to afford more than one full-time professional. In 1958 an additional ten deaconesses were employed in educational institutions and Boards of Christian Education.[46] This meant that more than half of all active deaconesses were employed in jobs which were defined as Christian Education positions. In 1959 and 1960 the situation was similar. Those not in local congregations were in the field of publications, visual aid materials, Sunday School

by Mail and Air programmes, or in provincial or national positions in Christian Education. Some were associate field secretaries, girls' children's and young people's work secretaries or university counsellors.[47]

Over-work and Job-Descriptions:

As the Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers continued to receive requests for deaconesses, many of them accompanied by lists of duties which were endless, and continued to receive yearly reports from individual deaconesses on their work, it became increasingly concerned about the fact that many were being over-worked and undermined by unrealistic expectations from their congregations. Some were resigning in frustration, returning to their previous occupations of business, teaching or nursing. In addition, some were given vague terms of reference for their work, and often had no one to relate to in cases of problems, other than the ordained minister, who often had no conception of the work being done or the problems encountered. While a few of the problems deaconesses faced had to do generally with the hierarchical nature and functioning of the church and were shared by male assistant ministers, the majority of them were gender-specific and had to do with an ingrained sexism and a theology which praised women's attributes as nurturers and followers, yet treated such work as if it were invisible, costless to the women involved, and less important than the other tasks of the church. Under such a system, women workers were rewarded only for those tasks which made the "real" work of male ordained clergy easier, and were punished for anything which drew attention to themselves, which suggested that they had a different experience of the church, or which questioned the legitimacy of a male-dominated church. While assistant ministers knew that eventually, with experience, they could become senior ministers, and would be labelled as "lacking in ambition" if they didn't, deaconesses knew that, with rare exceptions, they would always be perceived as assistants, and would have to work for clergy who had no training in collegiality or team work, and little understanding of the work involved in creating and maintaining a Christian Education programme.

In 1951 Tina Campion, the Secretary of the Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers urged the Committee to begin work on a job analysis form which could

eventually be used to help congregations decide on a proper job description for a deaconess. Also, the Committee hoped, it could be used by the Secretary to suggest to congregations that their demands were excessive. In explaining the purpose of the form, the Committee expressed the hope that it could be used to stop the exploitation of deaconesses within congregations which did not or could not determine what the appropriate work load should be. It would stop deaconesses from feeling they were failures, and would show instead that their jobs were impossible to do.

> From such a report we would be able to make recommendations more wisely and in some cases might need to point out that the amount of leadership they were expecting from any trained woman was more than one person could give. They would therefore need to select the most urgent areas for the present.[48]

Such a form could be valuable, the Committee believed, not just at the time of the appointment of the deaconess, but also in the future to facilitate a review of her work annually and allow for changes to be made in her work load before a severe overload forced her to quit in frustration. It was hoped that a clearly-designed form would facilitate a clear understanding by the minister and the congregation as well as by the deaconess about what is expected of her and about what resources and personnel would be provided by the church to help her in her work. The form eventually decided upon included the following questions, and helped to change the perception of deaconesses from assistants for the clergy to workers who were responsible to the whole congregation for their work.

> What is the relation of the Deaconess to the Session? Official Board? Presbytery? Conference? Groups in Church? What committee of the Session will be associated with the Deaconess and will be directly responsible for her work? To whom should the Deaconess report on her work, and how often? How shall the work be kept before the congregation in a meaningful way? What facilities will be necessary for the effective work of the Deaconess?[49]

**Changing the Educational Programme:**

In 1947 the United Church Training School made some changes in its educational programme, one of which was to lengthen its course for university graduates from one year to two. Though it was done at a time when the church was desperately trying to find women workers and to make access to jobs for women easier, faculty and students both agreed that the present educational preparation was not long or detailed enough and that

the special programmes instituted during World War Two to train women workers for special projects did not adequately train women for professional work in the church. Students within the programme claimed that they couldn't begin to deal with the subjects presented within one year, saying that they needed more time to "master a situation and adequately learn new skills."[50] Graduates were consistently reporting that at the time of their first jobs they were:

> inadequately equipped for the work expected of them and the opportunities awaiting them in the Church . . . The woman Church worker and missionary is expected not only to have sound knowledge herself but also to be able to mediate that knowledge in a variety of ways to people of all types and ages. Further, she is expected to be able to recommend books and other resources to leaders to enable them to do their own work more adequately.[51]

Though the move to a two-year programme was instituted quite quickly and smoothly, it was not without its critics, and the whole question of the level and prerequisites for the training of women were to be challenged many times as the shortage of women workers became worse.

At the same time as it was lengthening its required programme, the United Church Training School was also moving towards a period of closer cooperation with Emmanuel College, the Toronto theological college where some ordained ministers were educated. After the war, Victoria College, of which Emmanuel College was part, offered land to the Training School to build its badly-needed new facilities. The two houses which had been acquired in 1943 had proven very inadequate, both for the number of students and the expanded programmes which the Training School had taken on. The offer was accepted and in 1950 General Council authorized a fund-raising campaign to secure money for the new school. Harriet Christie, the present Dean of the School, was chosen to act as the National Executive Secretary and she travelled across the country, speaking to congregations, and particularly to women's groups, about the importance of women's work and the need for new and larger facilities for their training. Campaign committees were set up in every Conference and Presbytery. They were typically composed of representatives of the Woman's Missionary Society, and the Woman's Association, and any other men or women named by the church as key to the success of the programme. The objective was set at $600,000, but by February, 1954, only four years after

authorization for the campaign had been given, over $700,000 had been raised, with contributions continuing to come in at a steady rate.[52] The success of the campaign was interpreted both by local women's groups and by professional women workers as an affirmation of the contributions of women to the ministry of the church and as reflecting a desire to take more seriously their training and preparation.

In the early spring of 1955 the new building was finished and the dedication was held in March. A three-day open house brought over 4,000 visitors who toured the new facilities and celebrated what seemed to them to be a new era for women's work in the church. At the service of dedication Rev. W. C. Lockart summarized what many were feeling about the work of women in the church:

> Surely the appearance of this School in this place and at this time, planned and financed largely through the initiative, the ingenuity, the hard labours and the sacrifices of the women of our great church, is indication in itself that God's Spirit broods over His Church, looking for new and creative opportunities for expression . . . [This School] is symbolic of a growing and developing movement which heralds the dawn of a day in the life of our Church when the unusual gifts, the qualities of the feminine mind and heart and spirit are being made available for leadership and service in the Church.[53]

1950 also saw the joint appointment of a professor of Christian Education, who was to have an office and be on the faculty of Emmanuel College, but was to lecture in Christian Education at both Emmanuel College and the United Church Training School. He was to share in the field work of the students and to teach in the Graduate School of Theological Studies. In addition, other faculty from Emmanuel were to teach more than half of the courses for the students at the Training School. Students with a previous university degree could, for the first time, take courses at Emmanuel College and receive credit for the work done there, and students who qualified could work towards an M.A. in the University of Toronto. This scheme of dual enrolment whereby students with previous university work could earn a diploma from the School and work towards a university degree at the same time was part of a deliberate strategy to give women greater access to university degrees and the recognition which came with them, and to integrate the School's programme, wherever possible, with that of Emmanuel College.[54] In a panel presentation by students in 1950, they described the new, more-detailed programme of studies:

> At the Training School we studied the basic disciplines of Systematic Theology, Church History, Old and New Testaments, Ethics and Psychology of Religion with the theological students. The practical courses of our training include Social Work, Pastoral Theology, Sociology and Missions. Along with these we have Crafts, Recreational Leadership, Music, and this coming year Religious Drama is being added to the course. These courses are taken with the Anglican and Presbyterian women who are also training for full-time service in the Church. We consider this cooperation with the other two training colleges to be a valuable part of our training.[55]

Living in residence continued to be a requirement, and Sunday afternoon teas with the Principal and informal evening meals in the dining room continued to be strong socializing activities which communicated to women workers that successful professional work in the church involved aspects of graciousness, hospitality, highly-developed listening and conversation skills, and an ability to anticipate and respond to the social and physical needs of others. Ease at "getting along with others" was clearly construed as an essential component of being a professional woman in the church.

Also, the understanding was clearly there, both in academic courses and in informal socializing, that deaconesses and other women workers were primarily to assist the minister, to take direction from him and to be willing to subsume their interests and perceptions under his.

Enrolment continued to increase slowly, and in 1952 the School had its largest enrolment in history with forty-four students in the programme and twenty-seven graduates in the spring.[56] Prerequisites for entrance continued to be a university degree or training in a profession followed by several successful work years. Since the three most popular professions for women at this time were nursing, business and teaching, it is not surprising that by 1950 half of the women who became deaconesses had previous experience as nurses, businesswomen or teachers, and the other half were university graduates.[57]

The educational programme continued to have a strong practical emphasis. Students were required to work in a local church, giving leadership both on Sundays and during the week to children and to young people. Each student had a weekly interview with a supervisor, and also had the help of the minister, deaconess or Sunday School Superintendent of the church where she worked. This programme of double supervision

was instituted in 1946, and meant that each student had two resource people, two supervisors to learn from, one within her work setting and one who was an experienced deaconess or church member not directly connected with the placement.[58] Joint meetings were also held with other students, and such informal sessions provided a chance for the discussion of common problems and for peer learning and support. In 1947 the time commitment required for such field work was set at four to eight hours a week, and a second semester focussing on field work research was added to the curriculum. Regular meetings were also held with the supervisors as a way of facilitating the discussion, evaluation and revision of the recommended processes of effective supervision.[59] The result of all this emphasis on practical training was that women workers entered their first positions with a greater wealth of practical experience and a greater awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of congregations than did their ordained counterparts. Yet their training and qualifications were consistently minimized by a church which looked to academic degrees as the proof of excellence and qualification for ministry in the church.

In 1954 the Senate of Victoria University approved the formation of a two-year course of study, including a thesis requirement, which would be given at Emmanuel College and which would lead to the degree of Bachelor of Religious Education (B.R.E.). The creation of the degree programme was part of the increasing movement towards seeing Christian Education as an area of specialization in the church and to provide academic professional credentials for workers who wished to concentrate on it. The Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers, in hearing about the new degree, recommended that the Training School investigate the possibility of such a degree being incorporated, for those students who qualified, as part of the work leading to the diploma of the School.[60]

In 1959 the relationship of the School to Emmanuel College became even more formalized when, after years of negotiations and discussions, those students at the School who were college graduates were encouraged to register in the B.R.E. programme and to take all of the required courses for this. Thus, they could graduate in two years with both a diploma from the School and a B.R.E. degree from Emmanuel College. One of the results of this arrangement was the separation of degree from non-degree students. It was

now possible for field work seminars and community events to be the only activities which all students shared in together. Another result was that students no longer had the leadership of strong women teachers, women who acted as role-models and mentors and were crucial in the development of identity as deaconesses. All of the professors at Emmanual College were male, and many had only a minimal awareness of the work of deaconesses.

