

ABSTRACT

D. Div. dissertation at Göteborg University, Sweden, 2006

Title: Från moderhuset till domkyrkan. Upptagning, invigning och vigning av diakoner och diakonissor i Svenska kyrkan 1855–1999

English title: From Mother House to Cathedral: The Ordination of Deacons and Deaconesses in the Church of Sweden 1855–1999

Author: Helena Inghammar

Language: Swedish, with an English summary

Department: Department of Religious studies, Göteborg University, Box 200, SE-405 30 Göteborg

ISBN 91 7217 083-2

The first deaconesses in the Church of Sweden were accepted into the mother house in 1855 and the first deacons were blessed in 1902. The thesis aims at analyzing the deaconry in the Church of Sweden in the period 1855–1999 by investigating the role of ordination rituals. These rituals have been referred to as rituals for accepting, blessing or installing. They are discussed in the light of historical changes in Swedish society and the Church of Sweden. Material used in the investigation comes from archives and periodicals of diaconal institutions, and from official Service Books used in the Church of Sweden and decisions and discussions about them. Service Books from 1917 (through a supplement from 1921), 1942 and 1987 include rituals for ordaining deacons and deaconesses. Before 1921 there were no official rituals for ordaining deacons or deaconesses and the ceremonies were conducted by the diaconal institutions.

The first part of the thesis covers the period 1855–1920, a phase in which deaconesses were closely knit to the mother houses with their family-like structures. The mutual loyalty between the sisters was stressed. At the time one could not marry and remain a deaconess. Deacons however, were not as closely linked to their diaconal institution and their loyalty towards the church was mentioned in the ritual.

In the second part 1921–1999 it is argued that the situation for the deaconry altered due to changes in the Swedish society. Thus the deaconry became more churchly. The change became visible in the rituals for ordinations towards the end of the period. Discussions about liturgical tasks for the deaconry took place, partly initiated by high church movements. "Deaconess" was replaced by "deacon", which can be used about both men and women. The Church Order of 1999 stating that the deaconry should be ordained in the dioceses marks the end of the investigation.

Major conclusions of the thesis are that the rituals for ordaining deacons and deaconesses changed continuously and due to reasons in church and society, and that the meaning of ordaining and the role of the deaconry have been uncertain.

Keywords: deacons, deaconesses, Church of Sweden, nineteenth century, twentieth century, rituals for accepting, blessing and ordaining, mother house