

Ethical Church Archive

(EC)

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Name of Creator: Ethical Church

Extent: 3 Boxes

EC

Administrative/Biographical History: The Ethical Church, Queensway, Bayswater, was established in the late 1891 by Dr Stanton Coit.

Coit, who was a native of the USA, was a prominent figure in the UK ethical movement. He was minister of the South Place Religious Society (later South Place Ethical Society, then Conway Hall Ethical Society) from 1988 to 1891; founder of the West London Ethical Society in 1891; founder of The Ethical World journal; founder of the Union of Ethical Societies in 1896; and editor of the International Journal of Ethics in 1893-1905.

Following his resignation from South Place Ethical Society in 1891, Coit and his loyal followers established the West London Ethical Society. Shortly after, he purchased an old Methodist Chapel on Queensway, Bayswater, and converted it into the UKs first ethical church. By 1914 the distinction between the West London Ethical Society and Ethical Church had become blurred, and the Society formally changed its name to the Ethical Church.

Coit believed that his Church would be the first of many 'ethical churches'. He hoped it would act as encouragement to other established churches (ie. the Church of England), to move away from religious teaching.

Throughout the early twentieth century membership of the Church was open to all those who demonstrated a "rudiment of goodness which is called moral faith". Members sang hymns from their own ethical songbook and heard lectures from appointment ministers including Dr Stanton Coit, Harry Snell, Harold Blackham and Virginia Coit.

As explained in a leaflet produced by the Ethical Church, it's central aim was to "strengthen its members in their self-dedication, their love of the Good, their grasp of what is good, [and] their power to choose the better way in every situation".

By 1918 the membership of the Church had fallen to 300, and in 1953 the building was sold to the Catholic Church. Proceeds of the sale were used to purchase 13 Prince of Wales Terrace, renamed Stanton Coit House. The West London Ethical Society was re-established in 1953, re-joining the Union of Ethical Societies in the same year.

Custodial History: Donated by Carl Harrison, Honorary Archivist of Conway Hall Ethical Society, 2014.

Scope and Content: Papers of the Ethical Church. Includes:

- Committee Papers, 1894-1933

- Finance Papers, 1922-1933

- Correspondence, 1901-1935
- Church Business, 1894-1939
- Internal Sub-organisations, 1923-1932
- Publications, 1900-1926
- Stanton Coit Papers, 1926-1932
- Papers of Related Ethical Societies, 1923-1965
- Other Items, 1903-2013

[Additional records of the Ethical Church can be found in BHA/3/8]

System of Arrangement: The Ethical Church Archive is divided into the following nine sections:

- EC/1 Committee papers
- EC/2 Finance
- EC/3 Correspondence
- EC/4 Church business
- EC/5 Internal Sub-organisations
- EC/6 Publications
- EC/7 Stanton Coit Papers
- EC/8 Related Ethical Societies and Organisations
- EC/9 Other items.

Language/scripts of material:

English

Access conditions:

OPEN

Copying conditions:

Photocopying, scanning and digital photography (without flash) is permitted for research purposes on completion of the Library's Copyright Declaration form and with respect to current UK copyright law.

Finding Aids:

Copy of hand list available in Library Reading Room.

Rules and Conventions:

Compiled in compliance with General International Standard Archival Description, ISAD(G), second edition, 2000; National Council on Archives Rules for the Construction of Personal, Place and Corporate Names, 1997.

Archive Catalogue

EC Ethical Church

1894-2013

Papers of the Ethical Church. Includes:

- Committee Papers, 1894-1933
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- Other Items, 1903-2013

[Additional records of the Ethical Church can be found in BHA/3/8] **OPEN**

EC/1 Committee Papers

1894-1933

Minutes, correspondence and annual reports of the Ethical Church, (1894-1933) **OPEN**

EC/1/1 Minutes and Correspondence

1922-1933

1894-1933

Minutes and correspondence of the General Committee, (16 November 1922 - 23 February 1933). Includes:

Minutes and agenda (18 September 1926 (minutes) and 17 June 1930 (agenda))
Correspondence regarding committee resignations and elections, organisation of the church, finances, relationship with Theistic Church and general business, (16 November 1922 - 23 February 1933)
OPEN

EC/1/2 Annual Reports

Annual Reports 1894 - 1933 (1894, 1895 x 2, 1896, 1897, 1898, 1899 x 2, 1900,1901, 1904 - single sheet only, 1911-1912, 1914 x 2, 1916 - single sheet only, 1921/22 x 2, 1922/23 x 2, 1923-24 x 2, 1924-25 x 2, 1926/27 x 2 (one unbound and one with handwritten notes tucked inside), 1928 x 3, 1929 x 3, 1930 x 2, 1931 x 4,

1932 x 3 (one with letter from Stanton Coit regarding finances inside), 1933). Includes: - Principles and aims, lecture series, rules of society, lists of members and subscribers, accounts and general business.

- Handwritten notes in unknown hands on several reports.