With the finalizing and implementation of this agreement with Emmanuel College the expectation was clearly stated that the United Church Training School would "Become an institution which normally asked from prospective students a standing of college graduation."[61] Another hope of the School was that the participation of deaconesses and ordained candidates in common classes would increase the visibility of deaconesses across the church by giving to ordination candidates an understanding of who deaconesses were and how they understood their work in the church. The programme also provided, for the first time, an almost-equivalency between the training of some deaconesses and ordained ministers, and opened the way to salary comparisons between those women who had B.R.E. degrees and ordained workers with Bachelor of Divinity (B.D.) degrees.

**"Girl Fridays": The Attempt to De-professionalize Women's Work:**

Much of the discussion and work concerning status, working conditions and salaries of women workers, including deaconesses, was overshadowed by a larger question which arose about the nature and length of training needed to be a woman worker in the church. In 1957, during the time when there were many jobs and few graduates from the United Church Training School, individual churches, Presbyteries and Conferences began to question the need for extensive training for women and to call for a lowering of the entrance requirements at the School and a shortening of the training period. They claimed that such actions were logical ways to solve the shortage problem and to attract women into church work. They claimed that there were many women available who would like to enter church work, but were barred from it by both the high educational and professional qualifications needed beforehand and by the rigour and length of the course.

In 1953 a request came to the Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers to accept and provide training for women who did not have the entrance requirements for the United Church Training School, but who had other qualifications such as volunteer experience in the church or in other large organizations.[62] Though the request was denied and the admission policies of the School affirmed, such actions did not stop the questioning of the School's standards and training programme. In 1957 Maritime Conference sent a resolution to the Board of Colleges and Secondary Schools requesting the provision by the Training School of courses which would provide training for church work for young women with only Junior Matriculation standing.[63] Later, the Dominion Council of the Woman's Association passed a resolution asking the Board of Colleges and Secondary Schools to study the possibility of instituting a special one-year course for women workers (Senior Matriculation standard) at the United Church Training School. Referring to the precedents set in World War Two and shortly after, both the Woman's Association and Maritime Conference argued that the church was losing out on many qualified women who wished to serve as workers.[64] Both believed that the post-war WMS programmes of 1946 and 1951 were the model which the church should be adopting for the majority of women's work.

In 1946 the Woman's Missionary Society had recruited women workers to give a year of service in Indian Institutions and Residential Schools which included a training course at the Portage La Prairie Indian Residential School and a year's work. Teachers, nurses, matrons and supervisors were hired this way, and were provided with travel, salary, educational expenses, and were sent to Indian Institutions all across Canada.[65] In 1951 a similar programme was set up to secure qualified and experienced teachers, university graduates and business women who would work in Church Extension and new housing areas. There they were to do survey work, home visitation, set up Christian Education programmes, and cooperate with local Church Extension Committees in new housing areas to establish congregations. The training period was one year at the United Church Training School, followed by two years of work for the church. Scholarship money was provided to finance the year of training, and travel expenses were also paid.[66] The recruitment folder stressed both the urgency and importance of such work for women:

> Every city and large town has its new housing areas in which are found young married people with little children. The United Church plans to build 150 churches in these areas in the next five years. Women are needed to help with this important work.[67]

Initially the discussion of the length and the format of training programmes required for women workers stayed within the Board of Colleges and Secondary Schools and the Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers, both of whom were responsible for standards, training and selection of women workers. Both in 1957 and 1958 the Board of Colleges and Secondary Schools, which was responsible for all theological training, spent a considerable length of time debating the question of the paucity of women workers and the adequacy of the present training standards. During the discussions, some members of the Board expressed the fear that, unless professional church work was made more easily accessible to young women, they would get married and be "lost" to professional church work forever. Others spoke as if the church needed two distinct categories of women workers--one highly-trained and professionalized group, as now existed in deaconesses and WMS missionaries, and another large, minimally-trained disposable group of women who would be constantly available to meet special personnel needs in the church. Others suggested that more jobs be made available which combined religious education duties with secretarial or social service work, and that these positions be availble to women with experience in business or social work and no special training in Christian Education. The general tenor of the discussions was that, for most of the jobs women did in the church, minimal training and skill were required. Though nothing was resolved during the heated discussions, all agreed that "something drastic must be done if young women are to be attracted to the service of the Church in numbers that will even begin to meet the Church's need."[68]

During the following months the intensity of the debate increased and participants became increasingly polarized between those who saw women as highly-trained professionals and those who thought that what the church needed was a large group of minimally trained "assistants". The dynamics of the debate kept any other issues of work-load or status from being recognized or linked to the shortage of women workers at all. Most people never looked beyond their assumptions that the only problems had to do

with difficult entrance requirements and training length. Few ever asked questions about the working conditions, salaries and status of women, and those who did were silenced by comments that such issues had nothing to do with women's entrance into church work.

At the time of these discussions the recommended minimum salary scale for deaconesses was $2,800 and the WMS salaries were similar.[69] Inez Morrison, the Secretary of the Personnel Committee, in her speech to the Annual Meeting of the Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers, raised the issue by stating that recruitment strategies were not showing results because they were focused on the wrong issues. To be successful, they needed to be integrated with a concerted effort to improve salaries and working conditions. The church needed to take account of the fact that "somehow we have failed to give enough prestige to the work and to make it a good life."[70] However, her speech was heard by the converted, by those who had already struggled long and hard against the exploitation of women workers, and was not heard by those who were in a position to do something about the conditions of women's working lives. The eventual result of the Board of Colleges and Secondary Schools' deliberations was an agreement to send a questionnaire to ministers in congregations, asking them to identify the areas of need for the service of women workers in their own churches.[71]

Though the requests to change the entrance standards and curriculum of the United Church Training College did not speak specifically of deaconess work, and in some cases advocates of the change were prepared to leave the training of deaconesses as it was, the whole discussion did have specific implications for the recognition and work of deaconesses. Once women were certified and entered church work, they tended to move from one job to another and congregations often did not bother to check up on whether their training was specifically related to one task or whether they had the professional course of training provided for deaconesses and WMS Missionaries by the Training School. Congregations tended to treat one woman worker like another, and to generalize in terms of women's competence, training and status. The discussion and the proposals contributed to the general impression that women were indeed all hastily trained and therefore deserving of lower salaries and ancillary positions in churches. The discussion around education was representative of an intention to downgrade women's skills in the

profession of church work, and even though such calls for a simpler and shorter course were never acted upon, they still created a belief among church members that women's work was not particularly valuable or difficult.

Discussion continued on this issue for several years, mostly within appropriate committees or in congregations looking at the possibility of hiring a woman worker. In 1961 *The United Church Observer* took the discussion to the whole church and increased the intensity of the debate with the publication of an editorial entitled "Needed--A Short Course". It proposed the same solution to the problem of the shortage of women workers--the provision of a shorter course with lower entrance standards.[72] Though the article claimed to be talking about both men and women, all of the arguments given were based totally on assumptions about women's roles, capacities and goals in life. Men seemed to be included as merely an afterthought, or on the assumption that very few of them would be attracted to non-ordained, low-status, poorly-paid work in the first place. Based on an understanding of "true femininity" as expressed and completed only through marriage and child-bearing, and of work as needing to be kept from interfering with this natural desire and process for women, the article stated the following:

> The ambition of the normal Christian girl is to get a good education, work for a while, get married and rear a family. And that is a high calling. Some of the best of them want professional, full-time, life-long service in the church. For them we thank God. Others will find marriage passes them by, and they want to make life count for the highest possible good. For that kind of service there should be adequate professional training--the kind provided by the United Church Training School now. But among the tens of thousands of young women coming out of our high schools and churches, there are many who could make an excellent contribution for a few years--like young public school teachers. And after marriage they could continue to be of great help in their local churches. But they just are not prepared for the long preparation required now.[73]

The reactions to the editorial, as reflected in subsequent Letters to the Editor, were strong and immediate. Though few critiqued the assumptions about women behind the proposal, several did question the writer's assumption that Christian Education leadership was a job which required very little skill. They pointed out the dangers of the church's tendency to define Christian Education, with its constituency of women and children and its emphasis upon process and growth rather than measurable results, as less complex or important than the other aspects of the church's life. As Margaret Moore

pointed out in a letter to the Editor:

> No short term training programme can begin to replace the well-trained full-time leadership which is the genius of the Protestant Church. Surely as we face an increasingly bewildering and complex world our need for Christian Education in depth is an urgent one. A Church without such leadership is ill-equipped to play a vital role in our world . . . it [this plan] means that year after year the important responsibilities of Christian Education are to be placed in the hands of teenagers, I think we are being offered a plan that holds many dangers.[74]

Other criticisms questioned the editorial's assumption that easier access was the only issue around the shortage of women in the church.[75]

*The United Church Observer* responded to the criticism by publishing a second editorial which even more clearly articulated its position that women's proper activities were in the home and that nothing should ever interfere with their prospects or their desire for marriage. Careers were only to be seen as preparatory for their "real" roles. In its wording it was remarkably similar to the reasons being given to bar married women. particularly mothers, from ordination, a debate which was being held at the same time in the church:

> There are many young people, mostly girls, who would like to be Fridays. They don't intend to devote their lives to full-time church work, but would be ready to spend a few years prior to marriage in such work. They can't take time for five or six years training, and then time for service too, if they are going to get married and start rearing a family in early or mid-twenties. This, of course, is based on the assumption that God's highest calling for a woman is still to be a wife and mother.[76]

It is interesting to note that no similar recommendations were ever made concerning the training of ordained or lay supply men. Though the shortage of ministers was just as acute, and was perceived as such by the church at a very early date, no serious proposals were ever made to shorten the course or lower the entrance requirements. In fact, the short course, which provided a shorter programme for men who entered ministerial training at a late age, was seriously questioned several times by the same editor who proposed a much shorter course for women. In an editorial entitled "A Desperate Shortage", which gave the grim statistics about the lack of ministers, he stated the following:

> It must be remembered that an increasing number of the ministers in service

> are men without full training. To meet the shortage we have compromised with our standards. More and more older men with a short course are being ordained . . . They are not as well-trained as they or we would like them to be . . . History indicates that every time a church became short of ministers and lowered standards to meet the emergency, that church delined. It could happen to us.[77]

Though the Training School consistently refused to admit younger women with fewer qualifications into its educational programmes, it did eventually give in to the pressure to provide a concentrated course for older women who were already working in the church. In 1959 the staff initiated a summer course for women over thirty-five who were not eligible for entrance into the School but who were interested or already working in church institutions and congregations. At the time the programme was announced to the Board of Colleges and Secondary Schools, the Principal stated that she expected an enrolment of twenty women.[78] This programme represented the first significant attempt to recognize and provide for the work of older women in the church.

