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## HOW WOMEN BECAME PRIESTS IN IRELAND: THE DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN'S ORDINATION IN THE CHURCH OF IRELAND

Meagan Farrell Howe

*John Carroll University*, [meagenfarrell@gmail.com](mailto:meagenfarrell@gmail.com)Follow this and additional works at: <https://collected.jcu.edu/masterstheses> Part of the [Religion Commons](#)

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HOW WOMEN BECAME PRIESTS IN IRELAND:  
THE DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN'S ORDINATION  
IN THE CHURCH OF IRELAND

A Thesis Submitted to the  
Office of Graduate Studies  
College of Arts & Sciences of  
John Carroll University  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of  
Master of Arts

By  
Meagen Farrell Howe  
2014

In memory of Reverend Meredith “Energizer Bunny” Coleman (1951-2013),  
first United Methodist woman pastor in Avon and Jefferson, Ohio.

Many Thanks to Thesis Committee:  
Brenda Wirkus, PhD  
Joseph F. Kelly, PhD  
Edward Hahnenberg, PhD (Advisor)

## ABSTRACT

30 years ago, the Church of Ireland allowed women's ordination as deacons, then later priests and bishops. Leading to this doctrinal and social development, the Church of Ireland wrestled with big questions on the nature of Christian ministry and women's roles in the church. Have the Bible and church tradition always upheld male headship? Are women being called by God to serve as deacons, priests and bishops? Can groups with major theological differences reconcile and remain one church? The author introduces this historic Irish development to a United States audience with relevant lessons for social transformation, following the human drama in the political process. This thesis argues that the Church of Ireland built a structure and culture of listening to differences, which allowed the development of women's ordination to take place while maintaining the Church's unified identity.

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## **Purpose & Methodology**

The purpose of this research is to reconstruct the doctrinal and social development of women's ordination in the Church of Ireland from the period 1976-1991. Additional historical information outside this range is used for the purpose of explanation and contrast. The thesis went through three stages: first, the investigator aimed to uncover the arguments and tactics used by two groups, the Dublin Women's Ministry Group (WMG) and the Concerned Clergy Group (CCG). After initial research interviewing Church of Ireland members and exploring the WMG collection in the Representative Church Body (RCB) Library in Dublin, a hypothesis emerged that advocates of women's ordination used peace-making strategies, learned in the Troubles (1960s-1998), to aid the development. Sources refuted this hypothesis, leading to the more nuanced conclusion presented here: the structure and culture of listening achieved in the Church of Ireland General Synod contributed to the resolution of the controversy without creating entrenched divisions.

This historical development also serves as a case study of third wave feminism's application in a traditional religious context. The "third wave" interpretation of feminism should not be seen in historical continuity with the political women's liberation movements ("first wave" from the 1848-1920s and "second wave" from the 1960-70s<sup>1</sup>), but refers to a category of diverse feminist movements that adopt the underlying principle of gender equality to initiate community-specific reform. The Church of Ireland admitted women to the historic three-fold ordained ministry on the basis of consensus developed through the unintentional application of feminist and

conflict management strategies that can be described as consciousness raising, sustained dialogue, building social capital, and incremental introduction of policy changes.

The primary methods of inquiry were:

- Archival investigation, primarily “MS 522: Women’s Ministry Group” in the Representative Church Body (RCB) Library in Braemor Park, Dublin, Ireland.
- Analysis of secondary historical sources like autobiographies, publications, the Church of Ireland *Gazette*, and the Church of Ireland General Synod *Journal* from the time period.
- Qualitative interviews (with Institutional Review Board approval) with three Church of Ireland members alive during the development to validate and supplement written sources. For full reports, see Appendix.
- Personal communication with additional individuals to gather or validate information outside the context of formal interviews.
- Analysis of observed strategies through the lens of social change theories.

A note on style: In addition to historical accuracy in the analysis, the investigator also intended to write in a narrative style that included sufficient drama to keep US audiences engaged without assuming background knowledge in Irish history, the Anglican tradition, or the women’s ordination movement. The author derived her style from works of creative non-fiction like *Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail* (2012) by Cheryl Strayed; *And The Band Played On: Politics, People and the AIDS Epidemic* (1987) by Randy Shiltz; *Philomena: A Mother, Her Son, and a Fifty-Year Search* (2009) by Martin Sixsmith; and *How the Irish Saved Civilization: The Untold Story of Ireland’s Heroic Role From the Fall of Rome to the Rise of Medieval*

*Europe* (1995) by Thomas Cahill. For example, the decision to begin with a "Prologue" which presents a turning point from the middle first, before starting off at the beginning with Chapter 1, is a technique derived from Strayed's account of her hike on the Pacific Crest Trail. At various points the narrative veers from the linear account using the tools of flash-forward, flash-back, and character study. Readers should not expect a purely chronological historical analysis, but will instead find information organized into section headings, each its own scene. Originally the author used multiple metaphors to indicate the journey, pilgrimage, and movement represented by the exploration of new territory represented by women's ordination. A nautical metaphor, inspired by the Viking ancestors who laid the foundations for what is now Christ Church Cathedral, emerged as a fitting symbol to tie the thesis together in a narrative arch.

## **List of Abbreviations**

ACC	Anglican Consultative Council
APCK	Association for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (Irish Publisher)
ARCIC	Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CCG	Concerned Clergy Group
MFH	Meagen Farrell Howe (author)
MOW	Movement for the Ordination of Women (Church of England)
MS 522	“Women’s Ministry Group” collection, RCB Library, Dublin
RCB	Representative Church Body
SPCK	Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (UK Publisher)
WMG	Women’s Ministry Group (Dublin) or Women in Ministry Group (Belfast)



## **Prologue: The *Now* Testament**

In Dublin, the assembly at Christ Church Cathedral rose from the dark wooden pews. Together they stood and sang, their voices deep as thunder. They were a people on a journey, like their Christian Viking ancestors who had laid the first foundations of the building where they worshipped.

Together, they remembered the bread, broken for us, the wine, poured out for us. After sharing at Christ's table, the congregation followed the procession of bishops to the back of the Cathedral. They turned left and walked past the space where visitors usually pay their fees at the welcome desk and tourists pick up brochures translated in a dozen languages. The worshippers needed no introduction to the space; they were the reason for its existence.

Once they left the vaulted white sanctuary, the procession entered a narrower, grey stone hallway. As friends embraced, out poured the stories of the last year: a victorious hurling game, a wife with cancer, a leaky roof, a son's degree. This is the business of the church: to discern God's presence through the raw material of daily life. This is the fellowship of the table: to break bread together, and tell the messy stories of Christian witness, of our eating and living and dying.

Once a year, the Church of Ireland comes together to try and make sense of it all, to read the *Now* Testament. With prayer and laughter, reports and resolutions, the delegates to the Church of Ireland General Synod gather to take stock of where God has been leading them. Their calm voting is a stark contrast to the visible violence permeating their lives and clouding their meetings.

As the chief legislative body of the church, the annual General Synod is still a dramatic event where the community wrestles to discern the movement of the Holy Spirit. Synod doesn't have the spectacular injuries of rugby or the shouting of Parliament, but there is always suspense and mystery. There is no map here, no predetermined destination on the journey to God's reign.

But we can look back at the tales of past odysseys. This is the story of the first crew to explore the waters of women's ordination in the Church of Ireland.

The delegates' words echoed back to them as they climbed the stairs and crossed the bridge over Winetavern Street, one of the most aptly-named streets in Dublin. Their fellowship distracted them from the stained glass windows they passed, cars zipping along underneath. They marched past the metal plaque that commemorates the builder of the Synod Hall in 1875, over a century before. Another marker proclaimed the creation of the stone bridge, built for this very purpose: to provide privacy for Synod members crossing from Christ Church Cathedral to the Synod Hall. The assembly chatted their way into the hall where dark brown eaves vaulted over the gathering like the roof of a giant ark.

The 448 (of 660) voting members in attendance at the 1980 General Synod found their seats as the two archbishops and fourteen bishops in purple stocks under their clerical collars advanced to their tables on the stage. Clergy and lay delegates, press with photographers and notepads, and curious observers packed the steamy space. Speeches and reports, coffee and bathroom breaks, discussion and debate filled the room in turn.

Prior to tea on Wednesday, the motion was finally introduced by Rev. Canon S. Smart and seconded by Mrs. C. F. C. Lindsay:

That leave be granted by the General Synod for the introduction of a Bill in 1981 making provision for the ordination of women to the priesthood.

Members raised their voting cards, some glanced curiously at their colleagues, others sat like stone-faced auction buyers. Tellers swiftly counted. The resolution required two-thirds majority in both the House of Clergy and the House of Laity to pass.

Almost two thousand years after women proclaimed Jesus's resurrection, the resolution to ordain them failed the House of Clergy by seven votes. On Friday, May thirtieth the front page of the Church of Ireland *Gazette* read:

“How the General Synod Voted:”

		FOR	AGAINST
ORDINATION OF WOMEN	CLERGY	92	57
	LAY	136	41

The current crop of students at the Church of Ireland Theological Institute (C.I.T.I.), most in their early twenties in 2014, don't remember a time when the women in their midst might have been barred from training. But after the 1980 vote, it would take another decade of discussion until General Synod would admit women to test their vocation as priests, and at that time no one was quite sure if or when the Church of Ireland might arrive at that development.

To this day, in some Anglican provinces, the controversy over women's permission to administer the sacraments has created enduring divisions—but not in the

Church of Ireland. During the Troubles in Northern Ireland, disagreement over controversial issues led to brutality and terrorism—but not this clash in the Church of Ireland.

How did this crew avoid the hazards of entrenched division? How did this ship safely maneuver the perils of contentious theological differences? A lot of listening, a resurrected committee, and the relational approach of visionary women helped them navigate these potentially treacherous waters. The Church of Ireland managed to welcome women into the clergy without the fracturing of fellowship that has shipwrecked Christian communion elsewhere. In the end, though there were storms and doldrums along the way, the slow journey provided all involved with an opportunity for deeper study and appreciation of the historic three-fold ministry, and the contributions of women in Christian ministry.

## **Chapter 1: Voyage to Zhaoqing**

The first generation – Three-fold ministry – The church in Ireland becomes the Church of Ireland – Renewal of women’s ministry – A gift of the East to the West

When the Church of Ireland decided in 1976 to debate a proposal for women’s ordination, they ruled this potential change would be a doctrinal development. Any arguments for a change in doctrine must prove that the new formulation maintains continuity with evidence from the life of Jesus of Nazareth, the experiences of his first followers, and the understanding of this revelation handed down from one generation of disciples to the next through the ages.

### **The First Generation**

The twelve whom Jesus appointed as his representatives to the tribes of Israel (Mark 3:13-19, Matt 10:1-4, Luke 6:12-16) had a lot in common. Using today’s terms, we might call them Galileans, heads of households, working poor, and observant Jews. Jesus selected these men to become his representatives in the community: they literally walked away from their jobs and homes to follow him on foot. They were “like sheep among wolves” (Matthew 10:16), traveling in treacherous lands where a single person might be easily assaulted. While following him, they were witnesses to his public and private teaching; they celebrated Jewish religious festivals together; and they were told to perform miracles and signs while proclaiming that the Kingdom of God is at hand.

Their families were witnesses as well. Jesus healed Simon’s mother-in-law so she could get up and serve them (Mark 1:29-31). Jesus used a visit from his own mother

and siblings to make a point while preaching (Matthew 12:46-50). Mary traveled annually with Jesus to celebrate the Passover Seder in Jerusalem (Luke 2:41) where at the end of his life she witnessed his trial and crucifixion the following day (John 19:25). The mother of James and John made a request for special favor of her sons (Matthew 20:21-23), presumably because the honor also reflected on her and their whole family. The apostle Paul later argued that he had a right to travel with a Christian wife like the rest of the apostles, including Cephas (1 Cor 9:5).

Though clearly chosen to be the leaders of this movement, were these twelve the first Christian priests? There is a clear distinction in the New Testament between a Jewish ritual priest (*iereus*) of the temple like Zechariah (Luke 1:5-23) and the appointed twelve apostles/messengers (*apostolous*) of Jesus (Luke 6:13). Though reportedly many temple priests became “obedient to the faith” (Acts 6:7), the ruling majority are presented at odds with the new sect (Acts 4:1-6) which eventually claimed the name of Christians (Acts 11:26).

Converts to the new Christian community were all called disciples. Some individuals were appointed to various tasks and roles, using the laying on of hands as described multiple times in Acts. After Matthias replaced Judas in the ranks of the twelve (Acts 1:12-16), the community appointed seven of their number to daily food distribution to the widows (Acts 6:1-6). Other titles included preachers like Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:1-3), elders (*presbuteroi*) (Acts 15:6), representatives of “the whole church” to decide on matters of controversy (Acts 15:22), plus deacons/servants (*diakonois*) and bishops/overseers (*episkopois*) (Philippians 1:1).

Within the first generation after the Resurrection, women also filled many of these roles, including the deacon Phoebe (Romans 16:1) and the apostle Junia (Romans 16:7). Some biblical translators and readers have expressed doubts, qualifications, or even intentional refusal to include Phoebe<sup>2</sup> and Junia in the ranks of deacons and apostles. For centuries transcriptions and publications of the Greek New Testament used the masculine name “Junio” in Romans 16:7. This was corrected in the late twentieth century based on the observation of scholars (both male and female) that the earliest manuscripts indicated the feminine name Junia.<sup>3</sup> These two women greeted by Paul in the letter to the Romans filled leadership roles in the early church, among many women praised in the gospels, book of Acts, and the epistles—perhaps as many as sixty-four individually identified female disciples.<sup>4</sup>

### Three-Fold Ministry

When did apostles become priests? As the Christian community grew and leadership became more complex, the disciples used familiar political structures and roles to describe some of their own “servants.” Over time, use of the Roman political structure of dioceses (local administrative units) run by bishoprics (overseers) became the norm.<sup>5</sup> In the second century, various missionary roles described in the New Testament gave way to a three-fold pattern of pastoral ministry: deacons, elders/priests, and bishops. These were the three titles at stake in the Irish debate about women’s ordination in the last quarter of the twentieth century.

The Church of Ireland is one of the many Christian churches that claim the descent of their current clergy from the original twelve. The claim of “apostolic succession” suggests the tracing of biological ancestry, but instead refers to a spiritual

lineage that provides a sense of connection from Jesus' ministry to our present lives. Though the first generations of Christians did not record any use of the term "ordination," our modern concept of ordination is derived from the early Christian custom of laying-on-of-hands to appoint an individual to a role. A sense of continuity with this early church tradition held central importance both in arguments for women's ordination and for an all-male priesthood.<sup>6</sup>

Despite a sense of spiritual stability in these roles, the temporal job descriptions of deacons, priests and bishops have changed drastically over the past two millennia. In several places women were appointed to the three-fold ministry, though not universally. Diverse opinions were evidenced in the development of regulations to resolve disputes. For example, the ecumenical Council of Calcedon in 451 CE prescribed that a deaconess must be forty years old and celibate to be eligible for appointment.<sup>7</sup> In contrast, the local Synod of Orange in 441 CE disallowed further ordination for women deacons in its territory, asking existing deaconesses to step down with the blessing of lay people.<sup>8</sup>

In addition to the fairly solid textual evidence for women deacons, archeological evidence suggests women ministered as priests and bishops in some localities. For example, archeologists have uncovered a Roman fresco depicting a woman breaking bread at a table, and a mosaic of a woman saint with the inscription "Episcopa Theodora." Scholar Lavinia Byrne believes at least 15 depictions of women priests were discovered in the twentieth century. The archeological evidence referencing *presbyterae* is also corroborated by the "negative" evidence of disapproving documents like Pope Gelasius I's Epistle 14:26 written to three regions in Southern Italy in 494 CE whose bishops were ordaining women to administer the sacraments.



Scholars could not conclude that women deacons, priests and bishops were widespread in the early Church. The overwhelming majority of women would have been unqualified for the three-fold ministry given their lack of basic education, let alone theological training, which many also consider a major reason Jesus did not choose any women Apostles.<sup>9</sup> But the evidence of diversity suggests that some women were found suitable to serve in those roles in the first millennium of Christianity. For both women and men, responsibilities and requirements of “professional ministers” were modified to suit the needs of each local Christian community.

#### The Church in Ireland Becomes the Church of Ireland

Local flavor infused the ministry as well when Christianity took hold in Ireland in the fifth century. Two legendary Irish figures became the archetypes for Christian spiritual leadership: Patrick and Brigid. Patrick was the first widely successful missionary to Ireland, a literate, Romano-British bishop who returned to proclaim Jesus as Christ on the island where he was previously enslaved as a child shepherd. He is considered the first Bishop of St Patrick’s Cathedral in Armagh and the historic predecessor of the current office of the Archbishop of Armagh, a Primate of the Church of Ireland.

However, the episcopal structures that Patrick inherited did not take a very strong hold in rural Ireland. Thomas Cahill explained, “Lacking cities, Ireland didn’t quite see the point of bishops, and gradually these were replaced in importance by abbots and—in a development that would make any self-respecting Roman’s blood run cold—abbesses.”<sup>10</sup> The great model for this monastic form of Irish religious life and leadership was Brigid of Kildare.

Little can be historically verified about Brigid's life, but a few facts consistently shine through the hagiography: she converted to Christianity as an adult and was abbess over a dual male-female monastery at Kildare (Church of the Oak). Due to the symbolism, locations, and stories associated with Brigid, Brian Wright argued that this Christian Saint was the last Chief Druidess for the temple of the Goddess Brigid, who converted an existing druidic community to a Christian monastery.<sup>11</sup> Religious medals and stained glass windows typically depict Brigid with a shepherd's crook to indicate her status as caretaker of the flock, a symbol commonly associated with bishops.

The rise of monastic life in Ireland exemplifies a major pattern in the structure of Christian leadership and governance: disciples in new environments select appropriate organizational structures from their surroundings. Christian communities have always operated under a patchwork of local and global, religious and secular governing bodies that regulate professional ministry.

Some visitors to St. Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin are surprised to find it is under Anglican care. The Church of Ireland maintains the historic grounds along with its identity as an heir of the Christian legacy passed down by Saints Patrick and Brigid. They affirm that they are Catholic, in continuity with ancient tradition and part of the universal church, as well as Protestant, participating in reforms that broke with Roman ecclesial authority. The Reformation period spawned a host of new, divergent regulations on Christian ministry as emerging Protestant churches developed their own patterns.

Looking back to this history, as well as their surroundings, the Church of Ireland had a plethora of models available when adopting their own Constitution in 1871. They

were traumatically thrust into financial and ecclesial independence from the Church of England when it was disestablished by an act of the United Kingdom Parliament. However, they chose to retain their name and identity as an independent member of the Anglican Communion which has the Archbishop of Canterbury as a focus of unity. They were also intentional about retaining the three-fold ministry of deacons, priests/presbyters, and bishops. The 1871 Church of Ireland Constitution established a parliamentary model, in many ways similar to the one used in the United Kingdom's secular government at the time. It was a model that was familiar, comfortable, but also sufficiently complex. Major decisions are made annually using representative democracy, while an executive committee runs regular operations throughout the year.

#### Renewal of Women's Ministry

Why was interest in women's ministry revived in the worldwide Anglican Communion? Reverend Doctor Constance Pekay suggests the seeds of revival for women's ordination were sown by "those Christian men and women of the nineteenth century who gave priority to the education of women."<sup>12</sup> Based on educated women's new qualifications, bishops in the Church of England began ordaining them to the order of deaconess in 1862, which at the time was considered a lay religious order.<sup>13</sup> Approximately once per decade the member churches of the Anglican Communion meet at the Lambeth Conference to discuss issues of global importance. In 1897 the Lambeth Conference passed a resolution to formally recognize the renewal of the office of deaconess.<sup>14</sup> Diversity of practice and local decision-making were on display in this organic re-structuring of Christian leadership.

Within a few decades of this renewal in the Anglican Church, Christians around the world experienced women's public recognition and leadership in a historically unprecedented way. Women lobbied for and won the right to vote, to hold public office, and to be professionally trained and certified. This political movement is often called first wave feminism.<sup>15</sup> The principles of the feminist movement have not fundamentally changed, but have become increasingly diverse in their political and social applications. The expansion of Christian women's ministry was not directly connected to the political branches of what has been labeled the women's liberation movement, but in the context of Christian women's ministry, Ann Thurston provided this definition of feminism: "The promotion of the full humanity of women. The creation of a liberating community for all men and women. The promotion of mutuality and harmony."<sup>16</sup> Using Thurston's definition, the promotion of the full humanity of women in the Anglican Communion should be categorized as a "feminist" development.

