

Minute No.

13

MINISTRY OF WOMEN - THE PRIESTHOOD:

- a. Episcopal Synod put before Synod the question: "Should the CPCA permit the taking of steps to provide training for women for ordination to the priesthood?"

An informal vote was taken by houses, resulting in the following:-

Laity	:	7	for	16	against
Clergy	:	5	for	18	against
Bishops	:	2	for	6	against
		<u>14</u>		<u>40</u>	

- b. This Synod affirms the request of Episcopal Synod to the Church of the Province of Canada not to act in the matter of the ordination of women to the priesthood, at least until the Lambeth Conference has given some clear lead to the churches.
- c. Synod agreed overwhelmingly that it should remain in full communion with any other Province which canonically ordains women to the priesthood.
- d. In reply to the question: "Should a Diocesan Bishop in the CPCA, at his discretion, in consultation with his synodical authorities, be permitted to allow women canonically ordained elsewhere to the priesthood to exercise their ministry in his diocese?" The Synod answered overwhelmingly in the negative.

EPISCOPAL SYNOD: 1976 *ES. 37*

76.14

ORDINATION OF WOMEN

1. The Church of Canada's intention to ordain women to the priesthood.

Bishop Wood read the draft of a letter asking that such action be delayed till after the next Lambeth Conference. It was unanimously agreed that this letter be sent with minor amendment. The final text, posted on 11.3.76, is given in Appendix 1 to the minutes. Synod desired that it should receive full publicity in our dioceses, and that copies be sent to our Partners-in-Mission and to the ACC(Anglican Consultative Council).

2. The Ministry of Women in the Church

Synod decided that this should be debated in Provincial Synod under the following heads:

1. Is it desirable that women be given a larger place in the ministry of the Church, including the Lay Ministry?
2. Should women be admitted to the diaconate in the CPCA?
3. Should the CPCA remain in full communion with any other Province which canonically ordains women as priests?
4. Should a diocesan bishop in the CPCA, at his discretion, and after due consultation with his synodical authorities, be permitted to allow women canonically ordained elsewhere to the priesthood to exercise their ministry in his diocese, whether on a temporary or a permanent basis?
5. Should the CPCA permit the taking of steps to provide training of women for ordination to the priesthood?

Message from the Episcopal Synod of the CPCA to the Primate, Archbishops and Bishops of the Anglican Church of Canada.

Dear Brothers in Christ,

Conscious of our relationship as Partners-in-Mission, and thankful for the benefits that your Church has bestowed on ours in that relationship, we address to you this plea to delay your professed intention to proceed with the ordination of women to the priesthood until more general agreement has emerged on this issue within the Anglican Communion.

We acknowledge that the Canadian Church is an important part of our Communion, and feel that this makes your proposed action the more significant and, we fear, possibly dangerous.

The last Lambeth Conference certainly did not give our Communion the advice, as is sometimes misleadingly implied, that no theological objections exist to the ordination of women to the priesthood. At the same time we are convinced that the Anglican Consultative Council has not yet achieved sufficient authority for its recommendations to be the basis of action in so controversial a matter, which involves a serious departure from our ancient tradition - serious enough to threaten the undefined bonds that bind Anglicans together.

We therefore ask you to delay action in this matter, at least until after the next Lambeth Conference, at which it can be established whether or not a sufficient consensus exists in our Communion for us to proceed with this grave, though possibly desirable, step.

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EPISCOPAL SYNOD : 1974 (ES34)

Minute No.

74.21 ORDINATION OF WOMEN

Bp. Mabula's paper (71/1/B, circulated) was received with interested and thanks. It was agreed:

1. That it is not practicable to proceed actively in this matter at the present time in any of the dioceses of the Province (unanimous);
2. To accept the ACC's recommendation 1973 (p.41,(i), P in M) - "that, where any autonomous Province of the Anglican Communion decides to ordain women to the priesthood, this should not cause any break in communion in our family." (passed 6 to 1);

It was further agreed that there should be debate in Provincial Synod in 1975 on a resolution designed to provide some answer to Resolution 28 a and c of the 1971 ACC (pp 38,39 T is N).