**Removal of the Disjoining and Probationary Rules:**

In 1951 work began on revising the Constitution of the Deaconess Order. With it came a lively discussion of the regulation requiring the disjoining of women from the Deaconess Order when they married. Though the Deaconess Work Committee, a sub-committee of the Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers, ruled to leave it in the Constitution, this was challenged both by individual members of the Order and by Harriet Christie, the Principal of the Training School on the grounds that it reinforced outdated, rigid rules of women's roles in society and was out of step with what was happening in other areas of women's work. In a letter to the Executive Secretary of the Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers, the Principal voiced her concerns:

> I do not see why marriage, per se, disqualifies a woman from membership in the Deaconess Order. If membership in the Order results from the call of God to serve Him, I do not see why marriage invalidates that call . . . Marriage in itself does not necessarily alter either the nature or the quality of work, for many married women in all vocations continue to work after marriage. I can think of no vocation where marriage automatically removes status, and do not see why it should in this case. One of the tasks of the Committee on the Deaconess Order is to work for a growing recognition within the Church of the place and contribution of women and to develop within the Church the understanding which is increasing in other areas of life that men and women are persons of equal worth in the sight of God and deserve to be so treated, with each person

> being judged according to his own worth. It seems to me that this clause in the Constitution contributes to the attitude that woman's place is in the home, that women may be classified together rather than having individual persons considered for her own merits.[79]

The clause remained in the Constitution as a general rule, but the position of the Committee was softened in 1953, when individual deaconesses who were to be married and their employing congregations began to write to the Committee requesting that they be allowed to continue in their jobs and remain within the Deaconess Order. The first of these requests came in February of 1953, and after considerable discussion, the Committee agreed that "since it will be possible for [her] to continue to serve as a deaconess after her marriage, that she be permitted to retain her status in the Deaconess Order as long as she continues to perform the duties of a deaconess."[80] For the next four years decisions such as the previous one continued to be made around specific individuals and congregations who wrote asking that the rule in the Constitution be waived. However, the rule remained in force otherwise and acted as a continuing powerful statement of what was the expected, the desirable, the norm. It did not really make women's continued participation in the Order after marriage any more acceptable. What it did was to delay the imposition of the rule until such deaconesses were looking for another appointment, and were unable to find a congregation which would request a waiving of the rule on their behalf. The issue of deaconess' suitability for employment after marriage would then re-emerge. In 1957 the disjoining rule was finally removed from the Constitution and deaconesses' behaviour and decisions concerning the combining of careers and marriage were no longer legislated by the church.[81]

In 1951, as the work on revising the Constitution continued, the Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers also reconsidered the rule which required candidates for the Order to serve a probationary year before they could be recommended for membership in the Order. The Committee discovered that the probationary year, in practice, turned out to be two. Few deaconesses were able to work a full year between graduation in May and the meeting of Conference the next spring. Therefore, they were required to wait until the next conference meeting in order to be designated. After discussing the effects of this rule on both individual deaconesses and their employers, the

Committee sent a resolution to General Council in 1952 asking that it be removed and that deaconesses be admitted to the Order immediately after graduation from the Training School.[82]

**Low Salaries Continue:**

The low salaries of deaconesses continued to be a major agenda item for the Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers and it took the occasion of the revising of the Constitution to take a tougher stand on remuneration for deaconesses. In 1952 the Committee recommended that the following statement be added to the Constitution:

> The salary for a deaconess shall not be less than the existing salary scale which has been approved by the Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers.[83]

The Committee was becoming increasingly frustrated with congregations' and Boards' unwillingness to raise voluntarily the salaries of deaconesses to a suggested minimum. Strategies of consultation, persuasion, and of appealing to employing groups' compassion and sense of fairness had not proven successful and had left many deaconesses with barely enough money to live on. Particularly in congregational work, church boards and committees were noted for paying less than the minimum and justifying it on the basis of statements that the work being done was "assistance", and the women involved were single and therefore did not need much money to live on. Congregations also pointed out that such women had inferior educational qualifications or that they were paying as much money as they could afford. In 1952 the Committee did a summary of the salaries of deaconesses in congregational work and found that half of the deaconesses were receiving less than the minimum recommended by the Committee. Out of twenty-one women reported on, only six were receiving $100 or more above the minimum level.[84] In conducting its work on salaries, the Committee kept an extensive file on the salaries of teachers, and stated several times that it regarded teaching as a profession comparable to deaconess work. Yet the Committee was never able to bring deaconess' salaries anywhere near the level of those for teachers. In 1952, when the minimum for deaconesses was $1900 for new graduates and $2100 for more experienced workers,[85] teachers in Toronto who were Normal School graduates started at $2400, and those who had three years of

university received $3000.[86]

Over the next few years the situation regarding deaconesses' salaries did not improve substantially, with many deaconesses still receiving less than the recommended minimum. The Committee continued to receive correspondence from deaconesses who were in serious financial difficulties, and instructed the Executive Secretary to meet again with the Boards who employed deaconesses, "with a view to finding ways and means of providing adequate salaries and living accommodation for all deaconesses."[87] During 1952 the use of the deaconess uniform was also reviewed. Deaconesses in social service work saw it as a useful tool for identification and thought that it also ensured their safety in dangerous places. Deaconesses in congregations did not see it as useful at all. A committee was appointed to find a more suitable style, one which would appeal to all deaconesses. After a year of consulting with women workers, the Committee gave up on the task of finding a uniform for all. Instead, a ribbon and deaconess pin were provided as a form of identification on the job.

**Deaonesses and Presbytery:**

Though the visibility of deaconess work was increasing across the church and requests for such workers continued to pour in, deaconesses still had no access to the decision-making courts of the church. Unlike ordained ministers, who were members automatically of Presbytery and Conference and ex-officio of church Sessions, deaconesses had no guaranteed membership in any of these decision-making groups. As an increasing number of deaconesses found work in local congregations, their inability to speak and vote in the places where many of the decisions about ministry, finances and programmes of local congregations were made, became more and more an issue of injustice and exclusion. These women observed that within Presbytery and Conference, policies were being made which undermined or ran interference with their work and showed a lack of willingness on the part of church groups or committees to learn about or appreciate their difficult and unique work. One thing which particularly bothered deaconesses was the fact that retired ordained ministers, who were no longer active in ministry, were members of Presbytery by right, yet deaconesses who were actually working in local congregations had no such "right". With these discoveries, deaconesses

began to work for a voice in the courts of the church.

In 1942 the "attendance" of deaconesses at Presbytery meetings had been approved by General Council, but deaconesses could not speak during debates unless the individual Presbytery they attended passed a motion which made them corresponding members for the duration of the meetings. Such a motion would mean that they could speak on issues and participate in committee meetings, but could not vote. Deaconesses could vote only if they were appointed as lay delegates by their individual congregations, and this rarely happened before 1946. Thus the voices of deaconesses were heard at Presbytery only if individual Presbyteries chose to hear them and "allowed" such women to participate. Presbytery remained male-dominated, with male clergy doing most of the speaking, and lay people, mostly women, listening and following their lead. The admission of deaconesses as voting members would upset this balance, and was therefore resisted fiercely.

In 1946, recognizing that the position and status of deaconesses and other women workers in the church was far from adequate, General Council set up two important commissions, one to study the recruiting and training of church workers, and one to study the whole range of women's ministry, including ordination, and the problem of the lack of status of deaconesses in the courts of the church.[88] Both the Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers and the Fellowship began the preparation of detailed briefs, taking this opportunity to document the situation of deaconesses and to make proposals directly to the two Commissions about changes in the organization and functioning of deaconess work in the church. The Fellowship held a national meeting for the purpose of gathering material on the experiences of deaconesses and other women workers, and of preparing a brief. Energy and excitement were high, and many women workers described this as a time when they sensed that major changes were in the air, and that their ideas and concerns would be taken seriously by the two Commissions. Seventy-nine members attended the Fellowship's meeting in August 1947, and worked to prepare the material for the Commissions.[89]

**Another Proposal for a Diaconate:**

The prepared statements of both the Fellowship and the Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers proposed that there be a second Order of Ministry, a proposal which had been rejected in 1928. More detailed than the request in 1928, both briefs detailed the purpose, composition, status and function of such an Order, and gave elaborate theological and historical summaries which both highlighted the work of women in the church throughout history and pointed out the ways in which the church had not fully benefitted from the gifts of women. The Fellowship's brief described its proposal for an Order in the following way:

> Such Order shall be as valid an Order as that of the ministry of the Word and Sacraments, but different in function. Members of the Order would serve as nurses, doctors, teachers, social workers, Christian Education Workers, Lay Supplies, Executive and Field Secretaries, Writers and Editors. Membership in the Order would not be determined by function. The unifying factor would rather be a 'common theological training and a common commitment to full-time work in the church.' All these, if truly dedicated to Christ and manifestly called to the service of the Church, are in a real sense engaged in the Ministry of the Church.[90]

The creation of such an Order for non-ordained church personnel, the Fellowship believed, would solve the problems of lack of status for deaconesses and other women workers. Since entrance into the Order would be by ordination, the women within it would become part of the official ministry of the church and would be members of Session, Presbytery and Conference by right, just as ordained ministers presently were, according to the Basis of Union. Qualifications for the proposed Order would be those presently in place for deaconesses, and all women in full-time service of the church would be invited to join. Thus, both groups, the Fellowship and the Committee, were proposing something which would unify the work of non-ordained women workers in the church, provide access to the courts of the church, lead to greater visibility and recognition, yet maintain the uniqueness and separation of women's work which was other than Word and Sacrament.