Experiences of competent and educated women in ministry led some Anglicans to argue for women's full inclusion in the three-fold ministry. In 1928 the Chaplain to the King of England published a book proclaiming "for some years the conviction has grown in me that the admission of women to Holy Orders on an equality with men is inherent in the teaching of Jesus and necessitated by a true understanding of the nature of the Church."<sup>17</sup> However, the first church in the Anglican Communion to test the waters of women's ordination turned out to be far from the King of England and the Archbishop of Canterbury. An Anglican bishop in Hong Kong took decisive action during World War II that spurred an international dispute.

## A Gift of the East to the West

Bishop Roger Hall caused scandal in the Anglican Communion by ordaining the first woman priest, Li Tim-Oi, known in English-speaking circles by her confirmation name, Florence. Born in Hong Kong in 1907, Li Tim-Oi was raised by Christian parents who were proud of their Chinese culture and heritage. Her fluency in Cantonese, English, and later Mandarin opened up an international sphere of relationships that proved vital to her Christian ministry. In 1931, she attended the ordination of deaconess Lucy Vincent and sat in the front row as Archdeacon Mok Sau-Tsang challenged the congregation: “Today, there is a British lady who is willing to proffer herself to the sacred office of deaconess in order to serve the Chinese Church. Is there a Chinese lady in the congregation to follow in her footsteps and commit herself to the Chinese Church?”<sup>18</sup> Though questioning her own suitability, Li Tim-Oi “knelt down reverently and responded to God, ‘I am here. Please send me.’”<sup>19</sup>

It took Li a few years to muster the financial resources to fund her theological training. In 1938, in the midst of bombings and sirens during the Japanese invasion, she completed her exams at Union Theological College in Guangzhou. After an apprenticeship she was appointed to serve independently as deaconess of the Morrison Chapel in the port city of Macau. Situated on an island across an estuary from Hong Kong, Macau is an intersection of Filipino, Chinese, Portuguese, and British culture. Because Macau remained neutral in World War II, the city and Morrison Chapel were flooded with refugees.<sup>20</sup> The small, stucco memorial chapel only had seats for fifty people, “so folding chairs were set up inside and long benches were placed outside the front of the building. Sunday worship was crowded with a congregation of close to a

hundred.”<sup>21</sup> Li Tim-Oi led evangelical services at the Christian girls’ schools and dozens of young women chose to be baptized—as many as seventy-two in one year.<sup>22</sup> She witnessed tragedy and death due to food shortage and lack of sanitation, and worked to secure provisions of rice for her parishioners. The danger of travel during the war also prevented the usual monthly priest visitations, and raised concerns about the absence of spiritual nourishment through the sacraments. In 1942 Li was granted emergency permission to celebrate Eucharist in Macau by Bishop Mok Sau-Tsang.<sup>23</sup>

Reports of the fruits of her ministry led Bishop Ronald Hall of Hong Kong to meditate on Peter’s unsanctioned ministry to the Gentile Cornelius (Acts 10).<sup>24</sup> Hall became convinced of Li Tim-Oi’s vocation to the priesthood and, in December 1943, sent her an invitation to meet him the following month in Zhaoqing, Guangdong province for an ordination ceremony, since it was not occupied by the Japanese. Traveling was a great safety risk. From Macau she took a ferry, transferred to a boat, cycled to a mountain, hired a sedan chair, slept in a police station, had an armed escort for one portion, marveled at the beauty of the plains and bamboo forest before meeting Bishop Hall and an excited, ecumenical group of local Christians for the celebration in Zhaoqing. The ceremony filled Li Tim-Oi with the abundance of God’s blessing, and she floated on a river of joy safely all the way back to Macau.<sup>25</sup>

When World War II ended, and communication with the outside world resumed, there was a public backlash in the Anglican Communion against the emergency ordination. Though she would not renounce her priestly orders, Li Tim-Oi gave up her title as priest rather than allow Bishop Hall to resign.<sup>26</sup> Her ordination and service to God would become an internal guiding light throughout the political developments in

China that overshadowed Li's work and movements for most of the next 30 years. "This is my philosophy of life," she wrote, "no one can take away the peace that comes from completing one's responsibility to history and fulfilling God's will."<sup>27</sup> The Church in China proposed an experiment to the Lambeth Conference in 1948 requesting permission to ordain women deacons to the priesthood temporarily. The representatives at Lambeth passed a series of resolutions refusing their request, but upholding and praising the role of deaconesses.<sup>28</sup>

In 1951, the People's Republic of China initiated land reforms that took control of church property. Li Tim-Oi struggled to adapt to life tending chickens in Hepu and working in a factory as part of the Three-Self Movement. This Movement was based on ideas of Christian unity and an indigenous Chinese church self-sufficient from foreign missions, and while Li agreed with the principles, the reality was dramatically different than she had imagined. During that time her ordination was questioned, not on theological grounds, but due to baseless accusations of favors gained through impropriety, and implications that her British connections indicated a lack of patriotism. Identified as a cleric and an intellectual, she endured confiscation and destruction of her personal property and public humiliation during the anti-religious upheaval of the Cultural Revolution starting in 1966 until religious freedom was declared in 1979. Once church assets were unfrozen, the Three-Self Movement provided Li with back pay that became her retirement fund. She emigrated in 1981 to reunite with her sister in Toronto, Canada.<sup>29</sup> During this period it seems she received little or no news of the waves caused around the world in the Anglican Communion due to her ordination.

Meanwhile Ronald Hall's successor, Bishop of Hong Kong Gilbert Baker, had renewed the case for women's ordination with fervor. By 1971, two more women in Hong Kong were trained and prepared for priesthood, Jane Hwang and Joyce Bennett. Baker had the approval of the Council of the Church in South-East Asia, but he desired a decision from a global body before proceeding with the ordination ceremony.<sup>30</sup> The Anglican legacy of Li Tim-Oi's ordination now rested in the hands of the representatives to the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC). The ACC was established in 1968 to promote ecumenical dialogue and communication among Anglican churches.<sup>31</sup> The ACC met for the first time in Limuru, Kenya in 1971 and the Church in South-East Asia eagerly requested to add women's ordination to the proposed agenda. The resulting international tempest at the ACC ensured the squall would eventually land on the shores of Ireland.



## **Chapter 2: Called by Name**

Anglican Consultative Council – Bringing it home – House of Bishops vote – Herstories  
of women with a vocation – Initial steps in Ireland

The question of women's ordination in the Church of Ireland was never a debate about doctrine as a set of abstract principles. Doctrine about the three-fold ministry, and its potential to include women, was always focused on the lived experiences of people with a strong desire to share God's love through the sacraments.

### **Anglican Consultative Council**

The Diocese of Hong Kong and Macau became the first to formally recognize a woman's experience of vocation to the priesthood in 1944, challenging the rest of the Anglican Communion to follow suit. Though the international community initially suppressed this action, the first meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) in 1971 seemed a suitable venue for the Church in South East Asia to renew its petition. Its Council had approved the training and ordination of two more women as priests, in addition to Li Tim-Oi. Before proceeding with the ceremony, however, Bishop Gilbert Baker of Hong Kong requested reassurance from the ACC that this move would not damage their standing within the larger Anglican Communion.

The first ACC meeting brought together two delegates from each of the independent and missionary provinces in communion with the Archbishop of Canterbury. They met in Limuru, Kenya on the outskirts of Nairobi, many of them likely flying to Africa for the first time. As if Kenya's breathtaking mountains, lush valleys,

and water buffalo weren't enough to discuss for ten days, the ACC representatives each had requests, statements and resolutions from their own provinces that they hoped to bring to the attention of this international forum. Hong Kong's proposal certainly stole the show for most controversial, and Ireland's representatives would later boast of their key role in the deliberations.

Church of Ireland lay representative Honorable David Bleakley started his career as a union electrician in Belfast before joining the Northern Ireland Labor Party as a politician. Described as a "Christian socialist,"<sup>32</sup> he was deeply involved in the Church of Ireland, serving as a Lay Reader, representative in the General Synod, and member of the Church Unity Committee. Bleakley's childhood exemplified a phenomenon frequently encountered in Ireland: that even when income is lacking, wit and literacy abound. He recalled, "We were taught to seek a radical analysis to the social problems of the day and we learned to castigate preachers who turned religion into 'an opiate of the people.'"<sup>33</sup> This critical approach included rejection of Protestant-Catholic sectarian attitudes.<sup>34</sup> He brought his progressive, ecumenical perspective to Limuru as an ACC representative.

Another child of Belfast, the Church of Ireland clergy representative Right Reverend John Armstrong, served as a rector and dean in Dublin before his appointment as Bishop of Cashel and Waterford, which was his role at the time he flew to the first ACC meeting in 1971. Though best known as a liturgist, his actions in Kenya solidified his reputation as an ardent supporter of women's ordination.<sup>35</sup>

When the Church of South-East Asia introduced its resolution at the first ACC meeting Armstrong and Bleakley reportedly "threw their weight emphatically behind

women's ministry."<sup>36</sup> Throughout his life, Armstrong remained immensely proud that the Irish votes tipped the scale<sup>37</sup> in favor of the resolution, which passed twenty-four to twenty-two votes:

In reply to the request of the Council of the Church of South-East Asia, this Council advises the Bishop of Hong Kong, acting with the approval of his Synod, and any other bishop of the Anglican Communion acting with the approval of his Province, that, if he decides to ordain women to the priesthood, his action will be acceptable to this Council; and that this Council will use its good office to encourage all Provinces of the Anglican Communion to continue in communion with these dioceses.<sup>38</sup>

But the ACC did not stop with permission; they assigned homework. The resolution requested that all Churches of the Anglican Communion would consider the subject. In addition, the Secretary General asked the metropolitans and primates of each province to report an opinion on the matter by the next ACC meeting in 1973. Two years later the second ACC meeting and controversy over women's ordination would land in Dublin, Ireland.

### Bringing It Home

David Bleakley and John Armstrong brought their report and assignment on women's ordination back to the Church of Ireland's Church Unity Committee, but other issues pressed for the Church's full attention. Ireland was in the middle of "The Troubles" (1960s-1998), a sectarian conflict centered on the question of whether Northern Ireland should remain within the United Kingdom or join the Irish Republic. The Church of Ireland serves both Northern Ireland and the Republic, and during this period ongoing violence over Northern Ireland interrupted, and sometimes tragically ended, the lives of parishioners and clergy.

Though the conflict is essentially political in nature, religious identity became shorthand to differentiate between Protestant Unionists and Catholic Republicans. Church of Ireland leaders like Bleakley and Armstrong believed reconciliation could be achieved through social reforms and improved ecumenical relationships. ACC I supported their efforts and approach: “We believe the way forward is through the renunciation of prejudice, bigotry, and intolerance by all sections of the community.”<sup>39</sup> While Christian unity was a major theme and purpose for the first ACC meeting, it took on a particularly tragic tone and sense of urgency in the Irish context.

As a result, though Bleakley and Armstrong’s enthusiasm for women’s ordination was influential in the international Anglican gathering, their actions did not inflame the same “sense of urgency”<sup>40</sup> at home expressed in other provinces of the Anglican Communion. Two years quickly came and went with no action from the Church of Ireland. Hong Kong officially ordained Jane Hwang and Joyce Bennett,<sup>41</sup> and celebrated the recognition of Florence Li Tim-Oi’s orders. No other Anglican churches took the plunge, but they also did not break communion with Hong Kong. By the time ACC II opened in 1973 the Primate of all Ireland, Archbishop of Armagh George Otto Simms, had not yet reported to the Secretary General of the Anglican Communion with the Church of Ireland’s opinion of the matter.

However, the tardiness of submitting the homework from ACC I did not prevent a rigorous discussion on women’s ordination when Dubliners welcomed fifty-nine delegates to the second ACC meeting.<sup>42</sup> The ordination of women was an issue that “dominated its deliberations...One group wanted the ACC II to say, ‘It is the mind of this council that women should be ordained.’ Another wanted to repudiate the action of

ACC I. In the end, the Council did recognize that ‘any firm decision to ordain women will have important ecumenical repercussions.’”<sup>43</sup> They did not pass any additional resolutions on the topic, but re-affirmed their statement from ACC I.

What were the ecumenical repercussions at stake? For fifty years Christian denominations worldwide had poured considerable resources into international committees with the stated goal to increase visible unity between churches and promote mutual recognition of rites and ministries. However, by 1976, the Church Unity Committee reported to the Church of Ireland General Synod: “There is a growing concern among churchmen and churchwomen that the ecumenical movement has somehow lost much of its impetus. Some would ask the question ‘Does the movement have any future at all?’”<sup>44</sup> There were still many who felt the future of reconciliation lay in continued work towards administrative union. However, many prominent ecumenists redirected their efforts towards increasing mutual respect and understanding between Christian denominations and other religious faiths.<sup>45</sup> They felt this could be achieved by embracing their common Christian and human identity,<sup>46</sup> even while remaining independent.

#### House of Bishops Vote

In the early 1970s several anticipated ecumenical reports were published, but they said nothing definitive about women’s ordination beyond describing the diversity of opinions.<sup>47</sup> The Anglican province of the Church of Ireland has two Primates, the Archbishop of Dublin and the Archbishop of Armagh, and they could have responded to the ACC and these ecumenical reports with their own opinions of women’s ordination without consulting others. Instead the Archbishop of Armagh, George Otto Simms,

waited until 1976 to convene a meeting of the House of Bishops for their input and vote on the matter.<sup>48</sup>

As Archbishop of Armagh, Simms was the convener of the House of Bishops, which also included ACC I delegate John Armstrong, Bishop of Cashel. The Archbishop of Dublin, Alan Buchanan, was nearing retirement and had an adult daughter who would become a priest within a decade.<sup>49</sup> We would do well to pay attention to one of the youngest faces in the room: Right Reverend Doctor Robin Eames. Though Eames was just one year in his new role as Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, his experiences provide dramatic examples of the burning ecumenical conflict—and courage—raging in the heart of Ireland at the time.

When he was a parish priest in Belfast, Eames intervened when a loyalist mob set fire to the home of a Roman Catholic family in the area. He joined the search for the family's missing little girl. He found her hiding place in a woodpile and carried her through the mob to a Roman Catholic priest's house for safekeeping.<sup>50</sup>

In 1975 Eames caused uproar in some quarters by inviting the Roman Catholic Bishop of Derry, Edward Daly, to Eames' Episcopal enthronement as Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, a cross-border diocese that was deeply impacted by the Troubles. In 1972, an iconic photograph of Bloody Sunday launched Daly into international fame.<sup>51</sup> A British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) journalist's camera caught him waving a bloodstained white handkerchief while escorting an unarmed, mortally-wounded protester shot by British Army soldiers.<sup>52</sup> Eames and Daly were not alone among religious leaders who shared personal histories of grief and bravery during the Troubles,

cementing their commitment to peace. Their struggle for solidarity and reconciliation provides a likely cause of delay of this important meeting on women's ordination.

It is not possible to reconstruct the gathering of Eames, Armstrong, Simms, Buchanan and their brother bishops because the House of Bishops' proceedings are kept secret.<sup>53</sup> We can only imagine their discussion of the contemporary issues at stake. Until this point a concern for ecumenism, along with its potential to prevent or incite violence, may have consumed conversation on the issue while delaying action. On the one hand, ecumenical discussion with potential reunification between Roman Catholics and Anglicans had the potential to transform the conflict in Northern Ireland. In 1976 the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith released the document *Inter Insigniores* which claimed the Roman Catholic Church has "no authority to ordain women," and some were concerned that progress on women's ordination would have frustrated efforts for administrative union. Others in the Church of Ireland who were resistant to the idea of an Anglican merger with Rome may have seen this disagreement over women's ordination as more evidence that such a union was inadvisable.

On the other hand, the Church of Ireland bishops' commitment to combat bigotry in all sections of the community also urged their progress on issues of importance to victims of historical bigotry, like women in ministry. The outcome of ACC I demonstrated that other provinces in the Anglican Communion were already ordaining women, finding no theological barriers to admitting women to the three-fold ministry. Despite the secrecy of their proceedings, we know that the House of Bishops voted unanimously that there are no theological objections to women's ordination, because

they reported this decision to the Church of Ireland General Synod during their annual assembly in May 1976.<sup>54</sup>

### Herstories of Women With a Vocation

What was the origin of this unanimous, unprecedented “yes” from the Church of Ireland House of Bishops?

In 1976 there was not a long history of public debate or campaigns based on women’s ordination in the Church of Ireland. This watershed moment was not the fruit of an organized movement, but a resounding “yes” to private conversations with qualified women in the Church of Ireland who were discerning a call to full-time ministry. Except for their gender, these women’s stories contained the same indicators as men with a vocation to the priesthood.

The first woman from the Church of Ireland started training as an Anglican priest in 1982—in the Anglican Church of Canada. Desiree Stedman was the daughter of the Archbishop of Armagh, Alan Buchanan. Mrs. Stedman moved to Ottawa in 1971 where she worked as a physiotherapist and felt the ability to administer sacraments would enhance her service to patients. She felt called to the priesthood earlier in her career, but did not consider it as a real possibility until the Anglican Church of Canada admitted women’s ordination in 1980.<sup>55</sup> Her father was likely both an inspiration for and aware of her vocation to the priesthood, and may have shared this information with his brother bishops.

Gillian Wharton would have only been ten years old at the 1976 meeting, but believed that during the debates even those opposed to women’s ordination knew women like herself discerning a vocation.<sup>56</sup> She first felt the call to priesthood at fifteen



years old. While watching her rector lead worship she thought, “That is what I should be doing.” Like Mrs. Stedman, she immediately pushed the thought away because she knew it wasn’t legally possible for women. Instead she became a Lay Reader at age seventeen. Though the idea of priesthood seemed absurd to her, she shared her feelings with her chaplain who replied, “I’m not sure if women should be ordained or not. But I’m fairly sure that if they should be, YOU should be ordained.”<sup>57</sup>

She let the idea rest for a few years, trying out different roles as a bank manager and volunteer Scout leader, but always felt like she was cheating God. The idea of becoming a priest re-surfaced in her mind from time to time, and becoming a permanent deacon did not fit her vision. After attending a vocations conference in fall 1989, she felt strongly that she was being called to serve God and other people by leading the Sacraments. Her bishop confirmed her sense of vocation, encouraging her to apply for the selection process even though the legislation had not yet passed the General Synod. Her career in ministry was one of many hanging in the balance of the debates.

Irene McCutcheon, who later took the married name of Templeton, worked as parish staff for several years in England, then as an unpaid Lay Reader in the Church of Ireland. As a Minister of the Word promoting women’s lay ministry, she eventually decided it was theologically inconsistent to exclude women from the Ministry of the Sacraments.<sup>58</sup> During the General Synod debate of 1980, she worked in the Belfast office of the Church Missionary Society Ireland, which responds to global spiritual and physical needs. In this job she traveled abroad and experienced the sacramental ministries of Anglican women deacons and priests in Canada and the United States of America. This increased her longing for the opportunity to put her own calling to the

test. In the General Synod of 1980 she proclaimed, “The issue of women’s ordination will not go away, and I will not go away!”<sup>59</sup> We shall watch her fate and vocation unfold in the synods, public debates, and legal complexity to follow.

### Initial Steps in Ireland

After the House of Bishops reported their actions to the Church of Ireland General Synod, the representatives voted to approve an affirmative statement on the principle of women’s ordination and take the first exploratory steps towards legislative action. The Legal Advisory Committee was asked for their opinion on potential legal impediments, while the Church Unity Committee was given the task to determine which ecumenical questions to consider.<sup>60</sup>

We already know that women’s ordination had two very strong advocates on the Church Unity Committee—David Bleakley and John Armstrong—and the Standing Committee accepted their report in January 1977 without further comment or debate.<sup>61</sup> The Legal Advisory Committee, on the other hand, was of the opinion that women’s ordination would be a *development of doctrine*, an interpretation that would signal a challenging legislative process ahead. Not to be intimidated by the time-honored tangles of liturgy or law, the General Synod acted with appropriate valor in the face of innovation: it set up a committee.

In May 1977, General Synod created and appointed a Select Committee on the Ordination of Women to consider relevant theological, practical, liturgical and legal implications. The Troubles managed to slow the development with violent distraction, but it was the numbness of committee work and the hesitation of clergymen that would send the issue of women’s ordination adrift for the next several years.

### Chapter 3: Uncharted Waters

Structures of listening – The 1980 vote: We need more time – The hidden shoals of the legislative process – A woman with a vision – Yes to women deacons

In September 2013, the first woman was appointed to the rank of bishop in the Church of Ireland, Patricia Storey. It came as a surprise to this mother of two adult children, married to another priest who remained in Derry while she moved to take her new position in Meath and Kildare.<sup>62</sup> Described as “a person of great warmth, intelligence and spiritual depth,”<sup>63</sup> she was appropriately enthroned as Bishop in St Brigid’s Cathedral Kildare and St Patrick’s Cathedral Trim<sup>64</sup> as a spiritual descendent of these iconic Irish Christian leaders.

