

# Church of England Makes Massively Controversial Move

The Church of England consecrated its first woman bishop on Monday, the culmination of years of efforts by Church modernizers to overcome opposition from traditionalists—one of whom briefly shouted a protest during the service.

More than two decades after the Church allowed women to become priests, 48-year-old mother-of-two the Reverend Libby Lane became Bishop of Stockport in a ceremony at York Minster, a Gothic cathedral in northern England.

The protest came as John Sentamu, Archbishop of York, asked the congregation whether Lane should be consecrated as Bishop.

As the congregation chorused its approval, a lone man's voice shouted above them: "No, not in the Bible."

When Sentamu asked the question again, there was no dissent and the ceremony went ahead.

During the service, which ended in applause, Sentamu and other bishops ceremonially laid their hands on Lane and prayed for her.

Earlier, Lane had spoken of what she hoped her consecration would achieve for women.

"If my appointment encourages a single young woman to lift her eyes up a bit and to realize that she has capacity and potential and that her environment or those around her don't need to dictate what is possible for her, then I'd be really honored" she said in an interview published by the Church.

Her appointment, announced in December, has been hailed as a step forward for gender equality by Archbishop of Canterbury

Justin Welby, spiritual head of the Church, and by many others including Prime Minister David Cameron.

However, a conservative minority say the Bible demands male leadership.

The worldwide Anglican community has been deeply split over the issue of women clergy. Women already serve as bishops in the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, but Anglican churches in many developing countries, particularly in Africa, do not ordain women as priests.

After years of debate, an attempt by the Church of England to bring in women bishops failed in 2012 when it was narrowly defeated by traditionalist lay members in a vote in the General Synod, the Church's governing body.

After that setback, the Church came up with new proposals which gained wider acceptance and were approved by the Synod last year.

Women have served as priests in the Church of England since 1994. Lane was ordained in 1994. She has been vicar of a church in the outskirts of Manchester since 2007, as well as Dean of Women in Ministry in the diocese of Chester.

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