In 1948, after two years of work, the Commission on the Ministries of Women reported to General Council. In a lengthy report which raised and detailed many of the problems associated with deaconess' lack of membership in Sessions and Presbyteries, the Commission asked General Council to reactivate the idea turned down in 1928 and to set

up a Commission to begin investigating the possibility of establishing a Diaconate as an Order of Ministry. It recommended that such an Order be open to men as well as women, and that the Commission, if created, study the conditions of admission to such an Order, the relation of its members to the church courts and the training needed for such work. This recommendation was turned down by General Council, but the Commission's second recommendation was received more favourably. It involved the implementation of a policy that, in cases where the number of non-ministerial members elected to Presbytery was less than the number of ministers on the roll, the Presbytery, for the purpose of equalization, appoint those deaconesses working in its congregations as lay delegates, "up to the number necessary for the purpose of equalization."[91] This represented but a partial solution to the problem. Though its appeal was that it didn't require a change in the Basis of Union before it could be implemented, it still meant that many deaconesses would not be members of Presbytery. Those who did not work in congregations, or who were in Presbyteries where there were enough lay delegates would be left out. And those deaconesses who would be appointed as delegates, would be constantly aware that they were only included temporarily because of the goodwill of their congregations and because of a shortage of lay delegates. Deaconesses were well aware that their inclusion could be secured only because of the exclusion of others and that they were not really technically lay delegates. As paid employees of congregations, they brought a different perspective from that of true lay delegates. As the Fellowship pointed out in the section of its brief dealing with membership of deaconesses in Presbytery, deaconesses were never equivalent in outlook, experience or function to the laity:

> A Deaconess does not actually belong in the non-ministerial group in that she has completed the training required by the Church, for her office and work, been set apart by the laying on of hands and functions in the full-time work, carrying many responsibilities similar to those carried by the minister.[92]

In spite of the protests and discomfort of deaconesses, their, exclusion from automatic membership in Presbytery continued for several more years. The church continued to minimalize their professional status and their resultant differences from lay women, who made up most of the lay delegation to Presbyteries. The majority of deaconesses still had no official voice, no way of communicating with the officials of the

church other than indirectly through their ordained colleagues or nationally through the Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers. But the issue was kept alive by the Fellowship and by the Committee, who both continued to have discussions on the inadequacy of the position of deaconesses, and on the importance of an Order for all women in the church. Both groups continued to strategize about ways to bring the issue to the attention of the church yet one more time.[93]

**The First Remit on Deaconesses and Presbytery:**

Finally in 1954 the issue was put on the agenda of the national church again. Toronto East Presbytery memorialized General Council, asking that deaconesses be made ex-officio members of Presbytery. The Committee on the Law and Legislation, to which the Memorial was referred, recommended that it not be passed, saying that such an action would be contrary to the Basis of Union and therefore illegal.[94] Considerable discussion followed, and as a result of the strong opinions expressed in favour of giving deaconesses this status, General Council decided to issue a remit to Presbyteries. Such a remit would ask the church to endorse the changes necessary to the Basis of Union to allow deaconesses a place as ex-officio members of Presbytery. Thus, each Presbytery in the United Church was asked to vote on the following:

> Are you in favour of an amendment to the Basis of Union, Section 19; The Presbytery, which commences with the words, 'The Presbytery shall consist of' . . ., by adding thereto a new subsection-'(3) The Deaconesses in the active service of the Church within the Bounds of Presbytery'?[95]

A time limit was given for response, and, as was the case with all church remits, the procedural rules weighted the results in favour of maintaining the present situation. In order to pass, the remit needed "yes" votes from over half of the total number of Presbyteries in the church. Therefore, in terms of the counting, those Presbyteries who did not vote at all, and those which were late in sending in their responses, would have the same effect as those who voted negatively.

The Executive of the Fellowship of Professional Women met soon after the authorization of the remit to discuss strategies that could be used by individual deaconesses and by groups such as itself to secure the passage of the remit. The Executive decided not to take the initiative in issuing a general position statement to the church, but

instead to advise individual deaconesses, if asked, to provide information to congregations and Presbyteries. In order to facilitate this, the Executive wrote to all deaconesses in December 1954, asking them to study the issue. With the letter, the Executive included a packet of background material called "Statement--Deaconesses in Presbyteries". The covering letter advised deaconesses to stress that the issue was not currently on the agenda of the church because of the militant demands of deaconesses for status. It was there because such women were being kept from making effective contributions to the church. The remit, the Fellowship's materials suggested, was the decision of General Council itself and:

> was not sought by the Deaconess Order nor by the Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers on our behalf . . . [we] are in accord with the remit not because the members of the Deaconess Order want privilege or status, but because [we] have a contribution to make to Presbytery in discussion and in committee work and can gain much from Presbytery. As a member of Presbytery [we] would feel less isolated and the wider knowledge gained of the work of the Church would add considerably to the effectiveness of [deaconess] work.[96]

Such a recommended strategy was a result of deaconesses' socialization into roles which made them anxious when they used strategies which appeared strident, critical or which emphasized status or the rights of women over attitudes of cooperation and nurturing. Also, it was thought to be the politically expedient position to take. Several of the older members of the Fellowship remembered that a similar attitude of reticence and humility had been praised in Lydia Gruchy and had been mentioned as part of the reason why individuals voted for the change in the Basis of Union which allowed her to be ordained. Thus, the decision of the Fellowship to remain in the background was a combination of deliberate strategy choices and discomfort with aggressive, forceful roles for women. Most deaconesses responded as requested and the issue was clearly framed as one of an under-utilization of deaconess' resources rather than one of exclusion and injustice to women. Therefore, the success or failure of the remit would largely depend on how widely-known and appreciated the work of deaconesses was, and how urgently Presbyteries perceived the need for deaconesses' services.

Unlike the 1934 remit on the ordination of women, the remit on deaconesses' membership in Presbytery did not pass. Roughly one-third of the Presbyteries did not

reply at all, and only forty-eight voted in the affirmative, out of a total of one hundred and eight.[97] The high no-response rate was what defeated the remit, not the negative votes. Such a high rate of no response is difficult to explain. It may have been because the work and identity of deaconesses were still not widely-understood across the church. At the time of the remit deaconess work was still localized and the number of deaconesses was still small. In 1954 there were sixty-four deaconesses at work in only twenty-seven Presbyteries.[98] And much of their work was with women, youth and children, none of whom had much influence in Presbyteries. The lack of visibility and appreciation of deaconesses within the church as a whole was something that the Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers had been plagued with for years, and some progress had been made in changing the situation. But the lack of awareness of deaconess work continued to undermine the efforts of individual deaconesses, to force them to continue explaining themselves and educating church members, and to prevent any structural changes which would improve their professional lives. The Committee saw this lack of awareness of both the uniqueness and accomplishments of deaconesses both individually and as a group as part of the reason why the remit failed, and began to draft a pamphlet which would describe the history, work and training of deaconesses. Produced and quickly distributed across the church, it was called "What and Who is a Deaconess?"

The failure of the remit also had to do with a general belief that women did not have the skills required to conduct the business of the church and would not be interested or successful in learning them. This lack of confidence in women's decision-making abilities and interest in procedures and debate, led to a fear that the standards of Presbyteries would be lowered if deaconesses were given membership. These fears were magnified by the fact that in this remit, unlike the one on women's ordination, there was a whole group of women being discussed, not just one individual. Thus, the issue was the acknowledgement of the ministry and gifts of non-ordained women, women who had a long history and tradition, and not just, as in the case of Lydia Gruchy, the admission of one woman into a male-defined profession.

In the deaconess remit there was more of a threat of change, of upset in the balance of male power in the courts of the church. Some people opposed to the remit saw it as an

attempt by women to get into ministry "through the back door", and claimed that if deaconesses wanted the same status and privileges as the ordained, then they should take the training and apply for ordination themselves. Other reasons given by some dissenters during the discussions on the remit reflected a complex array of sexist assumptions, of misunderstandings of the identity and work of deaconesses, and of notions that women needed to be "kept in their place," in low-paying support staff jobs in the church. An extensive list of objections collected by the Executive Secretary of the Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers and shared with the members of the Fellowship in July, 1956, included the following:

> It would upset the balance of power and create a Professional Church; Women have nothing to say when they are in the Courts of the Church; This is merely a Feminist movement for status while the World Council of Churches is considering the co-operation of men and women in society; Few women are able to think on a policy-making level; The Church does not need women with high qualifications; Church Secretaries are all that are required.[99]

Perhaps the chances of success would have been greater if the Deaconess Association, The Fellowship and the Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers had taken a stronger stand and been more aggressive in their attempts to educate the church about the need for deaconess' participation in Presbytery. All three groups had considered a wide range of possible actions and had consciously decided not to argue the case on the basis of the injustice of deliberately excluding women from decision-making processes and of the effects of this on women's lives in the church. Instead, each group decided to stress that women had different gifts to offer the church than men, and women's gifts were not being fully utilized. The argument used by all three groups, elaborated in the following passage quoted from the Fellowship's materials on the issue, used much of the same reasoning and language as the 1943 Archbishops' report and the World Council of Churches' material on women in the church. It suggested that the churches were missing out on the skills of deaconesses, and deaconesses were missing out on the experience of the larger church available through Presbytery and Conference.

> It has not been possible for [women workers] to make the maximum contribution because they have not been granted a satisfactory status. These women have no official means of making their contributions, born out of a wide variety of experience, within the courts of the Church. They are granted, by virtue of their office, neither a voice nor a place in the courts of the Church, and the Church is

> the poorer because it lacks the contribution they should be making. They, in turn, through not being members of the Church courts, fail to receive the broad vision and the knowledge of the wider life and policies of the Church, which could enable them to make a larger and more constructive contribution in their own fields of work. In some cases professional workers are elected to the Church courts, but it is very regrettable that when so selected they replace lay representatives.[100]

While the remit was moving throughout the church, the Fellowship had continued to develop its proposal of an Order for all women--a proposal which, while in slightly different forms, had been rejected by the church twice in its short history. The Fellowship sent a letter in 1955 to all members which asked their opinions on the proposal for one Order. Members were asked to think about whether the Order should be a Deaconess Order, how such an Order could be strengthened, and whether men should be allowed to join.[101] Time was spent at the Biennial that year discussing the relationship of its members to Presbytery and in examining the political implications of having the Order open to men as well as women. Some expressed the opinion that the proposal would more likely be passed if the Order was open to men, and the Order would be accorded more respect in the church if it was open to workers of both sexes. In March of 1956 the Executive of the Fellowship, by then aware that the remit had not been passed by the church, set up a committee to compile the results of the discussions and letters into a written report for the next General Council. In April of the same year the Committee decided to keep the issue before the church by memorializing General Council, requesting that it "appoint a Commission to study ways in which the Church should recognize the call of men and women to a Ministry other than the Ministry of the Word and Sacraments, and the relationship of such persons to the Courts of the Church."[102] Though there were a number of members in the Fellowship who believed that women faced different work issues than men, and that the new Order should be for women only, those who saw men's admission as a political necessity and as an important way to ensure the success of the proposal won the debate. The Fellowship was in effect saying that women could not longer afford to work for recognition and status on their own.