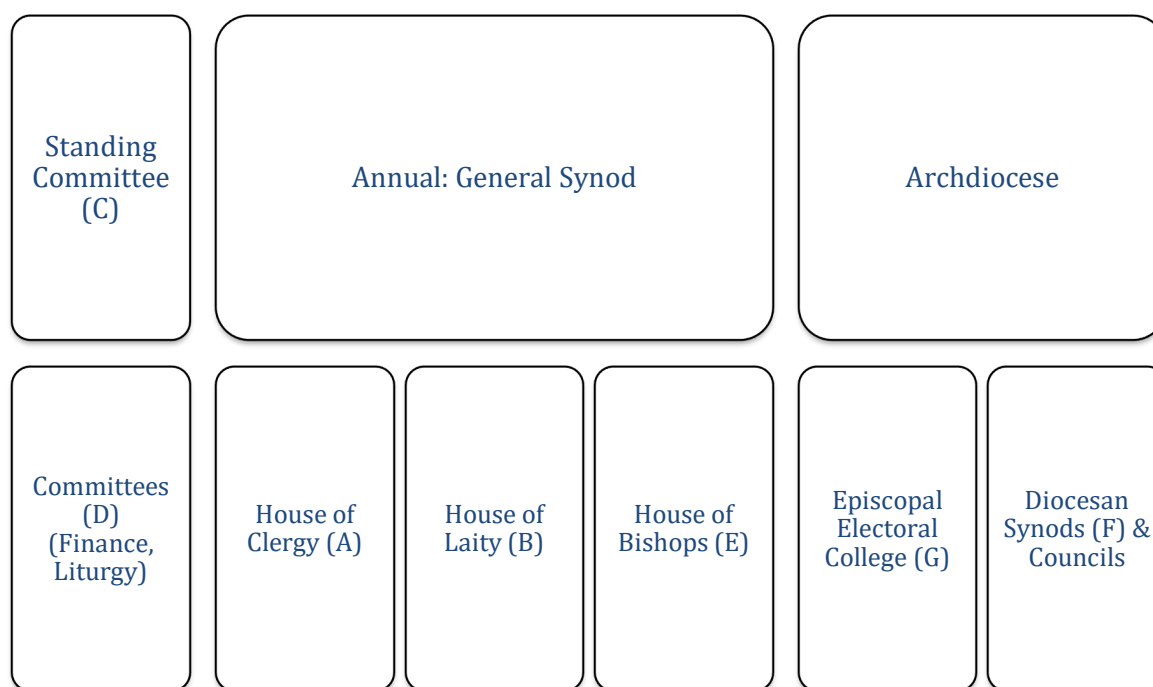
Though she was the first female voice in the House of Bishops, Storey emphasized that she did not plan to be the “voice of women” in the church: “I think of myself primarily as a minister answering to the call of God. The fact that I’m a woman is irrelevant. I’ve never made gender a big issue.”<sup>65</sup> Since all the bishops serve and represent women, then the concerns and voices of women should *always* be considered in their deliberations. However, after accepting a silver cross bequeathed by the late Daphne Wormell, Storey acknowledged: “I am here today because Daphne did it for me. I haven’t had to fight because of all the women who did that.”<sup>66</sup>

In the midst of decision-making, especially on controversial issues, it is in the interest of justice for people (including women) to have the ability to speak from their own experience about matters that impact them. Sometimes they have to “fight” to be heard, but the struggle was lessened for women in the Church of Ireland. Long before

women could be ordained, they had a direct voice in the governance of the church as members of the General Synod, the chief legislative power in the Church of Ireland.

### Structures of Listening

Figure 3.1: Structures of Listening in the Church of Ireland



The General Synod (see Figure 3.1) is a representative democracy similar to a parliament or congress with two voting houses: a House of Clergy (A) and House of Laity (B). The House of Laity has double the number of representatives as the House of Clergy. They can vote together as one group or with separate votes for Clergy and Laity.<sup>67</sup> They meet annually over a few days each May to review reports from working committees, and vote to approve or reject bills on matters of finance or changes that impact the entire Church of Ireland.

An elected subgroup of Synod Members called the Standing Committee (C) (which includes the entire House of Bishops *ex-officio*) carries out the ongoing work of

the church.<sup>68</sup> Synod Members may also participate in various working committees that meet in between the May Synods (D).<sup>69</sup> Since the Church of Ireland enacted its Constitution in 1871, women have theoretically been able to participate as representatives to the House of Laity and members of various committees.

The House of Bishops (E) is a gathering of all (currently ten) bishops and two archbishops in the Church of Ireland<sup>70</sup> to discuss issues with each other and make their opinion known to those who request it. They do not take minutes. As the bishops serve in the day-to-day ministries of the Church, and usually have accomplished theologians in their midst, they are typically consulted for their opinion on major issues. The House of Bishops has veto power in General Synod, but this is rarely exercised.<sup>71</sup> Basically the Bishops have the power to say “no,” but can only suggest that the General Synod should say “yes.”

Local matters are addressed by annual Diocesan Synods (F), which have a similar structure as General Synod on a smaller scale.<sup>72</sup> Every three years Diocesan Synods select their representatives to General Synod and to an Archdiocesan Episcopal Electoral College (G) that convenes as needed to appoint bishops.<sup>73</sup> In this way, the bishops are supported by and answerable to the people they serve and represent, including women.

#### The 1980 Vote: We Need More Time

The 1970s had already seen the approval of a diversity of new ministries: permanent deacons in addition to transitional deacons; non-stipendiary (unpaid) ministry to complement stipendiary (paid); and lay readers (non-clergy who could lead Liturgy of the Word). In 1980, Bishop John Armstrong was appointed Archbishop of Armagh and

Primate of all Ireland. With a strong advocate in the helm, it appeared to hopeful observers that women with a vocation to the three-fold ministry would soon be admitted to apply for training. When the Select Committee on the Ordination of Women proposed hearing a bill to admit women clergy in 1980, it seemed the ship was chugging full steam towards its Irish port.

Then someone dropped an anchor.

Despite positive feelings among the leadership and laity, there was a dissenting minority that strongly began to voice their questions and concerns. The speed of the change itself created a concern for many parish priests, including Reverend Doctor John Neill. He approved of the diversity of new ministries, and had spoken on behalf of the principle of women's ordination in the General Synod of 1976. Shortly after, Neill realized he did not have a depth of knowledge on the practical and ecumenical considerations of this particular change.<sup>74</sup>

By 1980 he began to feel “disturbed by what was perhaps a headlong rush towards this enormous step.”<sup>75</sup> He was one of a number of concerned clergymen who felt the Church of Ireland hadn't taken adequate time to consider all the implications. A few of them felt women should never be admitted to the priesthood at all. They leaned their political weight against the resolution in 1980, which comfortably passed the House of Laity but failed to pass in the House of Clergy by seven votes, blocking the introduction of a bill admitting women to the priesthood.

Irene McCutcheon took the floor at the General Synod of 1980 as a “powerful speaker”<sup>76</sup> in order to share her experience of vocation to the priesthood. Jane Galbraith<sup>77</sup> later wrote, “My heart went out to Irene McCutcheon at the General Synod,

as she told people why she was in favour of the whole thing. She told them something of her personal feelings.”<sup>78</sup> McCutcheon’s personal testimony was rewarded by an appointment to the Select Committee on the Ordination of Women. She found the experience frustrating,<sup>79</sup> but advocates had reasons to remain hopeful. The Select Committee proposed another resolution to General Synod in 1981 to hear a bill to admit women to the diaconate with the possibility of later consideration of the priesthood, but this resolution similarly passed the House of Laity and not the House of Clergy.

The resolution for women in the diaconate was proposed again, with minor revision, in 1982 and Neill took credit for resisting this “very bad legislation”<sup>80</sup> by questioning its constitutionality, since it did not separate the issues of women deacons and priests.<sup>81</sup> The House of Bishops convened a special meeting over lunch and ruled the bill unsustainable.<sup>82</sup> Though Irene McCutcheon seconded the motion to withdraw the bill, after it passed her restraint broke loose. From the visitors’ gallery, Michael Kennedy reported, “She was so incensed she got up and made a fiery speech, raging over what happened. ...It was (and remained) the most spectacular ‘blow-up’ I have ever seen at Synod!”<sup>83</sup> These fireworks introduced a decade of debate. The legislative path no longer had a clear beacon to find safe mooring, and building the required consensus would prove a daunting task.

### Hidden Shoals in the Legislative Process

What happened next is an excellent case study of the anatomy of change in a traditional religious community. Both the culture and structure of such organizations are conservative by design. They intentionally perpetuate historical continuity and resist innovation. The Church of Ireland is no exception. The legislative power in General

Synod was designed in 1870 to exercise “a certain restraining influence on the Church” and the high standards for legislative change “had a far-reaching influence in preventing extremists from making drastic changes in the doctrines and practices of the newly-independent Church.”<sup>84</sup> These restraints emerged as a formidable bar for advocates of women’s ordination to cross.

“Restraining” should not be interpreted as “silencing,” nor does it imply oppression. Because it meets annually and includes clergy and lay representatives, the Church of Ireland General Synod was also designed to move—albeit slowly—with the currents of the Holy Spirit revealed in the changing pastoral realities of the flock. Visionaries often find the ballast of traditionalism and bureaucracy frustrate progress in conservative organizations, and history does not always rule in favor of prophets. But dreamers also play an important role in this mechanism, and can gain hope of reaching the tranquil haven they seek by closely studying the travel logs of those who have ventured into new territory before.

The first crew to explore women’s ordination in the Church of Ireland found no impediments in civil law to admit women to the priesthood, but in church law the possibility constituted a doctrinal development. It would require amending the Church of Ireland Constitution as well as the Book of Common Prayer. Additionally, any proposed amendments would be held to stricter guidelines for passage in General Synod.<sup>85</sup> Similar to such changes in civil society, any proposed alterations would need to be shown to fall within the appropriate boundaries set by foundational documents (in this case scripture) and organizational precedent (ecclesial tradition).



An ordinary proposal would need to pass the General Synod with a majority vote of all representatives. But with doctrinal developments, the route of passage is intentionally complicated. The proposed resolution would need to pass both the House of Laity and the House of Clergy with two-thirds majority each. The resolution would have to be admitted for a reading in the first year. After obtaining permission and hearing a first reading in the first year, the second year the General Synod would need to approve the resolution twice more. There would be two separate votes after the second and third reading of the resolution. Finally, the House of Bishops would vote and they held the power of veto. If the resolution obtained permission to be heard, passed three readings, and was not vetoed, it would become law in the Church of Ireland.

Appropriate committees write the resolutions proposed in General Synod, in this case the Select Committee on the Ordination of Women. In 1979, General Synod proposed that each diocese should hold a special synod to discuss this matter and report to the Select Committee, who had the authority to submit a report of results and propose a resolution.<sup>86</sup> The Diocesan Synods reported back that they approved of the proposal. Despite this positive verdict, General Synod failed to approve the Select Committee's resolutions in 1980 and 1981, and did not even muster the necessary votes to re-appoint the Select Committee in 1982.<sup>87</sup> In other words, they wouldn't hear the current resolutions on this issue, and no one was authorized to introduce any new proposals.

Important matters sometimes run aground on hidden shoals in the ordinary channels of legislative action. If there is no serious damage done, experienced navigators know how to gently shift procedures to keep ideas moving forward in human organizations. In this case, since there was no Select Committee to propose legislation,

the Standing Committee took action. The Standing Committee meets regularly throughout the year to handle the ongoing business of the Church of Ireland, and includes all the members of the House of Bishops. In their June 1982 meeting, they decided to appoint an Advisory Committee on Women's Ordination to investigate the matter instead. This resurrected Advisory Committee just happened to include most of the same members as the disbanded Select Committee, like Frank Luce and Irene McCutcheon.<sup>88</sup> Thus resisters got the additional time they wanted, while the legislative process was able to surge slowly ahead.

#### A Woman with a Vision

While the dissenting minority began to raise questions, a woman with a vision continued to raise support. Daphne Wormell was a mother of four and influential member of a number of social committees in Dublin. By arranging meetings, speakers, and inviting people into her home, she literally set the table for discussions on women's ordination to occur.

Like Bleakley and Armstrong, Wormell saw the development of women's ordination arrive at other churches in the Anglican Communion before it reached the shores of Ireland. Born in Canada to Irish immigrants, she developed a global consciousness. After moving to Dublin to study history, she subscribed to newspapers and magazines from around the world and maintained an international correspondence.<sup>89</sup> Her relational, global approach to life was shared by many of the Christian women attracted to ecumenical meetings on women's ministry in her home in Dublin, called Gatineau. The group decided to organize under the name St. Brigid's Society.<sup>90</sup>

In 1975 Wormell was among the first five women commissioned in Dublin<sup>91</sup> as Lay Readers, trained by Archbishop Alan Buchanan at his personal request.<sup>92</sup> Lay Readers had a unique opportunity to set a precedent for women's ministry as the first women authorized to preach in the Church of Ireland. Like any change, their presence was a challenge to some people, and a welcome novelty to others. One thing was certain: they were doing a new thing. There was a great deal of discussion about what they should wear and how they should act during worship. Daphne Wormell's daughter Julia wrote, "The early women Lay Readers in the Church of Ireland felt they would be most effective by bearing themselves calmly with dignity and grace."<sup>93</sup> At the twenty-fifth anniversary of these five women's commissioning, Ginnie Kennerley reflected on the impact of the Lay Readers' chosen approach:

Few of us could imagine what a woman minister might be like, and the possibility in the Church of Ireland seemed remote. Or it did until we began to experience the ministry of these five women. They could not have been less like viragos. They were dignified, prayerful, intelligent, well able to expound scripture and to express themselves. They were distinctive in their pale blue scarves and magenta gowns. [...] Their presence in the sanctuary brought a new sense of completion and human balance to the conduct of worship. It is clear that the ministry of these five women, not only in the sanctuary but in committee rooms and synods, hospitals and schools, study groups and publications, was decisive for the relatively smooth progression of the church to the acceptance of women in the ordained ministry over the next fifteen years.<sup>94</sup>

Due to Wormell's active involvement on women's issues in church and society, she received an overwhelming sense that she *had* to focus on the issue of women's ordination.<sup>95</sup> She had a vision that the Body of Christ would be weakened without the gifts of half of humanity.<sup>96</sup> This revelation occurred while writing an opinion piece on women's ordination as early as 1970.<sup>97</sup> In 1979 William Gilbert Wilson (later Bishop of

Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh) asked Wormell to collaborate with Michael Kennedy—a scholar and parish priest in Armagh—on a pamphlet called “*Should we have women priests?*” A contrarian with a storytelling streak, Kennedy had even argued himself out of his *own* stance against women’s ministry as a University student in the 1950s, finding he could not reasonably answer the question “Why not?”<sup>98</sup> The Association for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (APCK) distributed this publication, containing essays for and against women’s ordination, to local Diocesan Synods to facilitate discussion on the issue in preparation for the General Synod vote in 1980.<sup>99</sup> The Diocesan Synods reported voting to approve the issue,<sup>100</sup> thanks in large part to the dialogue initiated by the publication. Though the vote did not initially succeed in General Synod, Wormell’s meetings provided a forum for advocates to organize.

Though women were the primary audience for Daphne’s meetings of St. Brigid’s Society, it would have been contrary to the spirit of St. Brigid to exclude men, as Brigid was the leader of a dual-gender monastic community. At a fateful talk by Diana McClatchey in 1984, the group welcomed male visitor Frank Luce, a lay reader, engineer, and ardent supporter of women’s ordination<sup>101</sup> who served as Secretary of the Select Committee on the Ordination of Women.<sup>102</sup> Anyone was welcome if they wanted to support women with a ministerial vocation.

#### Yes to Women Deacons

Due in part to the failure of the resolutions in 1980, 1981, and especially 1982, the Standing Committee exercised much closer oversight of the Advisory Committee on the Ordination of Women as Deacons in 1982-1983. The Advisory Committee submitted draft resolutions in September 1982 and March 1983 to the Standing Committee, and

consulted the Legal Advisory Committee along the way.<sup>103</sup> This procedure ensured that the proposed resolutions would be watertight before floating them out before General Synod in May 1983. The main purpose of this sounding process was “to enable the [General] Synod to consider a proposal enabling women to be ordained deacons but not admitted to the priesthood or episcopate.”<sup>104</sup> This clear distinction would avoid the constitutional questions that grounded the previous motion. The additional scrutiny proved worthwhile, as the General Synod admitted a hearing for the Bill in 1983.

Outside of the committee meetings, Wormell and her associates sustained their ongoing initiative to provide personal encouragement to women who felt a sense of vocation. They accepted opportunities to share their position with audiences around Ireland, as in this address Wormell presented at Christ Church Cathedral, Waterford:

I see very clearly that the Church needs all the help from women that we are prepared to give. For centuries we have done much for the physical beauty of the Church and for the comfort of its members. Long may this continue. But when, apart from nunneries, have we been involved spiritually, have we been consulted about vital church matters, have we been in on important policy decisions? I suggest that the practice should be to ask women what they would like to do for the Church, and, then, that they should be given the opportunity to do it. I suggest that clergy delegate some real responsibility to us, and that the Church provide fit training and preparation for that responsibility.<sup>105</sup>

At many of her talks, Daphne’s husband Donald provided a model for a gentle, supportive spouse. Their daughter Julia remembered, “Don would sit quietly in a front pew in a country church. Can you hear the whispers of the congregation behind him? ‘He’s a [Classics] Professor up at Trinity [College in Dublin], you know.’ The stage would be set for what Daphne wanted to say.”<sup>106</sup> Others may have taken her seriously partially because they saw that this intelligent, well-respected man gave her his full

attention and respect. It was important to their conservative audience to promote the understanding that supporters of women's ordination were not looking to capsize the traditional order of church and family life. As a couple the Wormells could demonstrate their belief that women and men were complementary, and that both genders had different, important but *equal* gifts to share.

Through their reassuring presence and preaching, women like Daphne Wormell asked churchgoers and other audiences to reconsider their unexamined attitudes towards women, a strategy that could be labeled "consciousness raising." Today community activists, psychotherapists, and even corporate trainers use this technique for the purpose of personal, organizational and political transformation.<sup>107</sup> In the United States in the 1970s, consciousness-raising (CR) groups were intentionally formed by the National Organization for Women in order "to break down the barriers between women, encourage open communication among them, and help them develop pride in their sex. [...] By seeing the common threads that united all the women in the room, women would then begin to have some awareness—or *consciousness*—of the political nature of their problems. It was hoped that the collective experience of CR would radicalize many of the women and encourage them to become agents for change."<sup>108</sup> Wormell was frequently asked to speak at local branches of the Mother's Union, which was an organization run by women for a similar purpose: to bring women together for mutual support, recognition of their contributions, and often organize to support charitable social causes. Wormell and other women Lay Readers provided a model of church leadership and gave talks that challenged participants in groups like the Mother's Union to expand the role of women in the Church of Ireland. While I found no evidence that

they explicitly connected their activities to other grassroots CR groups encouraged by the Women's Liberation Movement, the Mother's Union and groups like St Brigid's Society provided forums for women "to resolve emotional as well as practical conflicts, to educate themselves [...], and, in some cases, become politically active."<sup>109</sup> In the context of the Church of Ireland, "political" activity was largely exercised through local church decisions about how to structure and compensate ministry, and some churchgoers had the opportunity to participate in the body politic as voting representatives to General Synod. Some women, like those previously discussed, would also have been inspired to take seriously their own sense of vocation to ministry.

Male advocates were also unafraid to challenge flippant comments against women's suitability for ministry. At one point, when the bishops were discussing the possibility of ordaining women deacons, newly consecrated Bishop of Kilmore Gilbert Wilson defended an all-male diaconate. Archbishop of Armagh John Armstrong tersely replied, "Have you considered the evidence?"<sup>110</sup> Wilson, who reportedly did not have "a single unpublished thought in his head,"<sup>111</sup> abstained from voting on the measure until he felt he had done adequate research. Wilson answered Armstrong's question with a 186-page book *Should We Have Women Deacons?*<sup>112</sup> After his investigation, Wilson found himself arguing for ordaining women deacons on par with men, based on claims from emerging scholarship on women's position in scripture and church history. This evidence, discussed earlier, suggested that some women had legitimately exercised public ministry in early Christian communities, but were later suppressed. Wilson wrote a pamphlet on the topic, distributed by APCK, for all voting members of the General

Synod in preparation for the 1984 vote, signaling his change in self identity from skeptic to advocate of women's ordination.