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BISHOP MABULA'S PAPER

Ordination of Women to the Priesthood

Nowadays it is being argued that there is hardly any work in the world which women are incapable of doing. Through experience it has been proved beyond doubt that women are capable of doing most jobs including those which in the past were regarded as exclusively men's jobs. Today, it is pointed out, there are women doctors, scientists, University professors, Prime Ministers, Ambassadors and many others. If women are capable of doing all these jobs, why should they be debarred from ordination in the church of God?

Perhaps those who are arguing in favour of ordaining women may be right; and it would be wrong for most of us who are against the idea - that ordination to the priesthood should now include women as well - to resist it against the wish and mind of Jesus Christ which He is now revealing in them through the Holy Spirit.

Nevertheless, though I can speak only for Zambia and not for other countries, as far as Zambia is concerned our women are not ready yet for ordination, and I am right to say that the majority of women themselves are not enthusiastic about it. Perhaps the situation may change in the next one or two decades,

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Bishop Mabula's Paper cont...

and then would be the time when we should begin to think and talk about the ordination of women, the time when the majority of women themselves would show readiness and desire for ordination.

In Zambia it is not a new thing for some women to hold responsible positions in society and to do the work which could be regarded as men's jobs. Before the coming of western influence to Central Africa there were, according to the history of many Zambian tribes, women who rose to positions of great importance and influence in the society. Thus there were chieftainesses who ruled over tribes, village headwomen, women sorcerers and prophetesses to the supreme Spirit called Lesa. One thing however is worthy of note and it is this. Although there arose prophetesses to Lesa who exercised great influence in the society, when it came to the actual offering of sacrifice to Lesa on behalf of the tribe, this performance was left entirely to men to carry out.

In the Old Testament we are told that in Israel's history there were some women who rose to positions of great influence in the society. Miriam is called a prophetess (Ex.15²⁰); Deborah was both a prophetess and a judge (Judges 4⁴). There were also prophetesses connected with the Temple in Jerusalem, and chief among those was Huldah (2 Kings 22 : 14, 2 Chron. 34 :22). None of those mentioned above is reported to have exercised in the temple the work of performing sacrifice to Yahweh.

If our Lord, as it is alleged, was influenced by the social situation of the time, which regarded women as inferior to men; and if this was the reason why He did not include women among His closest friends, the situation could have changed now in the West with the emancipation of women. The door could then have been opened for women to join the priesthood long before now. But the fact that the situation has remained the same for some 2000 years could only mean one thing - that the majority of women still feel instinctively that priesthood is a man's job. In view of this attitude on the part of the majority of women it would be wrong for the Church to give in to the demand of the few in order to please them. If in due course the Church should agree to ordain women, the door should not open only to the few, such as elderly women or women with stable marriages, but to all women who have the vocation.

The few women who are demanding that the Church must open the door for the ordination of women to the priesthood are not completely sure and convinced themselves that the time is ripe now. These women are in fact isolated from the majority who are still opposed to the idea. They find themselves between the two groups. To take as an example the United Church of Zambia where the ordination of women has been accepted, the only expatriate woman minister finds it tough to work with her male fellow ministers. They do not in practice recognise her as their equal in the ministry of the Church. She bitterly complains against this attitude to which she is subjected by her male co-workers.

In addition, at the United Church's Ministerial College a Zambian woman student was admitted some two years ago to train along with male students. In the course of her studies she found it impossible to study along with the male students at the College simply because she could not be accepted by them. Later she was withdrawn and sent to study outside Zambia. I always wonder what will happen when she returns to Zambia to work alongside her male fellow ministers.

There are many fields in the ministry of the Church in which women can exercise their ministry in happiness and with confidence in themselves. They can work as deaconesses, licenced lay workers etc. These are open to them.

+ Joseph Mabula

Dec. 1973

EPISCOPAL SYNOD : 1973 ES 33

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73.14 ORDINATION OF WOMEN cont.

..... Finally Episcopal Synod agreed unanimously that:

- a) The Province should continue in full communion with the diocese of Hong Kong;
- b) It would not be opportune at the present time to proceed with any proposal to permit the ordination of women in this Province;
- c) An authoritative central decision for the Anglican Communion as a whole would be premature in view of the ecumenical position, and also because there is not yet a sufficient consensus of opinion on the theological aspects of the question.

This minute was to be the basis of my report to the ACC by the Archbishop as requested by Resolution 28.c (TN.39).

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