**Studying the Work of Women:**

While the remit and the work of the Fellowship on an Order for non-ordained workers was being developed, the Executive of General Council set up another committee to look at other aspects of women's work, both professional and voluntary. In 1953 a meeting was convened with representatives of the two women's organizations in the church, the Woman's Missionary Society and the Woman's Association, and of the Committee on the Deaconess Order and Woman Workers. The purpose was to look at the relationship of women's organizations both to each other and to the rest of the church. Powerfully influenced by a number of reports coming from different denominations and from the World Council of Churches which stressed the need for cooperation and structural unity among men's and women's groups, the Committee which was subsequently formed began to look at the possibility of forming one women's organization and integrating it into the existing structures of the church. Under such a plan, the existing independent Boards of both the Woman's Missionary Society and the Woman's Association would be phased out and women's work would become organized within a Board of the United Church.

The newly-envisioned women's organization would "preserve within the Church all of value in present Women's organizations" and "further the partnership of women and men in the Church."[103] Because of an understanding within the theology and teachings of the church that men and women's natures were indeed essentially complementary and that one was incomplete without the other, such goals were seen as unproblematic and compatible. No one sensed that, because men and women had unequal power within the church and much of this inequality was either unrecognized or treated as natural, the goals of preserving those things of value in women's organizations and creating a partnership between men and women simultaneously were incompatible and hopelessly naive. Both women's organizations received the initial plans and goals for amalgamation with great enthusiasm.

The larger Committee was made up of several sub-Committees, one of which was to look specifically at the recruitment and status of professional women workers. All of the

sub-Committees created gathered information and deliberated for three years, and the whole committee reported to General Council in 1956. In its work, the whole committee studied and was greatly influenced by the summary of the World Council of Churches' survey of women, "The Service and Status of Women in the Church" by Dr. Kathleen Bliss, by the Canadian Council of Churches' report, "The Life and Work of Women in the Canadian Churches", and by Dr. Charlotte Whitten's study for the Anglican church, "The Women of the Church".[104] All of these documents referred to the psychological, social, economic and political information available on the exclusion of women, and suggested that the church lagged behind most fields of secular life, both in the recognition of the problems of women's exclusion, and in the development of strategies to deal with it. The church, all reports pointed out, had done little, to date, to work for the equality of women within church structures, rituals and social gatherings.

All of the reports, but particulary the one from the World Council of Churches, were welcomed by the United Church, The World Council report's understanding of cooperation as being both necessitated by and based on a complementarity of the sexes deeply affected many of the political decisions made about the future structure, status and identity of women's work in the church. All three of the reports contained many ideas which were appealing to women, and their effect was to legitimize women's greater participation in the church. All contained elaborate lists of the particular gifts of women, gifts such as nurturance, wisdom, and patience, and argued that these were valuable not just in traditional spheres of women's church work, but also in worship and in decision-making, these aspects of the church's life which were dominated by men. Thus, the reports did clearly point out a serious problem, the under-representation and low participation of women within certain areas of the church, and encouraged churches to consider ways to encourage women to participate more. The information provided became a tool for self-examination and evolved, for many churches, into a vehicle for raising other issues about the treatment of women. It enabled some churches to examine structures, theology, procedures, all of which were weighted against women's participation. It helped individual women and groups of women to discover that the church was for them, in many ways, a foreign and unsupportive place. While this was very painful for both women and

men, the reports became important vehicles for self-discovery and new consciousness by providing language, ways of analyzing and questioning, and strategies for change which had rarely been available in public before.

But the limitations of the reports were many. All were based on a simplistic and over-optimistic assessment of people's willingness and ability to change life-long attitudes and habits. They conveyed no understanding of institutional sexism, and described the lack of women's participation as a problem of individuals and their relationships with each other. The implications were that women, once in positions of leadership, would be heard, valued and supported, and would make the way easier for other women to enter the public life of the church. No attention was paid to the fact that there had been many times in the past that women had been in leadership positions and had been undermined. ridiculed and silenced. Nor was there any discussion of the specific ways that men were continuing to silence women and to preserve their own power at the expense of the women around them.

The specific involvement of men in maintaining the invisibility of women in the church was ignored entirely. In fact, two of the reports claimed that women were provided with full rights by the structure and traditions of the church, but had somehow not claimed them, and therefore what was needed was only a concentrated effort at cooperation with men in the decision-making and working of the church. Thus, the reports came dangerously close at times to blaming women for their absence and then assuring them that they could solve the problem by offering themselves for leadership in the church. Such a naive analysis was dangerous to women, as is any discussion of sexism in the church which refuses to take seriously the entrenchment of male power, the complicity of theology, tradition and structures in oppressing women, and the historical evidence of the suppression of strong women's leadership. Thus all of the reports were based on a simplistic assessment of the source, number and strength of the barriers to women's participation, and the depth of the resistance to change built into all people and social structures, including the church. Because of this, they moved to idealistic solutions before the problems had been thoroughly examined, and in some cases actually prevented women's situations from being examined and women's pain from being shared.

The United Church Training School and the Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers both received the reports' framework of cooperation between men and women with great enthusiasm. The Principal of the United church Training School expressed the sentiments of many of her colleagues in regard to the World Council Report, in the speech at her installation in 1954:

> The day of fighting for rights and attempting to imitiate men is gone. The demand of our day is cooperation, acceptance of responsibility and use of gifts and capacities within the Church as well as outside it. The need is to discover the essential contributions of men and women and how these may be expressed in such a way that men and women may compliment one another, each bringing his or her characteristics and training to the service of their Lord.[105]

Such cooperation, with its implied greater involvement of women, was to be sought because it would enrich and complete the work of the church, according to the reports. Women's involvement would correct the distortions which then prevailed in a male-dominated church. This was a recycling of an oppressive and familiar theme, rephrased in a slightly different and appealing way. Women were again being told that they were in fact to use their gifts and their labour for the education and betterment of something else, in this case, the church. Women's qualities and women's labour were, it was argued, to save the church. As Kathleen Bliss argued, women were the civilizers, the reformers, and the nurturers in the world:

> The times when the Church regarded women as a lower species, doubtfully redeemable, or as ignorant and ineducable, are always the times when the Church is dead in other matters--failing to evangelise, indifferent to human suffering. As soon as quickening life returns to the Church, or to some section within it, men and women are found working at some enterprise and new attitudes begin to prevail . . . This is because women are essential to the balance and well-being of the Church.[106]

Cause and effect are clearly intermixed in the mind of the writer, and women are both described as victims of erroneous beliefs and seen as responsible for correcting such excesses and oppression by participating in and "civilizing" the very structures which have damaged them. Questions about the cost of this to the women involved, and the lack of support for women who attempt it are lost in notions of cooperation and complementarity which permeate the reports and imply a receptivity and gratitude which, past history has shown, is rarely invoked when women begin to speak and use their gifts in the church.

All of the recommendations were set within a theological framework which stressed the incompleteness of each sex when taken separately and in isolation from the other. Cooperation was equated with faithfulness to God's plan; competition and separateness were interpreted to be a denial of God's will, a sin. In one section of the report the writer again reduced the problem of women's lack of involvement in the church to the level of the individual and implied that just as one individual is, according to God's plan, incomplete without the other, so the church is also incomplete without men and women working together in all of its activities.

> The cooperation of men and women is not a special doctrinal issue nor a single feature of Church life or organization. Still less is it an emphasis on the interests or rights of a single group within the Church. It touches nearly all doctrinal and practical issues with which the Church is concerned. For example, we cannot overlook the fact that the Bible speaks of a very close connection between the nature of the Church and the mystery of the right relationship of the sexes.[107]

Such cooperation was clearly to be based on the model of the male-dominant, heterosexual marriage relationship in the view of the report-writer, a relationship which had no more equality or freedom for women to contribute than did the church which the report was criticizing! Therefore, the recommendations of the report were actually reinforcing rather than reducing the exclusion of women from the leadership of the church. Another problem obvious to the modern reader is the heterosexist assumptions throughout the reports.

The qualities which women were to bring to the church, according to all three reports, were the traditional ones, those which had been attributed to and devalued in professional workers as well:

> A characteristic of women, whether by nature or necessity, is concern for persons, the developing and maintaining of the kind of relationships which belong to the family, a sensitivity to what contributes to or detracts from the sense of being loved and wanted, of being responsible to a family, group or community. With compassion and wisdom their capacities can serve the church through groups . . . where the members can experience the meaning of the Love of God binding them together and to Him, and when they come to know that they are part of the whole church and are able to go forth to transform life, secure in the dependability of God and their Church.[108]

These are all skills which had a long history of being relegated to the sphere of work with women and children, to groups which had little power within the church. None of the

reports spelled out whether these were skills which would support women on church Boards and Committees, and, if not, how women were to acquire the skills needed to work effectively, or how they were to combat the belief that females could not participate in discussions or make decisions clearly.

**Integrating Women's Work:**

After examining all of these reports and surveying the situations of women in the church, the Committee to Study Women's Work in the Church reported to General Council in 1956. First, the Committee recommended that the church move ahead on the formation of one organization for all lay women in the church. The intent of the new organization was:

> to unite all women of the Churches in a concern for the total work of the Church. Some won't be isolated for mission study and others for quilting bees. The W.A.'s and the W.M.S. will be united and unified under one Board.[109]

This move toward unification, involving the removal of mission work from the W.M.S., was to radically affect the work and salaries of deaconesses, a significant number of whom were still working in Woman's Missionary Society jobs. As part of the unification, all mission work, both in Canada and overseas, would be directed by the appropriate regular Boards of the United Church. And the mission money previously contributed by women through the Woman's Missionary Society would now go into mission work through the regular finances of the United Church. Thus, the autonomy of one large area of women's educational and mission work was removed permanently.