The 1984 Synod finally passed the bill to admit women as deacons.<sup>113</sup> The admittance of women deacons was no small endeavor, but the debate about women priests and bishop would become even more heated. As the arguments reached a fevered pitch, the conclusion did not seem inevitable.



## **Chapter 4: Outside Influences & Ecumenical Considerations**

Reactions to The Troubles – W.M.G.: When women talk with each other – Other

Anglicans: Lambeth 1988 – What will Rome say? – A time of honesty

### **Reactions to The Troubles**

The Church of Ireland's position in the Troubles impacted its overarching strategy towards conflict, setting the tone for how to deal with other controversies like women's ordination. Irish Ecumenism in the twentieth century was overshadowed by Ireland's division into two countries: Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. This political development had little to do with theology, but religious identities were used as shorthand: Roman Catholics supposedly favored a single unified Republic, Protestants thought to prefer loyalty to the United Kingdom.

This interpretation of religious identity can be traced all the way back to King Henry VIII who crowned himself King of Ireland and head of the Church of England and Ireland in 1536. From that time, British rule and the Reformation had become intertwined in Irish consciousness. Some interpret them as forces of civilizing progress, others view them as oppressive colonialism, and many see them as some mixture in between.

In the 1900s, while unionist and loyalist neighbors were forced to contend with each other in the marketplace and ballot box, they usually chose to worship on Sunday with people of similar political affiliation. The Church of Ireland had a complicated role in the Irish political landscape as the third largest religious group in Northern Ireland<sup>114</sup>

even though The Church of Ireland is considered by members<sup>115</sup> and outside observers<sup>116</sup> as small in size and influence.

During the Troubles (1960s-1998), Church of Ireland members felt more vulnerable to violence, leading to emigration that significantly decreased its membership.<sup>117</sup> Lone farmers in border counties were frequent targets of Irish Republican Army (IRA) killings,<sup>118</sup> and city-based industrialization further sapped rural populations in traditional church strongholds.<sup>119</sup> Some bishops and laypeople had a traditional association with the Orange Order<sup>120</sup> (a Protestant defense group) but increasing numbers just craved peace.

By contrast with the majority of Church of Ireland members in the North, those in the southern Republic became more confident in their “Irish” citizenship, especially when represented by Irish-speaking Archbishop of Dublin George Otto Simms.<sup>121</sup> On both sides of the border, their identity as a “small church” led active members to feel empowered in ecclesial governance. In their religious life they had access to their leaders, a voice in governance, and in this period developed “a great capacity to agree to disagree agreeably and, hastening slowly, adapt.”<sup>122</sup> Both clergy and lay leaders in the Church of Ireland responded to the Troubles with a steadfast commitment to moderation.

The General Synod proclaimed its approach in 1971: “We believe the way forward is through the renunciation of prejudice, bigotry, and intolerance by all sections of the community.”<sup>123</sup> This commitment to social reforms and “respect for each others’ convictions”<sup>124</sup> was more than a hopeful policy statement. The Church of Ireland’s experience of vulnerability inspired heightened attention to minority voices. This

attention was sustained during the dialogue between women who felt a vocation to the three-fold ministry, on the one hand, *and* concerned clergy, on the other. Both groups were worried about discrimination based on their beliefs.<sup>125</sup>

Robin Eames, the young bishop who voted for women's ordination back in 1976, was enthroned Archbishop of Armagh in 1986, succeeding John Armstrong as Primate of all Ireland. Eames became a national voice for moderation during the Northern Ireland Peace Process, guided by the following beliefs: "We must replace the community of suffering with the community of healing. We must replace the community of sectarianism with the community of generosity. We must replace the community of shouting with the community that listens."<sup>126</sup>

Under high pressure and frequent fire, the Church of Ireland became a manifestation of peaceful reform, maintaining its all-Ireland unity through sustained listening that led to healing. The development of women's ordination would become a benefactor of this approach to conflict.

#### WMG: When Women Talk With Each Other

Irish advocates for women's ordination were similarly disinclined to use confrontational tactics to advance their cause, with a few notable exceptions. Their preferred strategy was to organize in order to promote respectful conversation and emotional support.

In the realm of ecumenical dialogue, many saw women's ordination as a starting point for mutual understanding. For example, in 1983 an ecumenical group of women gathered in Belfast and organized under the name Women in Ministry Group (WMG). They included two Presbyterian ministers plus representatives from the Baptist and

Methodist denominations. Mrs. Irene Templeton (née McCutcheon) represented the Church of Ireland.

The Belfast WMG adopted a purpose statement, “encouraging the leadership of women generally throughout the church.”<sup>127</sup> They met every two to three months to share experiences, worship, and learn from guest speakers.<sup>128</sup> While the group explicitly sought to encourage greater women’s participation, their meetings operated more as a professional support network than an advocacy organization.

In Dublin, St. Brigid Society met in Daphne Wormell’s home for the same purpose. But a fateful visit from England on 30 May 1984 would change the focus of the group. Just a couple weeks prior the legislation for women deacons had passed the Church of Ireland General Synod. Their guest was English Deaconess Diana McClatchey, who came to speak about the actions of England’s advocacy organization Movement for the Ordination of Women (MOW) and discuss its implications for “the Irish situation.”<sup>129</sup> She observed that Ireland was already ahead of England in this matter. English bishops officially reinstated the lay order of deaconesses back in 1871<sup>130</sup>, and MOW was formed in 1978<sup>131</sup>, but women were still not ordained to the three-fold ministry as equals with men.

Perhaps equally fortuitous was the presence at this meeting of journalist Ginnie Kennerley. A British transplant and recent convert to the Church of Ireland, Kennerley had considerable skills from her work experience at the BBC and *Sunday Press*.<sup>132</sup> Though a firm believer in gender equality, she had an adverse reaction to many of the public political campaigns. She thought it was inappropriate when a group of fellow women journalists took the train to Belfast to buy contraceptives and wave them in the

face of the police and the national media on their return to Dublin. She thought those tactics would be particularly undignified for women who wanted to become ministers.<sup>133</sup>

After McClatchey's visit, Kennerley expressed her concerns privately to Daphne Wormell. Kennerley's reaction to MOW and the Women's Liberation movement would inform how St. Brigid's Society would transform:

Working for a number of national newspapers, [...] I had become aware of how alienating many people found the extremes of the Women's Liberation movement. Churches and religious people being inclined to greater conservatism than most, I was sure that the demonstrations and door-stepping tactics of MOW, if transferred to Ireland, would consign all legislation to allow the priesting of women to the distant future. Fortunately Daphne agreed, and between us we decided that the best way forward would be to form a group that would be specifically a Church of Ireland one, which would include influential men as well as women, which rather than going out-and-out for women's priesthood would promote careful and informed consideration of all the biblical, theological, psychological and sociological matters which had bearing on the place of women in the ministry of the church.<sup>134</sup>

St. Brigid Society decided to change its ecumenical focus to promoting the reception of women deacons in the Church of Ireland. They organized into a Women's Ministry Conference Planning Group and spent over a year organizing an event on April 11, 1986 at Trinity College, Dublin called "Receive Her in the Lord," from Paul's exhortation in Romans 16:2.<sup>135</sup> The Conference speakers included Irish Senator Catherine McGuinness and former Primus of Scotland Alastair Haggart, who attracted media attention. The day began with Holy Communion service celebrated by Archbishop John Armstrong, and attendees heard reports and reflections from Reverend Canon Doctor Michael Kennedy, Lay Reader Daphne Wormell and Deaconess Diana McClatchey among others.<sup>136</sup>

Momentum from this Conference spurred interest in follow-up meetings in the Wormells' home, where participants adopted the title "Women's Ministry Group," also abbreviated WMG.<sup>137</sup> Daphne recalled that Donald "answered the door, took people's coats, and sometimes gave us wine to keep us going. He would sit quietly by the fireside, reading and listening."<sup>138</sup> He was happy to let Daphne take the driver's seat, whether in the car or ecclesial reforms. Michael Kennedy called the Dublin WMG a "benign kind of pressure group"; he served alongside Daphne as Vice-Chairperson.<sup>139</sup> The group aimed "to further the full participation of women in both the lay and ordained ministry of the Church of Ireland"<sup>140</sup> and promoted these ends with informational meetings, Quiet Days (retreats), sending cards or flowers after commissioning and ordination services, and respectful discussion with opponents and influential parties.<sup>141</sup>

Though this strategy would ultimately prove effective, it was not intentionally informed by any particular peacemaking theory or training. It was simply an expression of group members' personalities<sup>142</sup> as highly relational, emotionally intelligent, and globally connected individuals. Their vision for respectful conversation aligned with Eames' perspective that the Church was called to be "the community that listens."

#### Other Anglicans: Lambeth 1988

Women were called to communion in a special way at the international Lambeth Conference of 1988. Lambeth brought bishops from all the twenty-seven autonomous Anglican provinces to Canterbury, England, along with a host of non-voting participants and observers. The Episcopal Women's Caucus from the United States organized "The Anglican Women's Center" to provide networking opportunities and workshops while promoting issues of importance to women from around the world.<sup>143</sup> The first woman

priest in the Anglican Communion, eighty-one-year-old Florence Li Tim-Oi, attended the Conference as a special guest. In preparation, she had traveled to China with an Anglican camera crew to re-visit places where she had served and been ordained. They documented activities of the Three Self Movement, the only officially sanctioned Protestant Christian church under the Chinese communist government. Conference planners used this video, called *Return to Hepu*, as discussion material at Lambeth, particularly on the topic of women's ordination.<sup>144</sup> Li Tim-Oi also joined a March Past after the Eucharistic celebration in St Paul's Cathedral: "We flew high flags, coloured balloons, and banners and formed a massive army of smart-looking peaceful demonstrators in support of the ordination of women to the priesthood in Britain."<sup>145</sup> Compared to the violence Li had witnessed in World War II and the Cultural Revolution, such a peaceful approach to change was refreshing.

Throughout the conference, women's ordination was a centerpiece of discussion and debate. Reverend Nan Peete, an African-American Episcopalian priest, received a standing ovation after sharing her experiences of overcoming rejection based on race and gender. She told the story of being a chaplain at a meeting of the Episcopalian Women's Organization with participants from dioceses that do not ordain women:

"At the opening Eucharist," she said, "I was the celebrant and was concerned about these women. Yet they came and participated. And afterwards many of them came up to me and said what a transforming experience it had been for them."<sup>146</sup>

Episcopalian women were not the only ones who had been transformed by their personal experience of women's ministry. Since his opposition to the legislation in 1980-1982, John Neill had become Bishop of Tuam and was moved by the first

ordination of women deacons in 1987. His experiences as a young bishop led him to believe that the Holy Spirit was leading the Church of Ireland towards acceptance of women in the three-fold ministry.<sup>147</sup>

Neill's support became important when Lambeth Conference appointed him as Chairman of the Committee on Women and the Episcopate. The topic triggered high emotions during the full day of debate. It became clear that diversity of opinion existed even within provinces. The famous Archbishop Desmond Tutu from the diocese of Cape Town, South Africa, spoke strongly in favor of ordaining women, equating it with his struggles for racial equality. Throughout the Conference he attracted photographers with his charismatic, full-bodied laughter. His colleague from South Africa, Bishop George Swartz, instead portended the end of the Lambeth Conference if women were allowed to join their ranks as bishops.<sup>148</sup>

How could the Committee on Women and the Episcopate navigate this minefield of feeling? All jests about the drudgery of committee work aside, such groups have an immense responsibility with their capacity to ignore, prevent, engage, or transform conflicts that can otherwise divide communities and even turn to violence. John Neill proved a skilled facilitator for this potentially explosive group that included individuals from a variety of passionate and global perspectives on the issue of women in ordained ministry. The resulting resolution started with the following phrase: "That each province respect the decision and attitudes of other provinces in the ordination or consecration of women to the episcopate, without such respect necessarily indicating acceptance of the principles involved, maintaining the highest possible degree of communion with the



provinces which differ”<sup>149</sup>. As the first resolution of the Conference it passed overwhelmingly by 423 votes for to twenty-eight against, with nineteen abstentions.<sup>150</sup>

The outcome of this vote was an international endorsement of the Church of Ireland’s strategy for peaceful communion: to respectfully acknowledge, engage, and tolerate diversity. The Lambeth 1988 resolution also provided assurance for the Church of Ireland General Synod that its position on women’s ordination would be respected in the wider Anglican Communion, no matter what the outcome.

### What Will Rome Say?

The perspectives of other Christian denominations on women’s ordination were heavily considered during the ongoing Church of Ireland debate. Some writers addressed the official positions of the Presbyterian and Orthodox churches, but attitudes in the Roman Catholic Church, as the dominant religion on the Emerald Isle, particularly held the attention of Irish Anglicans. This attention did not amount to deference, but the official Roman Catholic teachings were considered important enough to warrant a reasoned response.<sup>151</sup>

In the 1960s, Pope John XXIII surprised the world by calling all the Roman Catholic bishops to an ecumenical council. The goal of the Second Vatican Council was to update the institutions of the church by returning to the sources of the tradition, opening the windows of the church to the modern world.<sup>152</sup> The sense of hope and renewal impacted other Christian denominations as well. Many in the Anglican Communion speculated about the implications of this reform for ecumenical dialogue and the potential for reunification. John Paterson, an Anglican parish priest, was in part

against women's ordination due to his hope that the Vatican would rescind the Papal Bull of 1897 that declared Anglican orders invalid.<sup>153</sup>

After the changes of Vatican II began to be implemented, Christians of many denominations thought that women's ordination might be next on the Vatican's agenda. This belief was further promoted in Ireland by journalistic coverage of renewed Roman Catholic ecumenical dialogue, including good wishes for women ordained by the US Episcopal Church.<sup>154</sup> When the Roman Catholic Church entered into serious talks with the Anglican Communion about church unity, called the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC), the Anglican Commission Co-Chair was chosen from the Church of Ireland, Bishop Henry McAdoo.<sup>155</sup> From 1970 to 1981, he worked to produce a document of mutual doctrinal agreement. Participation in this process required a deep knowledge of traditional theology and the creativity to craft new words and formulations to describe "a true converging of minds with integrity – losing nothing but sharing in the riches of Christ."<sup>156</sup>

The long-term goal of the ARCIC process was to find avenues for mutual recognition of ministries, with potential for reunification. McAdoo's work on ARCIC was highly applauded,<sup>157</sup> but he was later disappointed that it did not lead to its practical goal. During the Lambeth Conference of 1988, twenty-three autonomous Anglican provinces reported their responses to the ARCIC Final Report, and the assembled bishops affirmed the "Agreed Statements on the eucharist and the ordained ministry as 'consonant in substance with the faith of Anglicans.'"<sup>158</sup>

To the contrary, the Roman Pontiff and the Vatican's Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) indicated the Anglican-Roman Catholic gap was

widening. In 1976, in the middle of the ARCIC process, the CDF issued *Inter Insigniores* to answer the question of whether women could be admitted to the ministerial priesthood: No. Not long into his papacy, and within days of the Lambeth Conference's vote on women bishops, Pope John Paul II published his encyclical *Mulieris Dignitatem* (On the Dignity of Women) that explicated his support for the principles of the CDF declaration. The Pope responded to Lambeth's 1988 resolution on women in the episcopate with concern that it would "effectively block the path to the mutual recognition of ministries."<sup>159</sup>

Though the practical question in discussion was whether or not women could be ordained, "the principal issue before the [Lambeth] Conference had actually been the underlying question of authority, the developing tradition of the church, and ecclesiology."<sup>160</sup> The Anglican Communion affirmed the principle that churches and individuals with doctrinal differences could remain unified, but the Roman Catholic Church's official position held to a single global standard under the authority of the Roman Pontiff.

### A Time of Honesty

With their doctrinal autonomy on this issue confirmed by Lambeth 1988, the Church of Ireland's General Synod brought these issues home to find their own consensus. In May 1989, Eames' opening Presidential speech addressed the Synod's task, namely discussing and voting on proposed legislation whether or not to accept women to the priesthood and episcopate:

This is a time of honesty as we look out through the world of the Anglican Communion. Disagreement does exist. People of faith and conviction are making up their minds. It is a time for integrity as well as

charity. But the life of faith goes on. I am often reminded of the words of St. Cyprian: “The Church, while still preserving unity, will be obliged to live for a time with the fact of disagreement.” [...] The history of Ireland is in the main a story of living with differences. It is a story of two minorities. It is the story of religious and political differences among people destined to share an island [...]. In Church circles we talk about the “highest degree of communion” possible between people who differ. In the social picture of Northern Ireland we face an almost identical problem.<sup>161</sup>

Eames presented this conflict not as strife to be avoided, but rather as an opportunity to peacefully address a critical but controversial issue. In the ensuing debate, the Church of Ireland would frankly address its internal discord, conscious that maintaining a respectful tone was as important to continued unity as reaching a final conclusion.

## Chapter 5: “Don’t Look Too Triumphant!”

Sustained Dialogue – Arguments against women priests – New eyes examine the evidence – Tradition, scripture and reason – A dignified response – The final showdown

### Sustained Dialogue

In 1990, just months before the General Synod final vote on the legislation to admit women to the priesthood and diaconate, John Neill congratulated “the Women’s Ministry Group for the restraint it has shown, for the way it has not become a pressure group.”<sup>162</sup> One can imagine he was contrasting their actions with the flag-flying demonstrations by supporters of women’s ordination at Lambeth Conference 1988. W.M.G.’s non-confrontational strategy was in concert with the tactics modeled by Archbishop of Armagh Robin Eames:

I listened patiently and endlessly to all, I encouraged them to meet me and above all to meet each other, I organised prayer groups involving both groupings together and gradually understanding emerged that while they did not agree on all aspects at least they came to accept the sincerity of each others [sic] views.<sup>163</sup>

This “patient listening” approach to conflict management could also be described using the term “sustained dialogue.” Harold Saunders coined the term in the 1990s to describe his experiences and observations of managing dialogue between “people mired in deep-rooted human conflict who want to change their conflictual relationships.”<sup>164</sup> Though Saunders’ work and its application focused mostly on racial and ethnic conflicts,<sup>165</sup> the framework of sustained dialogue can

be applied to the struggle for gender equality in traditional religious organizations like the Church of Ireland.

This technique of conflict management focuses mostly on “systematic, prolonged dialogue among small groups of representative citizens,”<sup>166</sup> outside of the traditional spaces where governmental power is negotiated. The Women’s Ministry Groups (W.M.G.) and Concerned Clergy Group (C.C.G.) among others served as such organized small groups of “citizens” or members of the Church of Ireland. Eames intentionally intervened to provide spaces for such groups to “meet each other,” express their points of view, renew their common identity, and find workable solutions to the issue. Editors of publications on the topic of women’s ordination also promoted sustained dialogue through intentional representation of both sides of the conflict.

Sustained dialogue is a five-stage process,<sup>167</sup> which does not necessarily progress logically or sequentially. Similar to the Stages of Change Model used for counseling individuals, the organizational stages of change named in sustained dialogue are processes that can be identified and facilitated, but not designed or controlled. One can use the five stages of sustained dialogue to describe the development of women’s ordination in the Church of Ireland:

Stage One: Deciding to Engage—A commitment to engage this issue started by some parties with the Anglican Consultative Committee I in Limuru, Kenya in 1971, and Daphne Wormell’s article on women’s ordination in 1970. It was endorsed as a church-wide issue when the Church of Ireland House of Bishops and General Synod passed the resolution in 1976 that there were no

theological barriers to women's ordination. These acts initiated a dialogue with the intention of eventual legislative action.

#### Stage Two: Mapping and Naming Problems and Relationships—

Dialogue participants named their relationships through their participation in organized groups like the Women's Ministry Groups and Concerned Clergy and Laity Groups (to be discussed later in this chapter). The problems were mapped through listening to women's stories of vocation, concerns from clergy and lay people, and also through analysis of biblical exegesis and historical theology that discussed the continuity of the three-fold ministry, balanced by the claims of historic misogyny unveiled by emerging scholarship.

#### Stage Three: Probing Problems and Relationships to Choose a

Direction—It was the responsibility of the Select (and then Advisory) Committee on the Ordination of Women to propose legislation that would provide a policy solution. However, their initial repeated failure to muster the required votes in General Synod signaled to outside groups that their activities could be influential. Such groups organized conferences and distributed publications to promote their proposed solutions. Questions about the related theological and practical problems were taken up in surveys distributed by the respective groups. This public conversation on possible solutions would have been brought up in meetings organized by Archbishops Simms, Armstrong, Neill and Eames. Sustained dialogue groups move beyond this stage when they resolve to act. Even while they may disagree, a dialogue group must decide that letting an issue

fester unresolved will be more harmful to a community than taking action, even if one's proposed solution is not the one finally chosen.