**Keeping the Question Alive:**

The second part of the Committee to Study Women's Work in the Church's report had to do with the work of professional women in the church. The Committee affirmed the work being done by women workers, and asked, as the Fellowship had, that a commission be set up to study the status of deaconesses and missionaries, and to clarify their relationship to the courts of the church.[110] General Council agreed and a Commission was quickly appointed. During the next two years, while the new Commission was working, the Fellowship continued to provide a forum for discussion of what shape an Order for non-ordained church workers might take, and how it could provide for better working

conditions for women. The Fellowship also spent time strategizing about what could be done if General Council continued to deny deaconesses a direct place in the courts of the church. Some felt that deaconesses should continue to work at strengthening the Fellowship and increasing their connections with the Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers, which continued to be their only official voice in and link with the courts of the church. In 1957 the Fellowship issued a statement affirming the work of women in the church and reiterating its stand that the present lack of status hampered women's work. The Statement again urged the church to grant deaconesses membership in the courts and reaffirmed the need for an Order which would "bind its members together under the discipline of the church, with a sense of common calling and mutual support, and would strengthen women in the particular kinds of functions they perform within the Church."[111] The Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers also held their own discussions on a possible Order and issued a statement in 1957 which was similar to the Fellowship's and which stated the following:

> Historically the office of deaconess has had a dignity within the Church and presents an essential and challenging avenue of ministry and service. Those 'called of God" to this ministry should have membership in the courts of the Church by virtue of their office.[112]

In 1958 the Commission reported to General Council and pointed out the continuing problems created by deaconesses' lack of membership in Presbytery. It pointed out that there were also many other women workers who could benefit from Presbytery involvement, and recommended that the Manual of the United Church be changed so that:

> Lay workers in the full-time work of the Church who have been appointed by a Board of the Church and installed by Presbytery at the request of that Board, and Deaconesses, and Woman's Missionary Society Missionaries who are not otherwise members of Presbytery, shall be made corresponding members of the Presbytery in which they are serving.[113]

Though this still excluded some women workers from membership, those who were hired by congregations without the recognition of Presbytery, and who were probably in most need of the fellowship and support of the church, the recommendation would cover most of the women professional workers in the church, and was greeted with appreciation by both the Fellowship and the Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers. The Report also proposed, like the Fellowship, that there be a diaconate available to both

men and women, that it be structured as an Order, and that entrance into it be by either designation or ordination by the church. This diaconate, the report pointed out, should not be limited to the present understanding of the work of deaconesses, but should also include Missionaries and qualified lay workers and be flexible enough both in structure and function "to meet both present and ongoing needs of the Church."[114]

**Preparing for a Second Remit:**

General Council received the Report with its recommendations and asked the Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers to begin the process of instituting these recommendations by reviewing its constitution and bringing suggestions for changes to the next General Council. This the Committee did, submitting to the 1960 General Council extensive suggestions for revisions in conditions of membership, training, pension provisions, appointment procedures, and details of employment, supervision and termination of membership.[115] Another committee continued to look at the implications of making deaconesses members of Presbytery. Should their relationship be the same as that of the ordained? What should happen, in that case, to the Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers? If deaconesses became subject to the same employment practices as the ordained, how could the church be educated as to the special training and skills of deaconesses so that they could be settled in positions which would be satisfactory for them? In 1962 this second Committee presented a comprehensive report on new procedures for the training, work, screening, supervision and settlement of deaconesses, and proposed that, as far as possible, the procedures for deaconesses be integrated with those already in place for the ordained. This meant that the courts of the church, Presbytery, Conference and General Council, would assume responsibility for administering the work of deaconesses and of other non-ordained workers in the church.

General Council accepted the detailed proposals, and authorized another remit which would again ask Presbyteries to change the Basis of Union. The changes asked for in this remit were far more extensive than just Presbytery membership, and included several proposed alterations in the procedures used for administering the work of deaconesses. The wording of the remit was as follows:

> That deaconesses may become members of the Courts of the Church and that the Courts of the Church assume responsibility for receiving, supervising, designation and settlement of women candidates for work in the church other than the ordained ministry.[116]

General Council also authorized the dismissal of the Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers as of December 31, 1962. An Interim Committee was set up to finish the business of the Committee, to facilitate the changing of the administration procedures for deaconess work, and to make recommendations about details which had been overlooked.[117] During the issuing of the second remit, the Fellowship had a National Biennial and discussed the implications of the new administrative procedures for women, and formulated strategies to use if the second remit also failed. The Deaconess Association which, as usual, was meeting in conjunction with the Biennial, passed a motion that it become part of the Fellowship.[118]

**Non-Ordained Positions for Men:**

From 1955 onwards General Council and the United Church Training School began to receive requests for the provision of a place and status for men who wished to work in the church in non-ordained positions. In 1955 the Fellowship had also begun to discuss the possibility of integrating men into the proposed Order for non-ordained workers.[119] In 1958 General Council took up the question in a more formal way and approved a Commission to study the following:

> How the Church can give a place to men called to the full time work of the Church other than the ministry, what should be their qualifications, training, relation to Church Courts, minimum salary and such matters.[120]

The United Church Training School, with its excellent programmes in Christian Education and Social Ministry, was seen as the logical and best place for such training to be provided. Though the plans took time to complete, in 1963 the first man was admitted to the school's programme. On completion of his course, he was commissioned as a Certified Employed Churchman, the newly-created male equivalent to the position of deaconess.[121]

**Unity for Women Workers:**

When the integration of all lay women's work came about in 1962, the Woman's Missionary Society and the Woman's Association amalgamated to form the Board of Women in the United Church. All the previous work of the Woman's Missionary Society was transferred to the two Boards of the Church concerned with mission work. The women who had been commissioned as Missionaries by the Woman's Missionary Society and who had a diploma from the United Church Training School were offered an invitation to join the Deaconess Order. Their reception had been approved by the Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers as part of their proposals to facilitate the change in women's work. Within two months of sending out letters to the women who were eligible to join, the Committee had received twenty-one requests from women who wished to become deaconesses.[122] There had been an earlier movement of WMS Missionaries into the Order in 1953, because of their belief that women workers needed to be united in order to work for recognition and better working conditions. It was recorded in the Brief from the Fellowship of Professional Women in the United Church in 1955 that:

> A number of missionaries and women in executive positions who had not previously joined the Deaconess Order were designated . . . This was a personal expression of the desire for unity among the women workers of the Church rather than an endorsation of the Deaconess Order as an Order providing, in its present form, a completely satisfactory status for all women workers.[123]

**The Remit is Passed:**

By 1964 the work of integrating deaconesses into the courts of the church was completed. The Interim Committee, as one of its final details of business, had sent a letter to each Presbytery with a list of all the deaconesses within its bounds.[124] Committee members also secured time on the agenda of each Presbytery and explained the details of the transition period and discussed Presbytery's future responsibilities toward deaconesses. Though these educational procedures were relatively successful, there were still individual deaconesses and Presbyteries who were not aware of the changes and who continued on in their separate ways as usual. When the details of the remit were made public in 1964, deaconesses officially became members of Presbytery. Sixty-six

Presbyteries had voted in favour, eight against, and twenty-eight had not replied.[125] Thus, though the struggle for recognition and fair treatment was far from over, one preliminary hurdle at least had been overcome. The 147 active deaconesses of the United Church now had a way of participating directly in the discussions and decision-making of the church.[126]

One of the immediate results of coming under the authority of Presbytery was a substantial and mandatory salary raise for deaconesses. They now became part of the General Council salary scale for ministers, and were classified in this scale as "unordained personnel". This gave them a minimum salary of $4,500 for 1965. This was compared to the $4,250 minimum (plus housing) which was in effect for ordained personnel.[127] Though the salaries of these women workers would be challenged many times in the future, and all the old arguments about deaconesses' supposed inferior education, less arduous roles as assistants, and more modest needs as single women would be dragged out again as individual congregations fought against the requirements to pay women workers a professional wage, deaconesses had moved one step forward in their fight to be treated fairly in the United Church.

**Conclusion:**

The period after World War Two was one of incredible church expansion. With this growth came a plethora of Christian Education jobs for deaconesses. However, an examination of official descriptions of such jobs shows that the church continued to conceive of deaconess work as being restricted to women's "natural" sphere of women and children, as taking its direction from the work of the ordained minister, and as entirely separate from the "real" decision-making and worshipping functions of the church. Thus, women's professional jobs were still restricted by sexist notions of what women were naturally good at and interested in doing. During this time period, there was a serious attempt to deprofessionalize women's church work through lowering the admission standards and shortening the length of the training programme. The arguments given in favour of such a move were based on deeply-ingrained sexist beliefs that women's work in the church was temporary, not particularly difficult and was preparatory to the genuine calling of marriage. While the debates about educational preparation were being carried

on, deaconesses were also lobbying for membership in the courts of the church such as Presbytery and Conference. Though membership was finally granted almost forty years after it was first recommended, access to Presbytery did not displace the gendered hierarchical structure of the church or solve the many problems associated with deaconess work in the United Church of Canada.

## Notes

[1]CCSA, Minutes of CDOWW, April 14, 1948, 1.

[2]UCC, MPE, Minutes of the Fifteenth Annual Meeting of BCSS, May 1-2, 1957, "Appendix F", 2.

[3]M. B. Pengelley, "The Man Behind the Building Boom", *The United Church Observer*, April 15, 1958, 10.

[4]*Ibid.*, 8.

[5]"For This We Are Thankful", *The United Church Observer*, October 1, 1960, 6.

[6]*Ibid.*

[7]M. B, Pengelley, "The Man Behind the Building Boom", 10.

[8]"An Editorial Measurement of the United Church's Amazing Growth", *The United Church Observer*, May 1, 1959, 29.

[9]*Ibid.*

[10]*Personnel for Women's work* (Toronto: UCC, 1948), 4.

[11]Mona Oikawa, "Driven to Scatter Far and Wide: The Forced Resettlement of Japanese Canadians to Southern Ontario, 1944-1949", 10.

[12]*The World Church Needs Canadian Christian Youth for Its Post-War Advance* (Toronto: 1943), 2, a recruitment folder produced by BFM and WMS.

[13]*Re-Mobilize for Full-Time Service in the Church*, (Toronto: UCC, 1945), 4.

[14]"Aftermath of Windsor", *The United Church Observer*, October 15, 1956, 9.

[15]CCSA, Minutes of CDOWW, November 29, 1946, 3.

[16]*Ibid.*

[17]*The Calling of the Christian* (Toronto: UCC, 1947), 3.

[18]*The Calling of the Christian*--2.

[19]CCSA, Minutes of CDOWW, June 8, 1948, 1.

[20]"They've Got Jobs for Women", *The United Church Observer*, February 1, 1959, 27.

[21]CCSA, Report of the Executive Secretary, Minutes of CDOWW, April 14, 1955, 10; *60th Anniversary 1895-1955: The United Church Training School* (Toronto: UCTS, 1955), 15.

[22]UCC, MPE, Secretary's Report, Minutes of BCSS May 1-2, 1957, "Appendix 6", 2.

[23]CCSA, Minutes of CDOWW, June 20, 1957, 3.

[24]CCSA, "Inaugural Address Given by M. K. Harriet Christie at Her Installation as Principal of the United Church Training School," April 24, 1954, 2.

[25]*General Council Record of proceedings 1954*, UCC, 505.

[26]CCSA, speech by Rev. E. S. Lewis, recorded in the Minutes of CDOWW, April 9, 1954, 1-2.

[27]"Women in other Ministries", *The United Church Observer*, 1954, 18.

[28]Mary Anne MacFarlane," A Study of the Sunday School in Canada", an unpublished research paper, 1977, 57.

[29]"More in Sunday School", *The United Church Observer*, April 1, 1960, 26.

[30]*Ibid.*

[31]*Ibid., 26-27.*

[32]Women Teachers' Association began extensively documenting the absence of women in administrative and supervisory positions in the late 1960's and early 1970's. An excellent study, which shows a pattern similar to that of deaconesses involved in Christian Education, is Carol Reich's "The Effect of a Teacher's Sex on Career Development", done for the Board of Education for the City of Toronto in 1975.

[33]"Women in other Ministries", *The United Church Observer*, April 1, 1954, 18.

[34]CCSA, speech by Rev. E. S. Lewis, recorded in the Minutes of CDOWW, April 9, 1954, 2.

[35]*The Calling of the Christian* (Toronto: The Personnel Committee, UCC, 1947), 1-2.

[36]M. B. Pengelley and Margaret Price, "Deaconess . . . 1959 Model", *The United Church Observer*, November 1, 1959, 14.

[37]CCSA, Rev. Melville Aitken's Address, Minutes of CDOWW, April 14, 1948, 3.

[38]CCSA, Minutes of CDOWW, November 6, 1953, 5.

[39]CCSA, Minutes of CDOWW, April 14, 1955, 2.

[40]CCSA, Minutes of CDOWW, May 8, 1957, 6.

[41]CCSA, Minutes of CDOWW, November 6, 1953, 2.

[42]Quoted in Nancy E. Hardy, *Called to Serve--A Story of Diaconal Ministry in the United Church of Canada* (Toronto: MPE, UCC, 1985), 20.

[43]UCA, *General Council Record of Proceedings*, from 1944 to 1964, Annual Reports of CDOWW.

[44]CCSA, Minutes of CDOWW, February 4, 1958, 4.

[45]CCSA, Digest of the Minutes of DA Annual Meeting, August 29, 1955, 28; CCSA, Minutes of CDOWW, April 9, 1954, 3.

[46]CCSA, "Reports of the Executive Secretary", Minutes of CDOWW, May 8, 1958, 1.

[47]CCSA, Transcript of a Panel Presentation Made to Maritime Conference, June, 1950, 2.

[48]CCSA, Correspondence File of CDOWW, letter from Mrs. W. J. Campion to Harriet Christie, November 30, 1951.

[49]CCSA, Gertrude Rutherford, "The Deaconess in Congregational Work", report to CDOWW, February 11, 1958.

[50]Jean Hutchinson, "Why Lengthen Training School Course", *The United Church Observer*, August 1, 1947, 21.

[51]*Ibid.*

[52]*60th Anniversary 1895-1955: The United Church Training School* (Toronto: UCTS, 1955), 2.

[53]*Ibid.*, 19.

[54]"The Church Needs More Graduates from the Training School", *The United Church Observer*, June 15, 1950, 6; CCSA, Publicity Folder for the United Church Training School, 1950 (Toronto: UCTS, 1950), 2.

[55]CCSA, Script of a Panel Presentation made to Maritime Conference, June, 1950, 3.

[56]UCC, MPE, Minutes of BCSS, April 27-28, 1952, 13.

[57]CCSA, "Interesting Facts for Reports to Conferences", prepared by CDOWW, April 27, 1950, 1.

[58]Glenys M. Huws, "Training for Diaconal Ministry in the United Church of Canada: A Socially Acceptable Pattern of Education for Women", unpublished paper, 1982, 7.

[59]*Ibid.*

[60]CCSA, Minutes of CDOWW, April 9, 1954, 6.

[61]Quoted in Mary Anne MacFarlane, *Educated Ministry: Diaconal Ministry* (Toronto: MPE, UCC, 1987), 13.

[62]CCSA, Minutes of CDOWW, November 6, 1953, 5.

[63]UCC, MPE, Minutes of BCSS, May 1-2, 1957, 10.

[64]"Needed: Girl and Man Fridays", *The United Church Observer*, July, 1961, 7.

[65]*Calling United Church Women: Will You Give a Year to Work with Canadian Indians?* (Toronto: WMS, UCC, n.d.), 1-3.

[66]*Church Extension Scholarships for Young Women of the United Church of Canada.* (Toronto: The Personnel Committee, UCC, February, 1951), 1.

[67]*Ibid.*

[68]UCC, MPE, Minutes of BCSS, May 1-2, 1957, 12; "Appendix F", 1-2.

[69]*Ibid.*, 1.

[70]CCSA, Minutes of CDOWW, May 8, 1957, 9.

[71]UCC, MPE, Minutes of BCSS, April 30-May 1,1958, 5.

[72]"Needed--A Short Course", *The United Church Observer*, April 1, 1961, 6.

[73]*Ibid.*

[74]"The Suggested One-Year Course", Letters to the Editor, *The United Church Observer*, May 15, 1961, 5.

[75]*Ibid.*

[76]"Needed: Girl and Man Fridays", 7.

[77]"A Desperate Shortage", *The United Church Observer*, October 15, 1959, 6.

[78]UCC, MPE, Minutes of BCSS, April 29-30, 1959, 5.

[79]CCSA, Correspondence File of CDOWW, letter from Harriet Christie to Mrs. W. J. Campion, June 21, 1952.

[80]CCSA, Minutes of CDOWW, February 4, 1953, 4.

[81]CCSA, Minutes of CDOWW, May 8, 1957, 10.

[82]CCSA, Minutes of CDOWW, February 14, 1952, 2.

[83]CCSA, reported in the Minutes of CDOWW, October 15, 1952, 2.

[84]CCSA, "Summary of Salaries of Deaconesses in Congregational Work", prepared for CDOWW, March 27, 1952.

[85]CCSA, Minutes of CDOWW, February 14, 1952, 2.

[86]"Need $2,400 Start to Get Teachers, Golding States," *The Globe and Mail*, February 19, 1952.

[87]CCSA, Minutes of CDOWW, May 8, 1957, 5.

[88]CCSA, reported in the Minutes of CDOWW, November 29, 1946, 3.

[89]CCSA, "Brief on the Ministries of Women in the United Church of Canada from the Fellowship of Professional Women in the United Church of Canada", 1947, 1.

[90]*Ibid.*, 1-3.

[91]CCSA, reported in the Minutes of CDOWW, November 15, 1948, 4-5.

[92]CCSA, "Statement--Deaconesses in Presbyteries", prepared by FPW of UCC, November, 1954, 2.

[93]The Minutes of the National Executive of FPW of UCC and the reports of the Biennials for the period 1948 to 1953 indicate that considerable discussion and education contiunued within the national and local groups about the proposal of one Order for women and about the need for membership in the Courts of the church.

[94]CCSA, reported in the Minutes of CDOWW, October 26, 1954, 1.

[95]*Ibid.*

[96]CCSA, "Statement--Deaconesses in Presbyteries", 2.

[97]CCSA, Correspondence File of CDOWW, letter on the remit results sent by Mrs. W. J. Campion to all professional women in the United Church of Canada, October 16, 1956.

[98]CCSA, "Statement--Deaconesses in Presbyteries", 2.

[99]CCSA, Correspondence File of CDOWW, letter from Mrs. W. J. Campion to the members if FPW, July, 1956.

[100]CCSA, "Brief on the Ministries of Women in the United Church of Canada from the Fellowship of Professional Women in the United Church of Canada," 1947, 1-2.

[101]CCSA, Minutes of the Meeting of the National Executive of FPW, January 28, 1955, 1-2.

[102]CCSA, Minutes of the Meeting of the National Executive of FPW, April 6, 1956, 1.

[103]CCSA "Report of the Committee to Study Women's Work in the Church", presented to the Seventeenth General Council, 1956, 1-2.

[104]Kathleen Bliss, *The Service and Status of Women in the Church* (London: SCM Press, 1952); *The Life and Work of Women in the Canadian Churches* (Toronto: CCC, n.d.); Charlotte Whitten, *The Women of the Church* (Toronto: ACC, n.d.).

[105]CCSA, "Inaugural Address Given by Miss K. Harriet Christie at Her Installation as Principal of the United Church Training School", April 24, 1954, 2.

[106]*Ibid.*, 1.

[107]A Statement on the Co-operation of Men and Women in the Church and Society (Geneva: WCC, Department of the Co-operation of Men and Women in Church and Society, 1954), 1.

[108]CCSA, "Inaugural Address Given by Miss K. Harriet Christie at Her Installation as Principal of the United Church Training School," 2.

[109]CCSA, "Report of the Committee to Study Women's Work in the Church", 3.

[110]*Ibid.*, 4.

[111]CCSA, "Statement From the Fellowship of Professional Women", Win[illegible], August, 1957, 1.

[112]CCSA, "Statement Re: Deaconess Order", from CDOWW, 1957, 1-2.

[113]*General Council Record of Proceedings 1958*, UCC, 196.

[114]*General Council Record of Proceedings* 1958, UCC, 203.

[115]*General Council Record of Proceedings 1960*, UCC, 327-330.

[116]*General Council Record of Proceedings 1964*, UCC, 169.

[117]*Ibid.*, 209-210.

[118]CCSA, Report of the Nineteenth Conference of DA and the Tenth Conference of FPW, August 25-30, 1963, 14 and 19.

[119]CCSA, Minutes of the Meeting of the National Executive of FPW, January 7, 1955, 2.

[120]CCSA, Correspondence File of CDOWW, recorded in a letter from Mrs. W. J. Campion to Harriet Christie, October, 1958.

[121]UCC, MPE, Minutes of BCSS, May 10-11, 1962, 3-4; CCSA, Minutes of CDOWW, October 16, 1962, 3.