#### Stage Four: Scenario-Building, Experiencing a Changing Relationship—

In this phase, members of a group work together to design actions to move forward. This stage of the process may be more individualized, as group members name their potential obstacles and the group finds reasonable steps to overcome them. In the development of women's ordination, scenario building did not occur in moderated dialogue groups, but rather occurred in local churches when faced with the challenges of incorporating women ministers into their churches. Many "converts" to women's ordinations described their experience of liturgy led by qualified, dignified women as a moment of transformation. Church officials like Archbishops Armstrong and Eames facilitated this stage when they intentionally selected, trained, and commissioned the first women to these new roles. The first women pursuing vocations as Lay Readers and Deacons *became* the new scenario. Their presence prompted church members on both sides of the issue to imagine the future of women in ministry together, giving them concrete reasons to articulate and address their key concerns while designing specific, actionable solutions.

Stage Five: Acting Together to Make Change Happen—This is the point of the process where dialogue participants outside of governmental structures may choose to engage the political process as part of the solution. In this case, the groups acted together when they voted in the Church of Ireland General Synod and interacted with women who pursued training, ordination, and



placement in church ministry. Their actions will be analyzed later. Regardless of their theological beliefs, through sustained dialogue—or “patient listening” to use Eames’ term—the organized groups on both sides maintained a commitment to civility towards each other and women in ministry, which helped to transform the underlying beliefs in women’s inherent inferiority that had been ingrained in church policy and culture.

It is important to note that outside of representative groups in semi-structured dialogue, members of competing camps on the issue of women’s ordination continued to engage each other organically in shared liturgy, discussions leading up to Diocesan and General Synods, coffee after church services, Sunday dinners, Mother’s Union meetings, monthly meetings of the Armagh Clerical Union, articles in the quarterly journal *Search*, and letters to the weekly newsletter Church of Ireland *Gazette*. Their shared identity, reinforced by these ordinary functions of the church, increased their commitment to continued engagement even as they organized into groups that worked against each other on this issue in the legislative process.

What would we have heard in one of these dialogue meetings? What were the sincere views held by both sides of the issue?

#### Arguments Against Women Priests

The most well-read articles in favor of retaining an all-male three-fold ministry were published in 1979 in the booklet “Should We Have Women Priests?” which was distributed by APCK to all the Diocesan Synods to promote discussion on the topic. Written by two parish priests, Walton Empey (later Bishop and Archbishop of Dublin)

and John Paterson (later Honorable Secretary of the General Synod), these essays articulated concerns that many Church of Ireland members would continue to hold, even after the final legislation was passed in 1990 admitting women to the priesthood and episcopate.

Both authors started from the position that the Church of Ireland practiced a “reformed Catholicism”<sup>168</sup> which preserved a three-fold ministry handed down from Jesus through the Apostles. The Constitution of the Church of Ireland stated that she will “maintain inviolate the three orders of bishops, priests or presbyters, and deacons in the sacred Ministry”<sup>169</sup> as inherited from the broader church. The Church of Ireland previously had the opportunity to restructure its ordained ministry to create a Protestant Union in Ireland, but refused both in the Caroline Restoration of 1660 and Disestablishment in 1870.<sup>170</sup> They concluded that General Synod does not have the authority to alter an institution that claims ecumenical universality.<sup>171</sup> Furthermore, the authors expressed frustration that it was not sufficient for the House of Bishops simply to repeat that there are no fundamental theological objections to women’s ordination, when many still disagreed with their conclusion.<sup>172</sup>

This position did not mean they believed that reform was neither possible nor welcome. Both authors called for renewal of the ordained ministry.<sup>173</sup> As the son of a priest, Empey stirringly described the dramatic differences in the generations as he struggled to serve his role with increasing unease, compared to his father’s “fulfilling ministry” in which he felt “strong and confident.”<sup>174</sup> Paterson went so far as to call his current job “an unbiblical professionalized priesthood.”<sup>175</sup> Both believed admitting

women to this state of affairs would not address the underlying conflict of the role of ministry in a changed world.

John Neill was one of those swayed by the “opposing” argument that the church should be careful to make sure it is “not merely reflecting the upheavals of a society which still has to find its way.”<sup>176</sup> How can one claim to be critical of the social context in which the scripture and ministry was developed, without being equally critical of one’s own circumstances?

Conservatives expressed a legitimate concern that the church should not chase after every innovation that tantalizes secular society. The women’s liberation movement in the 1970s was viewed as one such innovation, and many therefore resisted its influence on church doctrine. In 1981, Neill warned that there are doctrinal truths expressed in symbols that cannot be taken lightly. “Priesthood with its association with fatherhood may not be merely the reflection of a sexist society, but a reflection of an essential truth about the shape of the Church in the divine plan.”<sup>177</sup> These arguments would be taken up again in 1990, as General Synod prepared for a final debate and two final votes on proposed legislation to admit women to try for selection as priests and bishops.

Those against women’s ordination held that they were not anti-women, or anti-women’s ministry. In defense of this position, a group called the Association for the Apostolic Ministry (AAM) purchased an advertisement in the weekly *Church of Ireland Gazette* listing seven reasons not to ordain women, signed “Women Against the Ordination of Women.”<sup>178</sup> The following week, a male reader complained about this “discrimination” and requested their leaders’ names and office address.<sup>179</sup> A month later,

the “Concerned Laity” responded with another full-page advertisement, listing “10 Reasons Why Women Should Not Be Ordained To The Priesthood” signed by 18 people (10 probably women’s names).<sup>180</sup>

In addition to agreeing with clergymen Patterson and Empey, these Concerned Laity groups expressed more common arguments against women’s ordination: The Twelve Apostles were male and there were no women at the Last Supper; St. Paul forbade female headship, despite the presence of priestesses in Ephesus; maternity leave and women’s promotion presents a serious practical difficulty for parishes; and women’s ordination in other Anglican churches has led to schisms or going “over to Rome,” which defeats the evangelical mission of the church.<sup>181</sup>

#### New Eyes Examine the Evidence

Despite a few intractable opponents, the story of women’s ordination in the Church of Ireland is largely one of conversion. From Michael Kennedy to John Neill, Henry McAdoo to W. Gilbert Wilson, over the course of decades of debate many previous believers in the status quo became convinced that women’s ordination was a legitimate development of doctrine. Those unconvinced after personal contact with women with a vocation often found themselves won over by interpretation of scripture and tradition. Interestingly, the question of gender complementarity was not resolved and remains a point of theological debate, even among women ministers.<sup>182</sup>

Advocates for women’s ordination emphasized that their position was not a demand for women’s “right” to be ordained.<sup>183</sup> Women’s increasing education and involvement in social movements like the abolition of slavery led to a growing awareness of their inferior position in society. By the twentieth century, first wave

secular political feminism won many women their basic human rights: to vote, hold public office, and train for professions. Some of these newly educated women turned their attention to religious tradition and scripture, becoming lay theology professors or lay ministers. At the 1986 Women in Ministry Conference, Daphne Wormell captured some of this feeling:

Why do we, as women, at this time see ourselves as having a vocation to express this [Easter renewal] in ministry in the Church? For one thing, women in the western world have been set free from much ill health, and also from the worst shackles of domestic chores. We are now as well educated as men. Those of us who have children have families of manageable size; those who do not are as free as any man. Many of us, therefore, could be *available* in new ways to devote untapped resources of energy, talent, and time to the service of the Church. In what capacity? [...] Our contribution to the decorating of churches, of even the making of tea, should never be underestimated, but it must not stop there. We can also serve with real responsibility in areas such as pastoral care in parishes, leading prayer and study groups, liturgical ministry, the healing of the sick. Our place is, indeed, in the home because *the world is our home*.<sup>184</sup>

Just as the issue of women's ordination benefited indirectly from the Church of Ireland's moderate response to the Troubles, women's ministry similarly indirectly benefited from the second wave of secular political feminism in the 1970s. The social ethos of women's equality gave "many women the confidence to pursue their personal goals."<sup>185</sup> More women swelled the enrollment of colleges and universities, and many showed interest in the experiences of women in scripture and Christian tradition. These groundbreaking scholars, initially women but slowly including men, acted like conservators who restore artwork to its original splendor. Feminist academics aimed to remove the accumulation of historic sexism to uncover and preserve the rich tradition of women in ministry for future generations.

## Tradition, Scripture and Reason

A heightened attention to the experiences of women produced a growing body of evidence that women in the early church, like the deacon Phoebe (Romans 16:1)<sup>186</sup> and the apostle Junia (Romans 16:7), held positions of ministerial authority. Women and men alike were shocked by revelations that this early tradition was often later discredited or redacted in light of attitudes of women's inherent inferiority.<sup>187</sup> Though women's ordination was never universal, many found it untenable to hold the position that the three-fold ministry had been exclusively male since the time of Jesus.

Scholarship also revealed how later practice forbade women from ordination. Thus the Church of Ireland had a choice in this matter between which element of tradition was most relevant for their current circumstance. Henry McAdoo envisioned Anglican continuity in tradition as a dynamic tension between the ancient testimony of God's revelation in the scriptures and the continual reinterpretation of the movement of the Holy Spirit throughout history. He stated one must use reason to discern the best path for our present reality.<sup>188</sup>

McAdoo came to his conclusions during the ARCIC process. After examining the available evidence, he became convinced "that there was no valid Biblical basis and no fundamental theological reason for denying the priesthood to women; that such ordinations were not against the divine order."<sup>189</sup> In his 1997 book *Anglicans and Tradition and the Ordination of Women*, McAdoo concluded that "the tradition [of an all-male priesthood] stems from the merger between patristic teaching on women and their subordinate social status" which led to a repression of historical evidence that

women have officiated as deacons, priests and bishops.<sup>190</sup> Importantly, McAdoo was a mentor to others in the Church of Ireland like Ginnie Kennerley<sup>191</sup> and John Neill.<sup>192</sup>

A biblical argument for women's ordination emerged from interpretations of the Pauline epistles. Mary Hayter argued that Paul's use of the word "head" (*kephalē*) in 1 Corinthians 11:3 (man as head of woman) should be translated "source," stemming from a literal interpretation of Genesis 3 that Eve proceeded from Adam in the order of creation.<sup>193</sup> Reference to a male "source" was not an argument for a perpetual hierarchy in light of the rest of Paul's writings. Indeed, Paul used this same evidence to promote gender reciprocity in verses 11-12, citing the biological fact that man proceeds from woman in birth. Paul also commanded a woman to take up her "veil" (*exousia*) in verse 10, interpreted by Hayter as a women's authority to prophesy and preach.<sup>194</sup>

Michael Kennedy and Daphne Wormell suggested it is "only now, in the later 20<sup>th</sup> century, that we are beginning to understand the full implication"<sup>195</sup> of Paul's statement of gender equality under Christ in Galatians 3:28. Using Galatians 3:28 as normative for Paul's theology, Elisabeth Schüssler-Fiorenza posited that Paul's primary concern in 1 Corinthians 11 was not to establish women's submission to men's authority. Instead he demanded more orderly worship, in which women kept their hair under control, in contrast to the confusing and "unclean" rituals of communities like the Isis or Dionysus cults.<sup>196</sup>

W. Gilbert Wilson similarly understood Timothy 2:11-14 in light of Paul's literal reading of Genesis 3 and the context of surrounding religious communities. Wilson accepted the conclusion of fellow scholars that when Paul said women must not teach or have authority (*authentēin*) over a man, it meant women should not teach men sexual

license like Ephesian priestesses in fertility cults.<sup>197</sup> Scholarship on the Pauline epistles led John Neill to ask, “Does the fact that a female priesthood would have been wide open to accusations of pagan immorality have to apply for all times and in all places?”<sup>198</sup>

In his address to the Dublin WMG Annual General Meeting in February 1990, Neill referenced Galatians 3:28 to express the thoughts of many converts to the cause, stating he believed:

[T]he priest ordained as a priest is a priest, Jew or Gentile, Slave or Free, Male or Female. [...] The fact of the matter is that our understanding of Scripture and of the Biblical revelation has constantly changed – the Word speaks afresh to each new generation, and though we must look to the wisdom of the centuries, we must surely also discern the will of the Lord for his Church today.<sup>199</sup>

As evidenced by the eventual “yes” vote in the General Synod of 1990, the majority of representatives agreed that scripture, tradition and reason suggested gender should no longer be a reason for exclusion from the historic three-fold ordained ministry.

### A Dignified Response

At the time of his address to the WMG, John Neill chaired the Select Committee on the Ordination of Women to the Priesthood and to the Episcopate. The Committee’s 1989 report established its authority for doctrinal development derived from three sources: “Scripture, Tradition and Reason.”<sup>200</sup> The detailed report explained arguments for and against the development, and described both the theological and practical implications of ordaining women as priests and bishops. The proposed resolutions would amend the Church of Ireland Constitution and the Book of Common Prayer to include ordaining women on par with men.<sup>201</sup>



Because the Legal Advisory Committee considered the proposed amendments to be a development of doctrine, the legislative process would require more complex navigation.<sup>202</sup> Usually a proposal would need to pass the General Synod with a majority vote of all representatives. In this situation, the resolutions needed to pass both the House of Laity and the House of Clergy separately with two-thirds majority. Before they could become a bill, the resolutions had to be admitted for a reading in the first year (1989). The second year (1990) the resolutions would need to pass two votes in a second and third reading. Finally, the House of Bishops could vote with the power of veto.

We can imagine our entire cast of characters assembled for the General Synod of 1989, except former Primate John Armstrong, who passed away in 1987. Delegates and observers settled on chairs at the exhibition and conference center of the Royal Dublin Society (RDS).<sup>203</sup> They had permanently left their traditional Synod Hall behind to test other waters.<sup>204</sup> This year's venue presented them with a variety of rooms with décor ranging from exposed steel beams to ornate columns and woodwork.<sup>205</sup> The movement between locations reinforced a sense of pilgrimage and community bonding that resulted from shared travel.

Robin Eames presided as current Archbishop of Armagh, ears open to all. John Neill, head of the Select Committee and moderator of the debate, sat among his fellow bishops including opponents of women's ordination Walton Empey and Donald Caird. Another prominent challenger of women's ordination with a reputation for admirable civility, Dean John Paterson, was serving as an Honorary Secretary of General Synod. The British journalist who fell in love with the Church of Ireland, Ginnie Kennerley, had been ordained a deacon. She sat in the visitor's section with fellow Dublin WMG

founder Daphne Wormell, the woman with a vision.<sup>206</sup> Other women deacons such as Kathleen Young, Irene Templeton (previously McCutcheon), and Katherine Poulton knew their future careers hung in the balance, along with untested women with a vocation such as Gillian Wharton. The contrarian parish priest from Armagh, Michael Kennedy, couldn't wait to vote "Yes." Prominent laymen including engineer Frank Luce and politician David Bleakley prayed for movement on the issue they had passionately promoted. Retired Henry McAdoo, former Archbishop of Dublin and co-chair of ARCIC, likely came from his home in Dalkey to observe.

After three hours of debate, delegates from both the House of Laity and House of Clergy rose to queue into "Yes" and "No" lobbies to be individually counted. This rare procedure ensured accuracy and also heightened suspense. Observers could easily tell that the "Yes" lobby was much longer than the "No" line, but by how much?

To break the tension, one advocate decided to poke fun at the occasion, and his opponents. As a voting representative from Armagh, Michael Kennedy recalled "going through the lobbies for one of the crucial votes, I paused at the ecumenical observers (from many churches including the Roman Catholic) and saying, 'It's quite simple. We're the goodies' –indicating those going through the Yes lobby – and 'they're the baddies' indicating the much smaller number going through the 'No' lobby!"<sup>207</sup>

Though private comments like these were all meant in good fun, Robin Eames would later indirectly address such behavior by frowning on a mentality of victory or defeat. Most priests at that time had presided over funerals during Marching Season,<sup>208</sup> when sectarian parades and flags and bonfires turned to violence. Eames aimed to

prevent entrenched divisions. Other than the voting delegates lined up for the “Yes” lobby, there would be no parades in Ireland for women priests.

Finally, the tellers reported that the Synod had voted overwhelmingly to admit a hearing of the Resolutions. Ginnie Kennerley described that moment:

Sitting there near the front of the hall in my black shirt and clerical collar, I was an obvious target for the photographers and the microphones. “Don’t be too triumphant,” Archdeacon Gordon Linney hissed at me as I passed him. “Tell them, it’s just part of a process!” “It’s just part of a process,” I echoed as the mikes invaded my space. “Of course I’m very pleased at the result; but there’s still a long way to go.”<sup>209</sup>

### The Final Showdown

Over the next year, back-and-forth arguments on the issue peppered the Church of Ireland *Gazette*.<sup>210</sup> While vocal lay individuals testified their resistance to the measure, the more formidable ecclesial force was the Concerned Clergy Group (CCG) who acted more privately. They organized after the passage of the first reading of the bill in 1989 in order to oppose the final vote in 1990.<sup>211</sup>

The records of the CCG are archived in the RCB Library in Dublin, but are closed to public access.<sup>212</sup> Thus the only reports we have of their activities and beliefs are through public documents and the reports of advocates. For example, the Dublin WMG was discouraged by the Concerned Clergy Group’s questionnaire sent to all ordained ministers asking if the recipient approved of going ahead “in this matter with what, to some, seems undue haste.”<sup>213</sup> This action prompted the WMG to invite the CCG to a meeting in January 1990. That meeting led to a reciprocal invitation to the CCG’s Pre-General Synod Conference in May.

As an attendee at these events, Ginnie Kennerley recalled:

[C]onvictions were by now too firmly held on either side for any deeply sympathetic listening or indeed conversions to be possible. It did, however, demonstrate that the supporters of women's ministry were no "monstrous regiment of women" but reasonable and courteous individuals who desired not to cause pain but to promote harmony and healing. And our male opponents were as courteous as we could have hoped in a setting which much have been difficult enough for them.<sup>214</sup>

The voluntary dialogue between the groups renewed relationships and unintentionally embodied principles of conflict transformation, preventing escalation and allowing participants to identify with their adversaries.<sup>215</sup>

Robin Eames opened the 1990 General Synod with a reminder and commitment to maintain compassion and mutual understanding.<sup>216</sup> There was suspense at every vote on the Resolutions: the second reading, the third reading, and finally the House of Bishops. Diana McClatchey joined as an observer from England's MOW, but both she and Daphne Wormell couldn't handle the tension and went back home before the third reading.<sup>217</sup> It only required 3-4 clergy votes to tip against the legislation<sup>218</sup> to repeat the outcome of the failed vote a decade earlier.

By now we know what happened: The President opened with his address. Speakers presented their arguments. Delegates queued into "Yes" and "No" lobbies. The assembly held their breath. It passed once. Tea was served. The second reading of the Bill. Counting heads again. The announcement was made: the legislation passed.

Kathleen Young and Irene Templeton, having already finished their training and one year of service as deacons, were ordained as priests the following month in Dublin.<sup>219</sup> Ginnie Kennerley was ordained a few months later. Some privately rejoiced,<sup>220</sup> and hundreds joined the witnesses (and media) at the ordinations. A few

individuals in Ulster defected, but a schism never developed in Ireland.<sup>221</sup> The minority who opposed but remained in the Church requested protections against discrimination.<sup>222</sup> Thus the work of reconciliation began.

## **Chapter 6: “What Kind of Father Are You?!”**

No “flying bishops” here – Experiences of women priests – Roman Catholics for women’s ordination – The conversation continues

### **No “Flying Bishops” Here**

Within five weeks after the legislation passed General Synod in 1990, the first two women were ordained priests in the Church of Ireland.<sup>223</sup> Quickly, women’s ordination moved from policy to reality. So what would become of the conscientious objectors who still could not accept this change?

The Concerned Clergy Group quickly disbanded as an organization, and its previous members remained committed to their service in the Church of Ireland. Some began drafting a ‘conscience clause’ to protect their positions even if they did not agree with the majority opinion.<sup>224</sup> They had reason to be hopeful for security in this regard under Primate Robin Eames who had declared, before the vote: “Whatever the result there will be a minority. That minority deserves the full consideration, respect and understanding of the majority.”<sup>225</sup> Soon after the vote, the minority who had opposed women’s ordination approached Eames to discuss the specific provisions for their promised equal pastoral care.

At this point, the position of John Neill and Gilbert Wilson as both converts and bishops proved critical to facilitating acceptance by the minority. Both Neill and Wilson could fully appreciate the sincere position of the concerned clergy, built on relationships

of mutual esteem. At the same time, they refused on principle to set up a two-tier system in which some ordinations would be considered more “valid” than others.

To articulate this compromise, the House of Bishops proposed the following statement to the General Synod in 1991:

Recognising that the decision [to admit women to the priesthood and episcopate] represented a development in the Ministry of the Church of Ireland and that some members, both clerical and lay, have genuinely felt that this change has significantly affected their relationship to the Church of Ireland, it is hereby affirmed that they should suffer no discrimination or loss of respect in their membership or in their ministry by reason of their bona fide held views, nor should such view constitute any impediment to the exercise of Ministry in the Church of Ireland.<sup>226</sup>

Gilbert Wilson suggested that the General Synod vote to receive but not approve the statement.<sup>227</sup> John Neill explained the distinction: “In other words, the general feeling in the Synod was that the decision had been to ordain women to the priesthood and episcopate and nothing should seem to undermine it.”<sup>228</sup> Personal attitudes aside, the Synod agreed that this issue should not be a cause for institutional discrimination for *either* women priests *or* concerned clergy and laity.

Though it raised hackles of newly ordained priest Ginnie Kennerley,<sup>229</sup> this constitutionally benign statement seemed sufficient to satisfy most who were still apprehensive. Because the Synod balked on “approving” the agreement of the House of Bishops, John Paterson stepped down as the Honorary Secretary of General Synod in protest,<sup>230</sup> but did not quit his position as priest in the Church to which he was still very devoted.<sup>231</sup> Apart from this action, Paterson was remembered for being personally supportive of women in ministry,<sup>232233</sup> even if he still had theological doubts.

The reception of this statement served to quell some of the partisanship that divided other Anglican provinces over the issue. The Church of England, for example, provided methods for parishes to formally refuse to accept the ministry of ordained women. This institutionalized resistance developed to the point of designating non-geographical “flying bishops” to serve these parishes. As a result, dissenters chose their parishes according to their position on a single issue, hardening their opposition and making it problematic to alter their views if changed later. Division was further encouraged by providing this minority group with representation in the “parties” used at the General Synod of the Church of England. Though groups may temporarily form around issues of the day, the party system has never been officially used in Church of Ireland governance.<sup>234</sup>

Voting members of the British General Synod serve as representatives of a particular constituency rather than the Church at-large. Such divisions run counter to the principles of conflict transformation that were unintentionally used by the groups within the Church of Ireland. Though members organized to promote a stance on this particular issue, they continued to meet with opponents for discussion, liturgy, and to develop personal relationships that encouraged a common identity. At the best of times it can be challenging to maintain a stance of openness in conflict, and sustained listening can be nearly impossible when parties are institutionalized.

### Experiences of Women Priests

Church of Ireland members frequently found their views on women’s ministry changed in response to new experiences and evidence. After fourteen years of debate, committees, events, private meetings, letters, publications, and resolutions, it might



seem that the final passage of the legislation admitting women to the priesthood and episcopate would provide a sense of finality. However, the 660 voting delegates in General Synod represented roughly 360,000 Church of Ireland members. Through the process of implementation, the doctrinal development became a social development. As in any human organization, many constituents remained blissfully unaware of policy changes and debates until they personally arrived in their own churches.

Thus the issue would be debated anew every time a community encountered its first woman deacon, priest, and (starting in 2013) bishop. Gillian Wharton<sup>235</sup> and Ginnie Kennerley<sup>236</sup> both commented on the immense pressure felt by ordained women, knowing that parishioners' first experience with women's ministry could be formative. There was a generalized fear that women priests might be burning bras<sup>237</sup> or swinging them from the pulpit<sup>238</sup> similar to secular feminist protesters. But as seen previously, these pioneering women were aware that the confrontational, protesting techniques that worked to bring change in secular government would be counterproductive in their religious community. In parish ministry, experienced and skilled women such as Kennerley, Wharton, Katherine Poulton, and Irene Templeton won over many hearts with their competency and genuine commitment to service.<sup>239</sup>

Ginnie Kennerley even managed to sway the previous Concerned Clergy Group member Donald Caird. In his duty as Archbishop of Dublin, Caird attended a fundraiser she organized for the Castledermot church roof. In gratitude for his support, her committee surprised him with a "football supporters' kit for the [upcoming] World Cup soccer match"<sup>240</sup> including a tricolor hat and six-pack of Guinness. After that delightful

evening, they were on a first name basis. Walton Empey also told Kennerley he would be happy for her to “bat on his team” as a priest in his Diocese.<sup>241</sup>

Gillian Wharton had a similarly touching experience with John Paterson. As friends, she sent him an ember-tide card, which requested prayers and attendance at her priestly ordination in 1993. She mailed him a letter in advance to check if this would be offensive, given his position on the issue. He was so moved by her message that he replied if he found he couldn’t lay hands on her, he would refrain from doing so with the men as well. Because there were so many in the “scrum” laying on hands during ordination, she never found out what he ultimately did, but their mutual respect was even deeper than before.<sup>242</sup>

John Crawford, who had been Honorable Secretary of the Concerned Clergy Group, had grown up in the same parish as advocate Michael Kennedy. Later in life he confessed to Kennedy that he went to St Patrick’s Cathedral in Dublin on a saint’s day only to discover to his horror that the Eucharistic service was officiated by a woman! He dithered and debated whether or not to receive communion from Canon-in-Residence Maureen Ryan, until suddenly he felt prompted to go forward. This dramatic event changed his mind, and he felt ready to tell the world!<sup>243</sup>

Of course, women’s experience in ministry was not universally positive. Especially in the majority Roman Catholic Republic of Ireland, ordained women wearing the clerical collar initially received many stares walking in public.<sup>244</sup> Joyce Moore, a non-stipendiary minister, reported causing great confusion for one woman behind a shop counter, who said with amazement, “What kind of Father are you?!”<sup>245</sup> As the first full-time woman priest in Dublin, Gillian Wharton was asked more than once at

the grocery store: “Are you really real, love?”<sup>246</sup> Before she was married, Gillian found some men strangely attracted to the “dog collar,” and she refused dates with those more interested in the office than herself.<sup>247</sup> Beyond feeling like an object of curiosity, ordained women reported some resistance, which at times felt like downright discrimination. Ginnie Kennerley observed that at times, “You felt it was not an intellectual reaction but a visceral one.”<sup>248</sup>

Opponents of women priests also threw up the red flag of discrimination. Even as recently as 2013, an evangelical group called Reform Ireland released a statement that Pat Storey’s appointment as bishop “discriminated against those who hold to a biblical position”<sup>249</sup> of male headship. Nearing retirement, Michael Kennedy came to Storey’s defense in a letter to the Church of Ireland *Gazette*. He asked members of Reform Ireland if they might be happier “in a Church which practices, or at least tolerates, discrimination against women?”<sup>250</sup>

Overall, women have been welcomed and assimilated into the demanding work of the ordained ministry in the Church of Ireland. Many young adults in the Church of Ireland have had women priests their entire lives. Media coverage has been generally positive, with a few exceptions. Though the Dublin WMG continued its ministry of encouragement until 1993, over time most of its members became too busy with their work to maintain their commitment; the new crop of women ministers showed little interest in the group.<sup>251</sup>

Some of the concerns expressed by clergy such as John Paterson and Walton Empey remained to be resolved. One major issue was a sense that the ordained ministry needed major reform. They felt that women’s ordination was not the answer to more

fundamental questions about the position of clergy in an increasingly secularized, professionalized society. For example, the movement of dispensation of charity from Church authorities to the state removed a major dimension of pastoral care.<sup>252</sup> Even advocates for women's ordination agreed that women's ordination was not the sole answer. Daphne Wormell believed that the expansion of lay ministry was in fact the solution to the crisis of the church's changing role in society. "The Lambeth report of 1978 said that the laity go where the clergy do not go, and speak where the clergy are not heard. Most of us have first-hand knowledge of the spiritual void in the world around us."<sup>253</sup> Michael Kennedy believed women's ordination was part of a larger renewal in the church based on "encouragement of much greater theological training and competence among women."<sup>254</sup> Ginnie Kennerley later reflected that the ordination of women cannot provide the answer to challenging questions about training requirements, flexible work arrangements, collaborative ministry, and underserved rural parishes. She concluded the answer lies in a better understanding of the Priesthood of All the Faithful, encouraging the ministry of all Church members, not just women with a vocation to the historic three-fold ministry.<sup>255</sup>

There was another major prediction by opponents that has not materialized: Ordaining women would turn worshippers away from the Church of Ireland, thus defeating its evangelical purpose. Demographic data suggests a mixed picture. Every Republic of Ireland Census since 1881 indicated a loss in Church of Ireland membership until the year 1991.<sup>256</sup> Since that time, their membership has increased, most recently growing 6.4% from 2006 to 2011.<sup>257</sup> Membership in Northern Ireland, on the other hand, has continued its gradual decline.<sup>258</sup> Are either of these trends linked directly with

women's ordination? Church of Ireland historian Alan Acheson remarked that only a few defections in Ulster were directly attributed to women's ordination<sup>259</sup> and Gillian Wharton observed that a couple individuals (men and women) converted from Roman Catholicism to the Church of Ireland to pursue ordination.<sup>260</sup> These anecdotal observations are the only evidence connecting change in Church of Ireland membership with women's ordination, though there are reports of members changing parishes over the issue. Statistically speaking, even if the population-wide data suggested correlation (which has never been tested) it would not imply causation. This is especially true of the dynamics of religious affiliation, particularly in light of equally important concurrent developments such as revision to the Book of Common Prayer and the complex role of religion in the conflict over Northern Ireland. As Dennis McCready observed, "One needs to bear in mind that the ordination of women was not the sole topic of interest in late twentieth century Christianity!"<sup>261</sup>

#### Roman Catholics for Women's Ordination

Rather than Church of Ireland members "going over to Rome," it seems that women's ordination in Protestant churches have had the opposite effect: it has inspired Irish Roman Catholics to pursue the development in their own denomination. Though the sight of a woman priest initially shocked some Roman Catholics in Ireland, on the morning after the 1989 Synod vote, an Irish talk radio program reported that 54% of 11,000 (majority Roman Catholic) listeners responded in favor of women priests.<sup>262</sup> Liturgy led by women priests became increasingly normal as Roman Catholic neighbors went to baptisms, weddings and funerals at Protestant churches.

Roman Catholic advocates for women's ordination in Ireland began with similar tactics demonstrated in the Church of Ireland: encourage women with a vocation; investigate relevant theology, scripture and tradition; and organize events to bring supporters together. Soline Vatinel (later Humbert) was one Catholic woman with a vocation who decided in the early 1990s to visit all the Irish Roman Catholic bishops to discuss her story. She found a mixed reception. In 1993, one bishop told her the story of Mother Theresa's struggles to have her religious community recognized by Rome, with the admonition: "Don't give up." However, Soline Vatinel was not admitted when she sought an audience with the Pope. Her petition to visit the Roman Catholic Cardinal of Ireland was similarly refused.<sup>263</sup> Not discouraged, she joined other advocates in Brothers and Sisters in Christ (BASIC), which later merged with another reform organization, We Are Ireland. They organized conferences to promote discussion on the topic, including speakers such as Mary McAleese, who was later elected President of the Republic of Ireland.<sup>264</sup>

The patient efforts and reasoned voices of Roman Catholic reformers in Ireland in the 1990s may have been partially drowned out by the controversy surrounding pop star Sinéad O'Connor. In 1992, after singing a version of the song "War" on Saturday Night Live (SNL), she ripped up a picture of Pope John Paul II shouting, "Fight the real enemy!"<sup>265</sup> The audience was silent.

O'Connor had changed the lyrics of the song to reference child abuse. After this injustice in Irish Roman Catholic institutions came to light in a series of legal cases, O'Connor later explained that in her actions on SNL she "wanted to force a conversation where there was need for one."<sup>266</sup> Her desire for reform was entangled with anger at her

experience of forced labor in one of the infamous Magdalene laundries after she was caught shoplifting as a teenager. Girls in such institutions—and indeed all women and lay men—had no formal voice in Church governance. Attempting to use her fame to be heard, O'Connor made headlines again in 1999 for her ordination in the Latin Tridentine church in Lourdes, taking the name Mother Bernadette Mary.<sup>267</sup> While some applauded resistance of what she named Roman Catholic “theocracy,” others expressed their frustration. Their response echoed Ginnie Kennerley’s conclusion about the women’s liberation movement, namely that explosive publicity has a negative effect on reform in conservative religious institutions.

Some Roman Catholics believe their church must first and foremost develop a culture and structures of listening before intractable issues can be openly discussed. Similar to members of the Church of Ireland, most Roman Catholics remained more aware of international news events such as O'Connor on SNL than the academic debates and political maneuvering in church governance on the issues at stake. But their overall attitudes towards women’s ordination indicate a positive experience, and a desire for change. As Archbishop, John Neill observed that Roman Catholics in rural areas of Ireland were more likely to participate in ecumenical activities if there was a woman priest involved!<sup>268</sup> In 2012, a poll by the Irish-based Association of Catholic Priests (ACP) found 77% of Irish Roman Catholics thought women should be ordained.<sup>269</sup> In 2013 the ACP joined with We Are Church Ireland, and 97 other international organizations in a letter to Pope Francis and the Cardinals urging them to reform church governance, including women’s ordination.<sup>270</sup>

## The Conversation Continues

Though happily settled in the Church of Ireland, the debate on women's ordination is ongoing in local and global Christian communities around the world. True to the restraining pace of traditional organizations, the practice is spreading slowly...much too slowly for the liking of some visionaries. By 2014, 33 of 38 independent provinces in the Anglican Communion permitted at least women's ordination as deacons, and eight have consecrated women bishops.

Though participants in this development in the Church of Ireland were not intentionally using the peace-making methods labels provided in this thesis, we can still learn a great deal from analyzing their tactics and strategies. They managed to maintain a sense of urgency to promote action and engaged discussion, without the debate dissolving into disrespectful camps that can no longer identify with their opponents. Consciousness-raising activities can provide the space for people to reflect on their own attitudes and increase awareness of the myriad personal and political issues surrounding social change. After one decides on a position on an issue, or joins a group to pursue social action, then maintaining relationships with opponents can be challenging, particularly when people disagree on theological issues. Sustained dialogue—a.k.a. patient listening—is a powerful process that can transform the dynamics of relationships during conflict. Civility is indispensable for resolving internal strife in religious communities, as well as ecumenical and geopolitical conflicts. It is also important not to underestimate the power of literally setting the table, arranging flowers, and making tea. Personal invitations, cards, and meaningful gifts softened hearts and opened new possibilities in this tumultuous period. After all, this is the fellowship of the table: to



break bread together, and tell the messy stories of Christian witness, of our eating and living and dying.

This development in the Church of Ireland can teach us the importance of attention to detail, particularly in legislative or doctrinal changes. Another balance must be maintained here: the Church needs both visionaries who are open to the currents of the Holy Spirit, and also governance designed to maintain tradition and continuity over time. Both can thrive in communities that develop structures and cultures of listening.

A final lesson from the legislative debacle in the early 1980s: resolution occurs faster when communities address one differentiated issue at a time. This is not to say that one issue should be placed on hold until others are resolved—after all, major reforms to liturgy and remarriage of divorced persons were addressed concurrently in the Church of Ireland during this time period. However, it is important to articulate theological arguments and legislative proposals distinctly from each other for each new practical circumstance. The term “gradualism” (changes implemented gradually over time) raises hackles for some prophets, but a slower, low-pressure approach brought change faster in this relatively conservative community. The caveat is that gradual implementation can become more difficult over time if divisions are institutionalized in the process, such as the creation of the “flying bishops.”

The theological and practical lessons from the Church of Ireland may be relevant in every new situation where women are welcomed into ministry. Every church, every ministry, and every woman will be unique, but we learn and grow from sharing our stories of navigating uncharted waters in search of tranquil havens. After all, this is the business of the church: to discern God's presence through the raw material of daily life.

## **Appendix: Interview Reports**

Interviews in Ireland by Meagen Farrell Howe (MFH)

Reverend Gillian Wharton, July 14, 2013

Key things: 1. Church of Ireland is small. It was not a faceless controversial issue. Even those opposed personally knew women in discernment. Their relationship allowed them to discuss with a healthy respect for each other.

*MFH: What were the reasons given by those opposed?*

Evangelical position: Women can be priests but no headship-interpret Timothy as prescriptive. Women can be ordained but not a rector. One woman was ordained-waited to become a rector. Woman cannot teach a man.

Anglo-Catholic: high view of the sacramental role: priest represents God to the people, becomes Christ. Women can be deacons.

Or gut reaction WRONG.

*MFH: How would proponents respond to those arguments?*

Should a priest be thirty, Jewish & circumcised? Paul said there is neither slave nor free, male nor female. The first person to bring Christ to the world was a woman—Mary.

Women proclaimed the resurrection. Women can do this as well as men.

*MFH: How did you come to a sense of your vocation?*

This was not my idea—for nine years I didn't want to do this but it would not go away. I wrestled with it. Personal vocation became political? Was fifteen—thought in church, watching the priest, "That is what I should be doing." Pushed it away. 1984—yes to deacons. Chaplain said, "You can be ordained now." Ashton School in Cork—May 1984 took leaving certificate. Issue disappeared on & off for fifteen years—priesthood a

bigger deal. Deaconness & permanent deacons seemed not so scary. Deacons can be a paid position-in curacy for 1 year before priesthood. Questioned myself: maybe I just want the limelight? 1989-let it rest for a few years. Attended a Fall vocations conference, which was scary because it sounded so much like what I want to do. I went to talk to Richard Clark, rector of Bandon-Director of Ordinands. He said, "I'm not sure if women should be ordained or not. But I'm fairly sure that if they should be, YOU should be ordained."

*MFH: Why a vocation to the priesthood and not another role?*

My reason for being was to serve God & serve other people. I had leadership roles in clubs, Scouts, etc to service but nothing else felt good enough. I was a parish reader from the age of seventeen. All these different roles felt like cheating God. Felt "right" leading worship. Tried to bargain with God: if I do this, it's enough. The answer I felt was: it's not enough. NOW I feel like it's what I'm called to do at that vocational conference. But can I judge a bank manager? No. (her job at the time)

In March 1990 I told my parents that the bishop said I should be ordained. They said, "Be a secretary or get married." I was surprised. My Mom said, "Just go for the auxiliary ministry, part-time on the weekends." Dad said, "Women priesthood won't pass General Synod so you'll have no chance of promotion, you'll remain as a deacon." May 1990 the legislation passed General Synod. Then my Mom & Dad said, "Well, you'll have to stop hockey and going to the pubs. They don't want people like you. They want a very formal, quiet priest." Went to the selection conference in June, then took a week holiday. I was staying with my Mom when I received the letter from the bishop accepting me for training. My Mom's response was, "Just because you got it, you don't

have to take it.” I went back to the bank on cloud nine and my co-workers said, “You’re glowing. Did you meet someone?” And I replied, “No, I’m resigning to become a priest.” They had to rush to the pub next door, they were so shocked!

*MFH: Did you ever participate in the Women’s Ministry Group?*

Women’s Ministry Group held day-long conferences, but I found them too women’s lib-by. I didn’t feel like it was a matter of women’s rights or being oppressed. Sometimes I discussed myself in break out groups, but my story was not public.

*MFH: What if the vote had not gone through?*

If the vote hadn’t gone forward in 1990—I would’ve been very frustrated. I have met some people who said, “If women’s ordination had happened twenty years earlier—I would’ve gone for selection.” Several people have converted from Roman Catholic to Church of Ireland (both men and women) to be ordained, but I don’t know any who have converted the other way around.

*MFH: Do you know of anyone who left the Church of Ireland over the issue?*

The late Dean John Paterson thought it would fracture relationship with Rome, hoped papal bull by Pope Leo would be rescinded. He resigned his position as secretary of General Synod over the issue. I sent an ember-tide card, “Please pray for those being ordained, especially Gillian, etc.” Asked him, should I send or not? Sent a letter: “I don’t want to offend you.” He said he was moved by the letter and will certainly pray for me. He said that if can’t lay hands on me (in the “scrum”) during the ordination, he wouldn’t do it to the men either. It was such a crowd, I never did find out if he did or not. But we had dinner together and had a great relationship and respect despite his reservations.

In 1993 when appointed to my first parish six people left before I even arrived. Four were women. I don't know of anyone who has left since specifically because I'm a woman. I guess they thought I'd be swinging my bra from the pulpit or something. It was daunting, though, to be the first because you were very conscious that their whole opinion on the ISSUE was based on their personal experience with YOU.

*MFH: How did you handle that?*

Not very well at first. At the beginning I brought in a male priest for a funeral due to the family's wishes. I shouldn't have done that. I would tell others: don't apologize. The next time it happened, I said, "Well, it's just me." And the family said, "Okay," and we got on with it.