[122]CCSA, Minutes of CDOWW, February 9, 1962, 6; May 4, 1962, 2.

[123]CCSA, "A Brief from the Fellowship of Professional Women in the United Church of Canada to the Committee to Study Women's Work in the Church", October, 1955, 1-2.

[124]*Agenda of the Twenty-First General Council 1964*. UCC, 440-441.

[125]*Ibid.*, 169-170.

[126]CCSA, "Membership List of the Deaconess Order", December, 1963, Files of the Interim Committee on the Deaconess Order, 1963-1964.

[127]*Agenda of the Twenty-First General Council 1964*, 205-215.

## Conclusion

Writing this thesis involved, as stated in the introduction, not only writing about a historical group of women, but also talking about myself. Because of this, the whole process of researching and writing made me aware of the silences created by the sources and methodology I chose to use, of some of the things that had not been recorded in any official way but which were important aspects of any discussion of the work and treatment of deaconesses within the United Church.

For example, the methodology and sources chosen for this thesis did not always enable me to get at the lived experience of deaconesses. The thesis only briefly discusses deaconesses' own perceptions of their work, their degree of awareness of unfair treatment by the church, and their individual understandings of their ministry. It does not get at the ways they resisted their unfair treatment day by day, or how they interpreted what was happening to them both at the time and later, in reflection. As is the case in most official historical documents, church records have not described the actions or viewpoints of dissenting women. Such women were seen oddities, eccentrics, atypical of the mass of supposedly satisfied women. Thus, individual women, in some parts of this text, almost disappear as victims, and the texture of their own reaction to and understanding of the church's policies towards them is missing. How did, for example, individual women react to the disjoining rule, and how did their reactions affect their understanding of themselves and their work? How did they see their roles as women workers during World War Two, and immediately after? When looking primarily at official committee minutes, General Council Reports and church publications, such questions, for the most part, either become invisible or cannot be answered. For as Ruth Pierson and Alison Prentice point out in their discussion of feminism and the writing of history, it cannot be assumed that women's experiences and actual behaviour coincide with official documents and projected images.[1] As a feminist, I consider the exploration of women's lived experiences as a crucial part of both the effective study of history and the analysis of patriarchy. For that reason, I have included, wherever possible, the words and thoughts of women about their own experiences.

Oral history provides one way of gathering and recording women's experiences. Its

methodology has been used by a wide variety of invisible and oppressed groups as a way of structuring their own history through telling stories which start from their own experiential categories and words. Oppressed groups have found it transformative both in its content and in its way of challenging the traditional categories of historical evidence and truth. Therefore, it also is an important tool for feminists and, used in conjunction with the more traditional methodology of this thesis, can give a fuller understanding of patriarchy's effects on women. Oral History can and does act as a corrective, enabling feminists to avoid the tendency in some women's traditional history, as Ruth Pierson and Alison Prentice suggest, to "plug women into historical chronologies or outlines that were established with other priorities in mind."[2] The Oral History method has been used successfully by feminists in the Episcopal Church in their "Deaconess Oral History Project."[3] A similar project is now underway with deaconesses in the United Church. The taped interviews will eventually be transcribed, catalogued and organized by subjects which reflect women's experience and will, along with the analytical material of this thesis, facilitate the work of historians of the future who wish to examine new aspects of professional women's experiences in the church.

Writing this thesis has raised further questions to be explored in the future. Two important areas of sociological historical research are suggested by, but not explored at length, in this thesis. The first is a study of the effects of class and race issues on deaconess work and an analysis of the interaction of class, race and gender oppression. The majority of deaconesses, like ordained ministers, were both white and middle class and brought with them distinctive values and world-views which, in addition to being gender-specific, were also defined by race and class. These views and values shaped their work and their understandings of themselves as women. While alluded to in the sections on work among Japanese Canadians during World War Two and among immigrants after the war, the effects of class and race are not analyzed in any way. Nor is the inevitable imperialism, embedded in and promoted by contemporary Christian theology, examined for its effects on, for example, the inner city people who were the recipients of much of the helping ministry referred to in the descriptions of deaconess inner city work. While the active membership of the United Church has been and continues to be normatively white

and middle class, many of the recipients of its ministry were not. Some of the theoretical questions and the analytical methods of Michael Apple[4] or Marta Danylewycz and Alison Prentice[5] on the teaching profession could well be used to begin an analysis of race and class issues in deaconess work.

Another fascinating area for research would be an exploration of women's sexuality as it was understood and embodied by deaconesses in their work. How did deaconesses experience their own sexual identity and what did they communicate about sexuality to the people they served? Women's sexuality has clearly been identified as one of the basic areas of women's oppression in church practices and theology. Feminist theologians such as Carter Heyward[6] and Beverly Harrison[7] have shown that the doctrine of woman as temptress, as the gateway to evil, has not died. It has merely been replaced by more subtle forms of misogyny which continue both to separate women from each other and to structure professional church women's lives in such a way that they must repress their sexuality and their identity as "woman" or they run the risk of having their suitability for ministry seriously challenged. A subtle theological construction based on the virgin/whore dichotomy creates a dualism within which women can be either pious and therefore competent to work in the church, or sexual and therefore dangerous, sinful and unsatisfactory for church work. A discussion of this would contribute to the literature which shows that within patriarchy women's choices are almost always circumscribed by rigidly-defined and impossible dichotomies, and that whatever they choose, they end up losing part of themselves. The discourse used in the debate about whether married women, who were of course sexually active, could continue to be deaconesses or ordained ministers, displayed aspects of this denial that women could be both sexual and spiritual beings at the same time.

While some experiential dimensions have not been explored, nonetheless this thesis has documented the workings of sexism within the institutional church by discussing its effects on one group of women workers, deaconesses. This historical study of the work of deaconesses from 1925 to 1964 shows the ways in which the work of this group of church workers was both defined and restricted by a patriarchal structure with a religious ideology which limited women's legitimate roles to those of handmaidens. Historical

teachings defined obedience, receptivity and humility as the faithful behaviour for women, and defined autonomy, criticism and stridency as evidence of sin and rejection of the role of Christian "womanliness." In work situations, this meant that women were socialized into and rewarded for professional tasks which involved meeting the needs of others and performing duties assigned by ordained clergy or others within the power base of the church. The essence of deaconess work was defined consistently as assisting the minister so that he could perform the "real" work of the church more effectively.

Though individual women and, on their behalf, the administrative committees responsible for women's work, the Fellowship of Professional Women and the Deaconess Association, all tried to change this gendered structure by challenging such things as the low salary schedules, the lack of pension provisions and the absence of job security for deaconesses, the essential structure remained in place. The discourse and the site of the struggle merely shifted from one work issue or group of women to another. Thus, as deaconesses gained slight concessions and their professional qualifications became more recognized, the church sought to create a new class of women workers who could be hastily trained, employed in temporary jobs and paid at a low rate. And it actively discouraged all efforts among women to unite and work for justice together by implying that deaconesses were special and essentially different from the average woman who wished to work in the church.

Whether deaconesses were working in New Church Development projects, in Christian Education positions in local congregations, or in inner city mission work, their roles were constantly restricted to ancillary ones. The resistance to change in the understanding and conditions of women's work was present both in individual men and women who had been socialized into gender roles, and within the structure and ideology of the church. Though conciliar in philosophy and appearance, the United Church was still patriarchal in structure, with all the self-protective mechanisms that patriarchal institutions share. Through its superficial, liberal notions of participation by all and of complementary cooperation between the sexes, promoted without any accompanying analysis of the ways in which those structures and ideologies prevent equality for women, the church's teachings and practices actually functioned to minimize or prevent the

expression of both women's pain and full humanity.

## Notes

[1]Ruth Pierson and Alison Prentice, "Feminism and the Writing and Teaching of History," in *Feminism in Canada: From Pressure to Politics*, ed. Geraldine Finn and Angela Miles (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1982).

[2]*Ibid.*, 110.

[3]Sandra Hughes Boyd, *Cultivating our Roots: A Guide to Gathering Church Women's History* (Cincinnati: Forward Movement Publications, 1984).

[4]Michael Apple, "Work, Class and Teaching," in *Gender, Class and Education*, eds. Stephen Walker and Len Bartan (New York: International Publication Services, The Falmer Press, 1983).

[5]Marta Danylewycz and Alison Prentice, "Revising the History of Teachers: A Canadian Perspective," *Interchange* 17, 2 (1986): 135-146.

[6]Carter Heyward, *Our Passion for Justice: Images of Power, Sexuality and Liberation* (New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1984).

[7]Beverly Wildung Harrison, "Human Sexuality and Mutuality," in *Christian Feminism: Visions of a New Humanity*, ed. Judith L. Weidman (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1984).

# ABBREVIATIONS GUIDE

## Abbreviations for Committees, Church Organizations

| | |
|---|---|
| ACC | Anglican Church of Canada |
| BCSS | Board of Colleges and Secondary Schools |
| BFM | Board of Foreign Missions |
| CCC | Canadian Council of Churches |
| CCSA | Centre for Christian Studies Archives, Toronto |
| CDOWW | Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers |
| DA | Deaconess Association |
| DMC | Division of Mission in Canada |
| MPE | Division of Ministry Personnel and Education |
| UCA | United Church Archives, Toronto |
| UCC | United Church of Canada |
| UCTS | United Church Training School |
| WCC | World Council of Churches |
| WIM | Women in Ministry Committee |
| WMS | Woman's Missionary Society of the United Church of Canada |

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## GROUP AND COMMITTEE RECORDS AND CORRESPONDENCE:

CCSA, Correspondence File, Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers.

CCSA, Minutes File, Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers.

CCSA, Recruitment File, Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers.

CCSA, Minutes File, Interim Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers.

CCSA, Minutes File, Deaconess Association.

CCSA, Minutes File, Fellowship of Professional Church Workers.

CCSA, Minutes File, Executive of the Fellowship of Professional Church Workers.

CCSA, Minutes File, Personnel Committee for Women Workers.

CCSA, Minutes File, United Church Training School Committees.

CCSA, United Church Training School Calendars, from 1926 to 1962.

MPE, Minutes File, Board of Colleges and Secondary Schools.

MPE, Statistics for membership in the Order of Ministry.

UCA, Correspondence File, The Committee on Camp and War Production Communities.

UCA, Journal of Proceedings of the Methodist General Conference, from 1910 to 1924.

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UCA, General Council Record of Proceedings, from 1926 to 1964.

UCA, Agenda of General Council, from 1926 to 1964.

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