Things have changed a lot. I heard that this parish applauded when they heard my name as their new pastor. One woman made a point to come up and tell me that she didn't agree with me being ordained, but maybe she changed her mind because she bought me a Christmas present and accepted personal communion.

*MFH: How did you meet your husband? What did he think about your ordination?*

I met my husband when we were at a wedding and he chatted me up after the ceremony. He came up at the reception and asked me to dance, and after that to dinner and it went from there. He wasn't intimidated or anything, just thought I seemed like an interesting person. I was asked out once at my Aunt's funeral—I think some people are just "fascinated by the collar" and I try to avoid them.

At first people would stop me on the street. One gentleman, I don't think he meant to say this but it just came out, he said, "Excuse me, Father, are you really a woman?" I

was the first full time woman priest in Dublin. They would stare in the grocery store, or ask, “Are you really real, love?” No one stares any more.

When he was first dating me, there was a debate at Alen’s work: “He’s going out with a Vicar!” “What, he’s gay?” “No!” But since I was already ordained, he didn’t have to wrestle with my vocation or anything. At the time Alen was the first lay man to marry a woman priest.

*MFH: What is it like for Alen being a clergy spouse?*

People would stare. Lots of Roman Catholics have never experienced anything else. But I think a parish expects more out of a wife. He has freedom and a job—there’s no real role or expectations. There’s no pressure. He cuts grass and does things around the grounds, but nothing really big. Clergy wives are sometimes asked to speak, but he’s not really asked as a husband.

Reverend Doctor Michael Kennedy, July 16, 2013

Though women can be bishops, none have yet been appointed yet. Women bishops still not allowed in Church of England.

Had an excellent candidate for bishop here in the West of Ireland. She went back to New Zealand to be head of a theological institute. Her bishop left his position only six months later, and if she had stayed she otherwise might have been appointed. There are only twelve bishops in the Church of Ireland! But there are other things involved—electoral colleges drawn from diocese and province. Have to have 2/3 majorities to appoint a candidate.

If the electoral college can’t reach 2/3 majority, they turn it over to the House of Bishops but that has happened so frequently that it might become an exercise in corruption. The

House of Bishops' proceedings are very secret—no one would ever see the minutes! The votes are not recorded.

Women's ordination vote by bishops was 9-3, from a very credible source. Not even known how often they meet but it must be pretty regularly—some question at times about the boundaries of their authority.

Funny story: Synod was held at the RDS-Royal Dublin Society and the House of Bishops went to have a vote on the stage behind the curtain, then suddenly reappeared with the verdict. Tada! The House of Bishops doesn't always vote, but sometimes their decision is requested on important matters. Sometimes they are called out by other Synod members saying, "We need to have the House of Bishops' opinion on this," so they sheepishly go off and then come back with their decision.

*MFH: Does the House of Bishops have any legislative power?*

The chief legislative power rests in General Synod. For matters regarding doctrine, liturgy & ministry, if fundamental in importance there is a two-year process. 1<sup>st</sup> year must pass a resolution, the 1<sup>st</sup> reading and then it can be amended. The 2<sup>nd</sup> year there is a 2<sup>nd</sup> reading with votes using parliamentary procedure. The vote for women priests was almost short in 1990. In 1980 the vote was 7 votes short on women deacons in the House of Clergy.

People like Ginnie Kennerley were invaluable, with the quality of her input as a born communicator was invaluable. They helped the cause of women priests and deacons by being so competent. The human dimension can be very funny.

*MFH: What is the selection process for women priests?*

The selection process can be very rigorous.

1. Conference, have to see the selectors (bishops)—lasts several days
2. Reference from the rector and a lay person
3. Psych tests
4. Academic record

Selectors look into the aspects that make them suitable for ministry: stability, academic rigor. A report is sent to the bishop who decides whether to send them to training. After training, must pass exams, then be appointed to a curacy. After that, go to bishop for post ordination training.

It's a journey of faith. Placement can't be guaranteed & ordinands come in all shapes, sizes & abilities. For example, one woman priest was "a real Dub": had a deep Dublin accent, had a prejudice against the country until she was appointed there. Another was from the old Anglo-Irish aristocracy—extremely eccentric! But academically brilliant and had a very successful, eccentric ministry.

After twenty-three years, women's priesthood has reached maturity. It is sensible not to rush such an appointment. Another example: Maria YOUNSON—on liturgical committee, Dean of Waterford, feminist to the power of X. Sandra is the rector at Dundock, which is 95% Catholic, and on the street they'll say, "Good morning, Father!" She raises ducks all named after Irish saints. If you hear her say, "Oh, Collumkille got sick again," she's talking about her ducks. She was strongly against women's ministry until to her horror she discovered her sense of vocation! She was English, was in Northern Ireland during the Troubles, then returned for the Irish selection process instead of the Church of England (like St Patrick). I'm very enthusiastic on the topic of women priests!

*MFH: What is the Armagh Clerical Union?*



Priests get together and take turns with a 20-minute introduction to a scripture, then have discussion the rest of the hour.

Reverend Doctor Virginia (Ginnie) Kennerley, July 17, 2013

Suggestions for research:

Interview Soline Humbert. Lives in Blackrock. Roman Catholic woman with a strong vocation to the priesthood. Founded the organization Brothers and Sisters in Christ (BASIC). Research on acceptance of women's ordination in Ireland, especially among Roman Catholics: about 60%.

*MFH: Did you ever receive negative reactions that weren't reported in your book?*

Some unpleasantness from some male clergy—but one famous example even changed his mind! You felt it was not an intellectual reaction but visceral.

*MFH: You mention some authors in your book that you were reading at the time. Can you remember any titles?*

Fiorenza: *In Memory of Her*

Moltmann-Wendel: *Women and the Bible* or all books by her

*MFH: You include some Prayers for 1990 that were included and distributed in the book. How did you distribute them? Would it be possible to re-issue them as bookmarks?*

I just printed them out on paper and handed them out to people who might be interested or at meetings. They were never printed or made into bookmarks. But I have the copyright on the book so as long as you give proper credit, you can distribute them.

Some other Roman Catholics who were very supportive of women priests might be of interest to you:

Eamonn McCarthy is Curate of Donard in West Wicklow. You could find him in a directory of priests in the Diocese. Also the nuns in Castledermot, especially Sr. Kathleen, were very supportive of women priests, and the local Cistercian monks at Bolton Abbey were particularly encouraging.

*MFH: Tell me more about Daphne Wormell. How did she come to feel so passionately about this issue?*

She was Canadian by birth. She had an illumination that she really had to work on it, and that the church would be diminished without half of humanity.

*MFH: You mention in your book a “ministry of encouragement,” and I noticed in the archives that you have records of sending cards and flowers at diaconate appointments or writing letters to the editor. Were these approaches a particular strategy? Did you have any tactics you decided as a group to use to pursue your goals?*

The ministry of encouragement was not deliberate. It was just an expression of who we were, especially Daphne. The first generation of women priests and deacons mostly wanted to be “one of the boys” and the WMG wasn’t as much needed any more. They didn’t feel the need for the support of other women in particular.

The one thing that hasn’t happened yet is that we don’t have a woman bishop. I suppose it is because people who get involved with synods and electoral colleges tend to be “cradle” Church of Ireland members who like the way things have been, and don’t want to rock the boat. There was a recent article in the *Church Times* written by Ian Poulton, the husband of Katherine Poulton, titled “Why No Women Bishops?” He makes some

interesting points on the topic that might be of interest to you. The ex-Irish President also spoke in favor of women's ordination at Milltown Park before her election. Mary McAleese's latest book would also be a great resource for you. [Post interview comment 10/6/2013: We have now! Patricia Storey, elected to Meath and Kildare. Ironically, she is a northern conservative evangelical and has been rejected by Reform Ireland, the hyper-conservative group in Northern Ireland.]

I am a staunch ecumenist—we all need to have some humility! Church unity happens at the local, grassroots level. In my village of Dalkey all the churches get together at least three times each year. At one point I asked in my parish if folks would be interested in a series of Lenten talks on ecumenism, not even to talk about our Christian differences but to look outside of ourselves. I said if ten people approached me after service we would hold the sessions, and we had a lot of interest. People from different faiths came to talk about their perception of God, and we had Christians from around the world, no Catholics or Anglicans! If you want ecumenism, someone has to take the initiative. In terms of Catholic and Anglican ecumenism, after a while we stopped looking for structural unity, and started working towards mutual acceptance.

*MFH: You talk in your book about some decisions you made in the WMG not to use a “bra burning” approach. Can you talk a little bit more about what you didn’t want to do?*

We did not want aggression, flag waving, or demonstration. Our strategy was simply to politely ask the people against women's ordination what it was about the issue they opposed, explain their feelings, and then express the ways in which their opposition was hurtful—we just had human, respectful conversation.

*MFH: Specifically what tactics were other groups using at the time that you thought were ineffective?*

The women's liberation movement in the 1970s was that type. Once a bunch of journalists, some of whom I knew, went on a train to Belfast to buy contraceptives and then bring them back to wave them in the face of the police. I didn't think that was very appropriate. Women who want to be priests must preserve a degree of dignity.

*MFH: Tell me a little bit more about how you define dignity. You also mention in the book that you think women have often been denied an experience of dignity. What does dignity look like in action?*

Dignity is an absence of condescension. You want to be treated with respect, acknowledging that you have a brain and feelings. Being treated with dignity mean you are treated like you have potential and you have the opportunity to prove yourself. It means not being typecast as somehow other, inferior, or different. [Post interview comment 10/6/2013: Actually I think dignity is a word which describes how one behaves – not how one wants to be treated. Daphne Wormell's book is finally coming out at the end of this year. It is called *Dignity and Grace*, which is how Daphne felt women aspiring to be clergy should conduct themselves.]

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Jennifer Baumgartner and Amy Richards, *Manifesta: Young Women, Feminism and the Future* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010), 69-79.

### CHAPTER ONE

<sup>2</sup> W Gilbert Wilson, *Why No Women Priests?* (West Sussex: Churchman, 1988), 4.

<sup>3</sup> Eldon Jay Epp, *Junia: The First Woman Apostle* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005), 45-48.

<sup>4</sup> Mary Malone, *Women & Christianity Volume I: The First Thousand Years* (Columba: Dublin, 2000), 44.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Cahill, *How the Irish Saved Civilization: The Untold Story of Ireland's Historic Role from the Fall of Rome to the Rise of Medieval Europe* (New York: Anchor Books, 1995), 172.

<sup>6</sup> Jane Galbraith, Irene McCutcheon, and John Neill, "The Ordination of Women," *Lowdown*, no. 11 (Dublin), January 1981, 7-11.

<sup>7</sup> Gratian, *Decretum*, trans. Philip Schaff, Pars II., Causa XXVII, Quaest. I., Canon xxiiij.

<sup>8</sup> John Winjgaards, "Church Councils on Women Deacons," *Women Deacons*, October 2, 2013, [http://www.womendeacons.org/history/deac\\_cls.shtml](http://www.womendeacons.org/history/deac_cls.shtml)

<sup>9</sup> Wilson, *Why No Women Priests?*, 142-143.

<sup>10</sup> Cahill, *How the Irish Saved Civilization*, 172.

<sup>11</sup> Brian Wright, *Brigid: Goddess, Druidess and Saint* (Gloucester: The History Press, 2009), 38-42.

<sup>12</sup> Constance Pekay, "The Journey of an Idea," *The Community of Women and Men in the Church: Report of the Asian Consultation Held at the United Theological College, Bangalore on 11-15 August 1978*, (Geneva: The World Council of Churches, 1978), 7.

<sup>13</sup> "Elizabeth Ferard," *Famous Deacons*, October 2, 2013, <http://www.dace.org/deacons/famous.shtml#ferard>.

<sup>14</sup> "Resolution 11," *Lambeth Conference 1897*, October 2, 2013, <http://www.lambethconference.org/resolutions/1897/1897-11.cfm>

<sup>15</sup> Mark Chaves, *Ordaining Women: Culture and Conflict in Religious Organizations* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 12.

<sup>16</sup> As quoted in Anne Taylor, "About this Report," *Celebrating 10 Years of Women Priests* (Dublin: Privately produced, 2000).

<sup>17</sup> Charles E. Raven, *Women and Holy Orders: A Plea to the Church of England* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1928), 7.

<sup>18</sup> Li Tim-Oi, *Raindrops of My Life: Memoirs of the Reverend Florence Li Tim-Oi* (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1996), 7.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> "History," *Morrison Chapel*, October 22, 2013, <http://www.morrisonchapel.com/history/>.

<sup>21</sup> Tim-Oi, *Raindrops of My Life*, 14.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 15-17.



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<sup>24</sup> *It Takes One Woman: The Rev Dr Florence Li Tim-Oi* (Milton Keynes: Murrays the Printers, 2009), 3-4, <http://www.ittakesonewoman.org/docs/Lto-4web.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> Tim-Oi, 20-22.

<sup>26</sup> *It Takes One Woman*, 3-4.

<sup>27</sup> Tim-Oi, *Raindrops of My Life*, 23.

<sup>28</sup> “Resolutions 113-116,” *Lambeth Conference 1948*, 2 October 2013, <http://www.lambethconference.org/resolutions/1948/1948-113.cfm>.

<sup>29</sup> Tim-Oi, *Raindrops of My Life*, 25-47.

<sup>30</sup> Marion Kellaran, *Partners in Mission: Anglican Consultative Council Second Meeting, Dublin Ireland, 17-27 July 1973* (London: SPCK, 1973), 38.

<sup>31</sup> “Worldwide Anglican Communion Creates Consultative Council.” *Christian Century*, no. 47, (November 19, 1969), 1477.

## CHAPTER TWO

<sup>32</sup> Harold Miller, “A Cloud of Witnesses: Letters on C.S. Lewis from Christian Leaders,” in *C.S. Lewis—at Home in Ireland: a Centenary Biography*, ed. David Bleakley (Bangor: Strandtown Press, 1998), 163.

<sup>33</sup> David Bleakley, *Peace in Ireland: Two States, One People* (London: Mowbray, 1995), 8.

<sup>34</sup> In the 1990s Bleakley would lead ecumenical work in Ireland as the head of the Irish Council of Churches.

<sup>35</sup> Ginnie Kennerley, *Embracing Women: Making History in the Church of Ireland* (Dublin: Columba, 2008), 58.

<sup>36</sup> Michael Kennedy, e-mail message to author, July 15, 2013.

<sup>37</sup> John Neill, e-mail message to author, October 9, 2013.

<sup>38</sup> “Resolution 28.b: The Ordination of Women to the Priesthood,” *Anglican Consultative Council 1, Limuru, Kenya*, October 22, 2013, <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/communion/acc/meetings/acc1/resolutions.cfm#s28>

<sup>39</sup> “Resolution 19: Ireland,” *Anglican Consultative Council 1, Limuru, Kenya*, October 22, 2013, <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/communion/acc/meetings/acc1/resolutions.cfm#s19>

<sup>40</sup> “Resolution 28.a: The Ordination of Women to the Priesthood,” *Anglican Consultative Council 1, Limuru, Kenya*, October 22, 2013, <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/communion/acc/meetings/acc1/resolutions.cfm#s28>

<sup>41</sup> Kellaran, *Partners in Mission*, 39.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 87.

<sup>43</sup> Donald E. Becker, “Anglican Consultative Council Ends,” *Episcopal Press and News*, August 8, 1973, [http://www.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/ENS/ENSpress\\_release.pl?pr\\_number=73187](http://www.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/ENS/ENSpress_release.pl?pr_number=73187)

<sup>44</sup> “Church Unity Committee of the General Synod of the Church of Ireland Report 1976,” *Journal of the Proceedings of the General Synod of the Church of Ireland*, (Dublin: APCK, 1976), 141.

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<sup>45</sup> Ginnie Kennerley, interview by author, July 17, 2013 (hereafter cited as “interview”).

<sup>46</sup> Kenneth, Stevenson, “Obituary: The Most Rev Henry McAdoo,” *The Independent* (London), December 12, 1998.

<sup>47</sup> *One Baptism, One Eucharist, and a Mutually Recognized Ministry* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1975) is an example of one of these exhaustive theological reports promoted by the Church Unity Committee.

<sup>48</sup> Michael Kennedy, interview by author, July 16, 2013 (hereafter cited as “interview”). There are twelve members of the House of Bishops including the Archbishops of Dublin and Armagh.

<sup>49</sup> Jacqui Dunne, “Irishwoman Goes for Priesthood.” *Irish Independent* (Dublin), September 28, 1982. MS 522: Women’s Ministry Group (hereafter cited as MS 522), box 2, item 16.3, Representative Church Body (RCB) Library, Braemor Park, Dublin.

<sup>50</sup> Robert Eames, e-mail message to author, October 26, 2013. Years later, he met a nurse in a hospital who asked Eames if he remembered the incident. “Of course I did,” he said. She replied, “I was that little girl.”

<sup>51</sup> “Daly: Bloody day changed my life.” *The Mirror* (London), March 21, 2007. <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Daly%3A+Bloody+day+changed+my+life.-a0160779049>

<sup>52</sup> Henry McDonald and Richard Norton-Taylor, “Bloody Sunday killings to be ruled unlawful,” *The Guardian* (London), June 10, 2010, <http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2010/jun/10/bloody-sunday-inquiry-northern-ireland> At the time the soldiers claimed that they were returning fire. The fact that the civil rights protesters carried nothing more than rocks as weapons was recently confirmed after an exhaustive twelve-year inquiry by the British legal system.

<sup>53</sup> Kennedy, interview. This lack of transparency is tempered by the fact that their rulings are fairly limited in their authority, for example veto power in General Synod or tie-breaker for Electoral Colleges.

<sup>54</sup> “Resolution 25,” *Journal of the Proceedings of the General Synod of the Church of Ireland*, (Dublin: APCK, 1976) 5.

<sup>55</sup> Dunne, “Irishwoman Goes for Priesthood” (see n. 49).

<sup>56</sup> Gillian Wharton, interview with the author, July 14, 2013 (hereafter cited as “interview”). Both paragraphs of her vocation story are derived from this interview.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Galbraith, McCutcheon, and Neill, “The Ordination of Women,” 9-10.

<sup>59</sup> Irene McCutcheon, letter to Daphne Wormell, December 22, 1980. MS 522, box 1, item 20.5.

<sup>60</sup> “Standing Committee Report Item 25,” *Journal of the Proceedings of General Synod of the Church of Ireland*, (Dublin: APCK, 1976), 5.

<sup>61</sup> “Standing Committee Report Item 24,” *Journal of the Proceedings of General Synod of the Church of Ireland*, (Dublin: APCK, 1977), 76.

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## CHAPTER THREE

<sup>62</sup> “Soon to be Bishop, Pat Storey, on Her New Role,” *Derry Journal*, October 21, 2013, <http://www.derryjournal.com/news/your-community/soon-to-be-bishop-pat-storey-on-her-new-role-1-5606913>

<sup>63</sup> “Church of Ireland Appoints First Female Bishop Pat Storey,” *Episcopal News Service*, September 23, 2013, <http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/ens/2013/09/23/church-of-ireland-appoints-first-female-bishop-pat-storey/>

<sup>64</sup> “Consecration and Enthronements of Our New Bishop,” *Diocese of Meath and Kildare*, November 13, 2013, <http://meath.anglican.org.dnnmax.com/mainsite/News/tabid/79/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

<sup>65</sup> “Soon to be Bishop, Pat Storey, on Her New Role,” *Derry Journal*, October 21, 2013, <http://www.derryjournal.com/news/your-community/soon-to-be-bishop-pat-storey-on-her-new-role-1-5606913>

<sup>66</sup> “Pat Storey: Silver Cross Bequest for First Woman Bishop,” *BBC News Europe*, December 10, 2013.

<sup>67</sup> W. Gilbert Wilson. *How the Church of Ireland is Governed* (Dublin: APCK, 1963), 43.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 49-53.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

<sup>70</sup> “Dioceses & Parishes,” *Church of Ireland*, January 13, 2014, <http://www.ireland.anglican.org/information/dioceses/> There are two archdiocesan provinces—Dublin and Armagh—to oversee (currently) twelve dioceses.

<sup>71</sup> Wilson, *How the Church of Ireland is Governed*, 43.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 10-11.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 31. If the Electoral College cannot come to consensus with two-thirds majority for any recommended candidate, the decision can be deferred to the House of Bishops to fill the position. For example, this happened before Patricia Storey was appointed to the vacancy in the Diocese of Meath and Kildare.

<sup>74</sup> John Neill, e-mail message to author, September 26, 2013.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> Michael Kennedy, e-mail message to author, October 28, 2013.

<sup>77</sup> Kennerley, *Embracing Women*, 51. Another woman who felt called to the three-fold ministry.

<sup>78</sup> Galbraith, McCutcheon and Neill, “The Ordination of Women,” 9.

<sup>79</sup> McCutcheon, letter to Daphne Wormell (see n. 59).

<sup>80</sup> John Neill, e-mail message to author, September 26, 2013.

<sup>81</sup> “Select Committee on the Ordination of Women Report 1981,” *Journal of the Proceedings of the General Synod of the Church of Ireland* (Dublin: APCK, 1981), 199-207. Hereafter cited as *General Synod Journal* (Year).

<sup>82</sup> “First Day (Tuesday, May 11),” *General Synod Journal* (1982), lxxix.

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- <sup>83</sup> Michael Kennedy, e-mail message to author, October 28, 2013.
- <sup>84</sup> Wilson, *How the Church of Ireland is Governed*, p. 41.
- <sup>85</sup> “24. Ordination of Women,” *General Synod Journal* (1977), 75-76.
- <sup>86</sup> “31. Ordination of Women,” *General Synod Journal* (1979), 77.
- <sup>87</sup> “30. Ordination of Women as Deacons,” *General Synod Journal* (1981), 92-93.
- <sup>88</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>89</sup> David McCready. “Introduction,” MS 522, 1. Based on interview with Daphne Wormell on April 22, 2001.
- <sup>90</sup> Kennerley, *Embracing Women*, 51.
- <sup>91</sup> Though they were not the first women Lay Readers in the Church of Ireland, they were the first in Dublin.
- <sup>92</sup> Julia Turner and Daphne Wormell, *With Dignity and Grace* (Dublin: Hinds, 2013), 158-162.
- <sup>93</sup> Ibid., 170.
- <sup>94</sup> Ibid., 175-176.
- <sup>95</sup> McCready, “Introduction,” 2 (see n. 89).
- <sup>96</sup> Kennerley, interview.
- <sup>97</sup> Daphne Wormell, “Women and the Church,” *New Divinity: A Church of Ireland Journal* 1, no. 2 (November 1970): 32-41. Reproduced in Turner and Wormell, *Dignity and Grace*, 183-191.
- <sup>98</sup> Kennedy, interview.
- <sup>99</sup> Turner and Wormell, *Dignity and Grace*, 164.
- <sup>100</sup> “A Time for Decision,” *Church of Ireland Gazette* (Lisburn), May 11, 1990.
- <sup>101</sup> Michael Kennedy, e-mail message to author, October 28, 2013.
- <sup>102</sup> “Select Committee on the Ordination of Women Report 1981.” *General Synod Journal* (1982), 199.
- <sup>103</sup> “30. Ordination of Women as Deacons.” *General Synod Journal* (1981), 93-94.
- <sup>104</sup> Ibid, p. 93.
- <sup>105</sup> Turner and Wormell, *Dignity and Grace*, 159-160.
- <sup>106</sup> Ibid., 118.
- <sup>107</sup> Philip Mirvis, “Executive Development through Consciousness-Raising Experiences,” *Academy of Management Learning & Education* 7, no. 2 (2008): 174.
- <sup>108</sup> Anita Shreve, *Women Together, Women Alone: Seven Women Recall How the Women’s Movement Changed Their Lives and Their Times* (New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1989), 12.
- <sup>109</sup> Ibid., 5.
- <sup>110</sup> Michael Kennedy, e-mail message to author, October 28, 2013.
- <sup>111</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>112</sup> Now out of print, but probably printed by APCK. Position surmised based on interviews and other publications in support of women’s ordination.
- <sup>113</sup> “President’s Address.” *General Synod Journal* (1981), 1.

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## CHAPTER FOUR

<sup>114</sup> Alan Acheson, *A History of the Church of Ireland: 1691-2001* (Dublin: Columba Press, 2002) 254. By 1991, they were almost tied in the census (17.7%) with those identifying their religion as “none” (17.6%).

<sup>115</sup> Wharton, interview.

<sup>116</sup> Timothy White, “Lessons from Northern Ireland: Changing Identities and Building Peace” (presentation, 2013 Scopus Lecture, John Carroll University, University Heights, Ohio, November 14, 2013).

<sup>117</sup> Acheson, *History*, 233.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 262.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 255.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 253. The Orange Order is a Protestant social order that supports Northern Ireland remaining in the United Kingdom, named after Protestant King William of Orange who deposed the Catholic King James and then defeated him at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690. The Battle is annually commemorated in marches on July twelfth.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 233.

<sup>122</sup> “No Murder in the Cathedral – Just Sex,” *Clerical Whispers*, May 17, 2012, <http://clericalwhispers.blogspot.com/2012/05/no-murder-in-cathedral-just-sex.html>

<sup>123</sup> “Resolution 19: Ireland,” *Anglican Consultative Council* 1, (Limuru, Kenya, 1971). <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/communion/acc/meetings/acc1/resolutions.cfm#s19>

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>125</sup> John Neill, “If One Member Suffers, All Suffer Together,” *Church of Ireland Gazette* (Lisburn), June 16, 1989.

<sup>126</sup> Robin Eames, “Presidential Address,” (presentation, Armagh Diocesan Synod 2006, The Synod Hall, Armagh, October 24, 2006), <http://ireland.anglican.org/news/676>

<sup>127</sup> “Record of Decisions Taken at the January Meeting of the Women in Ministry Group,” 3 January 1983, MS 522, box 1, item 16.5.

<sup>128</sup> “Programme WMG September 1988-April 1989,” 6 April 1989, MS 522, box 1, bag 1, item 16.4.

<sup>129</sup> Kennerley, *Embracing Women*, 51.

<sup>130</sup> Wayne Kempton, Transcription, “Deaconesses in the Church of England: A Short Essay on the Order as Existing in the Primitive Church, and on Their Present Position and Work,” (London: Griffith and Farran, 1880), January 14, 2014, [http://anglicanhistory.org/women/howson\\_deaconesses1880/](http://anglicanhistory.org/women/howson_deaconesses1880/)

<sup>131</sup> Huma Qureshi, “Angela Berners-Wilson: I was the first female priest in England.” *The Guardian* (London), November 7, 2012, <http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2012/nov/07/angela-berners-wilson-first-female-priest-england>

<sup>132</sup> Kennerley, *Embracing Women*, 11, 41 & 44.

<sup>133</sup> Kennerley, interview.

<sup>134</sup> Kennerley, *Embracing Women*, 51.

<sup>135</sup> MS 522, box 1, bag 4.

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- <sup>136</sup> “Report on the Conference on Women’s Ministry in the Church of Ireland,” MS 522, box 1, bag 4, item 4.1.
- <sup>137</sup> “Women’s Ministry Group – Inaugural Open Meeting,” 25 November 1986, MS 522, box 1, bag 7, item 7.1.
- <sup>138</sup> Turner and Wormell, *Dignity and Grace*, 169.
- <sup>139</sup> Michael Kennedy, e-mail message to author, July 15, 2013.
- <sup>140</sup> MS 522, box 1, bag 7, item 7.1.
- <sup>141</sup> MS 522, box 1, bags 6-8.
- <sup>142</sup> Kennerley, interview.
- <sup>143</sup> “Share the Riches Through the Anglican Women’s Center at Lambeth Conference,” Episcopal Women’s Conference, 1978, MS 522, box 1, item 5.1.
- <sup>144</sup> Tim-Oi, *Raindrops of My Life*, 71-79.
- <sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.
- <sup>146</sup> Robert Nowell, “Prolonged Applause for Woman Priest,” *Irish Times* (Dublin), MS 522, box 1, item 5.20.
- <sup>147</sup> John Neill, e-mail message to author, September 26, 2013.
- <sup>148</sup> Joe Carroll, “Lambeth Paves Way for Women Bishops,” *Irish Times* (Dublin), 2 August 1988, MS 522, box 1, item 5.21.
- <sup>149</sup> “Resolution 1: The ordination or consecration of women to the episcopate,” *Lambeth Conference 1988*, January 14, 2014, <http://www.lambethconference.org/resolutions/1988/1988-1.cfm>
- <sup>150</sup> Carroll, “Lambeth Paves Way,” (see n. 148).
- <sup>151</sup> Wilson, *Why No Women Priests?*, 3.
- <sup>152</sup> Edward Hahnenberg, *A Concise Guide to the Documents of Vatican II* (Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2007), 1-2.
- <sup>153</sup> Wharton, interview.
- <sup>154</sup> “Women Ordained but U.S. Dialogue Goes On,” *Church of Ireland Gazette* (Lisburn), June 27, 1980.
- <sup>155</sup> Alan C. Clark and Henry R. McAdoo, *The Doctrine of the Ministry* (Canterbury: ARCIC, 1973), January 14, 2014, [http://www.anglicancommunion.org/ministry/ecumenical/dialogues/catholic/arcic/docs/ministry\\_and\\_ordination1973.cfm](http://www.anglicancommunion.org/ministry/ecumenical/dialogues/catholic/arcic/docs/ministry_and_ordination1973.cfm)
- <sup>156</sup> R. L. Clarke, *Memorial Sermon for Archbishop Henry Robert McAdoo preached at Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin*, January 10, 1999, <http://www.ireland.anglican.org/archives/pressreleases/prarchive1999/mcadooem.html>
- <sup>157</sup> Kennerley, *Embracing Women*, 44.
- <sup>158</sup> Robert Runcie, letter to Pope John Paul II, August 6, 1988. Published in *Church of Ireland Gazette* (Lisburn), May 19, 1989.
- <sup>159</sup> John Paul II, letter to Archbishop of Canterbury Robert Runcie, December 8, 1988. Published in *Church of Ireland Gazette* (Lisburn), May 19, 1989.
- <sup>160</sup> Runcie, letter (see n. 158).
- <sup>161</sup> Robin Eames, “Learning to Live with Differences,” *Church of Ireland Gazette* (Lisburn), May 26, 1989.

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## CHAPTER FIVE

<sup>162</sup> John Neill, "Women's Ministry Group AGM," February 2, 1990, MS 522, box 1, item 7.11.

<sup>163</sup> Robin Eames, e-mail message to author, September 25, 2013.

<sup>164</sup> Harold Saunders, *A Public Peace Process: Sustained Dialogue to Transform Racial and Ethnic Conflicts* (New York: Palgrave, 1999), p. xv.

<sup>165</sup> The examples in his 1999 book range from urban transformation on the North Side of Pittsburgh, PA in the United States, to Arab-Israeli conflict in Jerusalem, to Inter-Tajik Dialogue in Central Asia.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid, p. 12.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid, pp. 88-92.

<sup>168</sup> Walton Empey, Michael Kennedy, John Paterson, and Daphne Wormell, *Should We Have Women Priests? Two Essays by Four Members of the Church of Ireland*. (Dublin: APCK, 1979), 14 (pagination by author).

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid., 19-21 for the full story.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>176</sup> Galbraith, Neill, and McCutcheon, "The Ordination of Women," 8.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

<sup>178</sup> "Seven Reasons for Saying 'No' to Women Priests." *Church of Ireland Gazette* (Lisburn), March 23, 1990.

<sup>179</sup> Reuben McKelvey, "No to Women Priests," *Church of Ireland Gazette* (Lisburn), April 6, 1990.

<sup>180</sup> "10 Reasons Why Women Should Not Be Ordained to the Priesthood." *Church of Ireland Gazette* (Lisburn), May 4, 1990.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> Kennerley, *Embracing Women*, 64-65.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>184</sup> Turner and Wormell, *Dignity and Grace*, 167-168.

<sup>185</sup> Galbraith, McCutcheon and Neill, "The Ordination of Women," 11.

<sup>186</sup> Wilson, *Why No Women Priests?*, 4-6.

<sup>187</sup> Henry McAdoo, *Anglicans and Tradition and the Ordination of Women* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 1997), 116-122.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid., 125.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid., 120.

<sup>191</sup> Kennerley, *Embracing Women*, 44.

<sup>192</sup> John Neill, e-mail message to author, September 26, 2013.



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- <sup>193</sup> Mary Hayter, *New Eve in Christ: The Use and Abuse of the Bible in the Debate About Women in the Church* (London: SPCK, 1987), 120.
- <sup>194</sup> Ibid., 123-4.
- <sup>195</sup> Empey, Kennedy, Paterson and Wormell, *Should We Have Women Priests?*, 5.
- <sup>196</sup> Elisabeth Schüssler-Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1983), 226-229.
- <sup>197</sup> Wilson, *Why No Women Priests?*, 16-17.
- <sup>198</sup> Neill, "Women's Ministry Group AGM" (see n. 162).
- <sup>199</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>200</sup> "Select Committee on the Ordination of Women to the Priesthood and to the Episcopate Report 1989." *General Synod Journal* (1981), 223.
- <sup>201</sup> "Appendix: Resolutions," *General Synod Journal* (1989), 247-251.
- <sup>202</sup> "24. Ordination of Women," *General Synod Journal* (1977), 75-76.
- <sup>203</sup> Kennerley, *Embracing Women*, 90.
- <sup>204</sup> "Exhibitions," *Dublinia*, February 6, 2014, <http://www.dublinia.ie/exhibitions/>. The Synod Hall has had multiple owners, and since 1993 has been home to *Dublinia*, a tourist destination with exhibits on Viking and medieval Dublin.
- <sup>205</sup> "Conferences," *Royal Dublin Society*, February 6, 2014, <http://www.rds.ie/index.jsp?p=227&n=122>
- <sup>206</sup> According to Michael Kennedy, Daphne's husband, a professor at Trinity College, had threatened to rejoin the Methodists, his childhood denomination, if the legislation didn't pass.
- <sup>207</sup> Kennedy, interview.
- <sup>208</sup> Every year in July, Protestant identity groups hold celebrations in honor of King William of Orange's defeat of the Catholic King James in the Battle of the Boyne in 1690.
- <sup>209</sup> Kennerley, *Embracing Women*, 92.
- <sup>210</sup> For example: Carola Peck, "Women's Ordination." *Church of Ireland Gazette* (Lisburn), April 26, 1990. Responding to the article by Daphne Wormell, "Ordination of Women," *Church of Ireland Gazette* (Lisburn), April 6, 1990.
- <sup>211</sup> Kennerley, *Embracing Women*, 92.
- <sup>212</sup> Raymond Refausse, e-mail message to Edward Hahnenberg, June 21, 2013.
- <sup>213</sup> Kennerley, *Embracing Women*, 93.
- <sup>214</sup> Ibid., 96.
- <sup>215</sup> Nigel Young, Ed, "Conflict Transformation," *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Peace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 2012, <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195334685.001.0001/acref-9780195334685-e-136#>
- <sup>216</sup> Kennerley, *Embracing Women*, 102.
- <sup>217</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>218</sup> Ibid., 103.
- <sup>219</sup> Ibid., 104.
- <sup>220</sup> Kennedy, interview.
- <sup>221</sup> Acheson, *History*, 246.



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<sup>222</sup> Kennerley, *Embracing Women*, 109.

## CHAPTER SIX

<sup>223</sup> Kathleen Young and Irene Templeton, due to their sufficient training and service as deacons: Kennerley, *Embracing Women*, 104.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*, 109.

<sup>225</sup> Robin Eames, 15 May 1990. "President's Address." *General Synod Journal* (1990), xlvii.

<sup>226</sup> John Neill, "Women and Leadership in Ministry in the Church of Ireland," *Search: A Journal of the Church of Ireland* 36, no. 1 (Spring 2013).

<sup>227</sup> Kennedy, interview.

<sup>228</sup> Neill, "Women and Leadership."

<sup>229</sup> Kennerley, *Embracing Women*, 110-111. In her book, Kennerley would later identify herself as the anonymous author of the editorial "Ambiguous Statement," *Church of Ireland Gazette* (Lisburn), May 10, 1991.

<sup>230</sup> Wharton, interview.

<sup>231</sup> Walton Empey. "Sermon preached at the funeral Eucharist of the Very Revd John Paterson," *Church of Ireland*, 12 September 2005. Included in article "Bishop Walton Empey Remembers 'Devoted Priest' at Funeral of the Very Revd John Paterson," December 9, 2005, <http://ireland.anglican.org/news/473>

<sup>232</sup> Wharton, interview.

<sup>233</sup> Kennerley, *Embracing Women*, 111.

<sup>234</sup> Neill, "Women and Leadership."

<sup>235</sup> Wharton, interview.

<sup>236</sup> Kennerley, *Embracing Women*, 78.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*, 51. Title of chapter: "No Bra Burning Here!"

<sup>238</sup> Wharton, interview.

<sup>239</sup> Michael Kennedy, e-mail message to author, July 15, 2013.

<sup>240</sup> Kennerley, *Embracing Women*, 139.

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*, 128.

<sup>242</sup> Wharton, interview.

<sup>243</sup> Kennedy, interview.

<sup>244</sup> Wharton, interview.

<sup>245</sup> Michael Kennedy, e-mail message to author, October 9, 2013.

<sup>246</sup> Wharton, interview.

<sup>247</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>248</sup> Kennerley, interview.

<sup>249</sup> "Latest News: Appointment of the New Bishop of Meath," *Reform Ireland*, September 23, 2013, <http://www.reform-ireland.org/NewsDetails/68>.

<sup>250</sup> Michael Kennedy, "Reform Ireland on Women Bishops," *Church of Ireland Gazette* (Lisburn), October 18, 2013, <http://www.coigazette.net/?p=1685>.

<sup>251</sup> Kennerley, *Embracing Women*, 123.

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- <sup>252</sup> Empey, Kennedy, Paterson, and Wormell, *Should We Have Women Priests?*, 18-22, 26.
- <sup>253</sup> Turner and Wormell, *Dignity and Grace*, 172.
- <sup>254</sup> Michael Kennedy, "Study Group," *Report of the Conference on Women's Ministry in the Church of Ireland, April 11, 1986, Trinity College, Dublin*, (Dublin: Women's Ministry Group, 1986), 33. MS 522, box 2, item 17.1.
- <sup>255</sup> Kennerley, *Embracing Women*, 163-164.
- <sup>256</sup> "Average percentage change in the population classified by religion for relevant intercensal periods from 1881 to 2006." *Census 2006* 13, no. 02 (Cork: Central Statistics Office Ireland, 2006),  
<http://census.cso.ie/Census/TableViewer/tableView.aspx?ReportId=74641>.
- <sup>257</sup> "Profile 7: Religion, Ethnicity and Irish Travellers." *Census 2011* (Cork: Central Statistics Office, 2012), 14,  
<http://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/census/documents/census2011profile7/Profile,7,Education,Ethnicity,and,Irish,Traveller,entire.doc.pdf>
- <sup>258</sup> Comparison in both percentage and numbers of population between: 1) "Religion and Gender by Geographic Area." *1991 Census* (Belfast: Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, 1991). 2) *Census 2011: Statistics for Northern Ireland* (Belfast: Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, December 2012), 19.
- <sup>259</sup> Acheson, *History*, 246.
- <sup>260</sup> Wharton, interview.
- <sup>261</sup> McCready, "Introduction," 3 (see n. 89).
- <sup>262</sup> Wilson, W. Gilbert Wilson (1989) *Towards Accepting Women Priests*. APCK: Dublin, p. 2.
- <sup>263</sup> Confusingly, or perhaps illustrating the ancient links between the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches, the Roman Catholic Cardinal Cahal Daly at that time also held the title of Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland.
- <sup>264</sup> Soline Humbert, conversation with author, July 18, 2013.
- <sup>265</sup> "Milestones: Sinéad O'Connor tore up pope's photo on 'SNL' 18 years ago today," *Slicing Up Eyeballs*, October 3, 2010,  
<http://www.slicingupeyeballs.com/2010/10/03/sinead-oconnor-pope-snl-video-war-bob-marley/>.
- <sup>266</sup> Sinéad O'Connor, "To Sinéad O'Connor, the pope's apology for sex abuse in Ireland seems hollow." *Washington Post* (Washington, DC), 28 March 2010,  
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/03/25/AR2010032502363.html>
- <sup>267</sup> "O'Connor becomes a 'priest'." *BBC News* (London), May 4, 1999,  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/328709.stm>
- <sup>268</sup> Neill, "Women and Leadership."
- <sup>269</sup> Henry McDonald, "Almost nine in 10 Catholics in Ireland want priests to be allowed to marry." *The Guardian* (London), April 12, 2012,  
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/apr/12/catholics-ireland-priests-allowed-married>

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<sup>270</sup> “Irish groups join global Catholics to urge Pope to allow female and married priests.” *IrishCentral* (New York), October 3, 2013, <http://www.irishcentral.com/news/Irish-groups-join-global-Catholics-to-urge-Pope-to-allow-female-and-married-priests-226281931.html>