EC/2 Finance

Appeals and tax papers of the Ethical Church, (1922-1933) **OPEN**

EC/2/1 Appeals

1922-1933

Papers relating to financial appeals (March 1922 - 18 November 1933). Includes:

- Circulars regarding appeal for money to purchase church building - the 10 guinea appeal (March 1922 - 9 June 1922).

- Letters to contributors to the fund for Mr Vernon Hill regarding his upcoming exhibition and appealing for members to purchase art works ((7 December 1923)

- Circulars regarding appeal to purchase new organ (April 1923 - June 1928).

- Note from Dr Coit for committee meeting regarding transfer of mortgage held by Thistlethwaite Trustees to church members (8 January 1928)

- Correspondence regarding the repayment of the mortgage of Mr Thistlethwaite following his death (27 January 1926).

Letter from Stanton Coit to members appealing for financial donations (9 July 1926)
Correspondence and circulars relating to payment of mortgage (31st March 1931 - 10th May 1927)

- Annual appeals to make up deficits in income from subscriptions and collections and follow up circulars (25 July 1927 - November 1932).

- Circulars regarding appeal for Dr Stanton Coit's 70th birthday (May 1927 - 5 July 1927).

- Statement regarding the Theistic Church using the building for services to generate income (18 December 1931).

- Circulars regarding financial crisis of 1933 (18 November 1933 & 6 December 1933).

- Financial report (1933)

- Various handwritten notes of accounts in unknown hand (c. 1922-1933).

EC/2/2

Papers relating to taxes and the Inland Revenue (19 April 1929 - 9 September 1932). Includes: - Correspondence with the Inspector of Taxes regarding tax paid on mortgage interest (19 April 1929). Includes draft of letter with handwritten notes and full, typed letter.

- Correspondence with the Inland Revenue regarding interest given as donations on mortgage investments by church members (19 June 1932 - 9 September 1932). **OPEN**

EC/3 Correspondence

1901-1935

1901-1935

Correspondence, including notices to church members and correspondence of Stanton Coit, Alex Drew and MN Drew of the Ethical Church, (1901-1935) **OPEN**

EC/3/1 Notices to church members

Notices to church members (10 October 1901 -8 March 1935). Includes circulars regarding: - West London Ethical Society appeal for subscriptions, singing practice and encouraging new members (10 October 1901)

- Fortnightly discussion meetings of the West London Ethical Society (5 March 1902)

- Information on Discussion Meetings at the West London Ethical Society and on the Ethical Worker's Guild (29 March 1903)

- Union of Ethical Societies lectures from West London Ethical Society (13 November [?])

- Fellowship Suppers (14 October 1922)

- 36th Anniversary celebrations on 1 July 1928

- Mr Hynd becoming assistant leader (24 October 1930)

- Special General Meeting to vote on Mr Hynd being invited to be Dr Coit's Assistant (24 October 1930)

- Special General Meeting when members are asked to sanction Lord Snell as Stanton Coit's successor as President and membership Supper (18 May 1933)

- Financial crisis faced by the church (7 November 1933)

- Results of financial appeal [1933?]

- Suggestions to increase membership and income (14 February 1935)

- Suggestions to increase membership and income (8 March 1935)

OPEN

EC/3/2 Correspondence Stanton Coit, Alex F. Drew 1924-1933 & Miss M. N. Drew

Correspondence: Stanton Coit, Alex F. Drew & Miss M. N. Drew (28 February 1924 - 28 December 1933). Includes: - Mostly letters to Alex F. Dawn from a number of senders on church matters including arrangements for a debate, donations, financial appeals (28 February 1924 - 28 December 1933).

Unsigned letter to Dr Peck regarding his visit to speak at the Ethical Church (25 March 1931)
A letter from John L. Elliott in New York to Stanton Coit regarding Mr Hynd's move to America (30 July 1931)

- A handwritten draft of a letter in unknown hand submitting resignation from Committee after an 'episode' (20 June 1932)

- Letter from Albert Spring of the Oriana Madrigal Society regarding payment for use of rehearsal space (22 July 1933)

- A letter to Dr Stanton Coit from the Superintendent Registrar of the Metropolitan Borough of Paddington regarding the appointment of Edwin Collier as an additional authorised person for marriages at the Ethical Church (22 July 1933)

-A letter from Stanton Coit to The Arden Press regarding missing pages from the manuscript of his book that they published (24 August 1933) **OPEN**

EC/4	Church Business	1894-1939
	Papers regarding the business of the Ethical Church including service and lecture announcements, service information, Steward's duties, building maintenance, press cuttings and images of the building, (1894-1939). OPEN	
EC/4/1	Service and lecture announcements	1894-1935
	Service and lecture announcements including information regarding The Friday Club, suppers, meetings for the study of religion and the publication of new pamphlets (14 January 1894 - 30 June 1935) OPEN	
EC/4/2	Service information	c. 1920- 1939
	 Service information (1920s-1930s). Includes: Orders of Service including a marriage order of service and a service including the presentation of the Polish flag to the church (1 April 1923 - 6 July 1933) Speeches made during a service where a Japanese flag was presented to the church (10 June 1923) Flyer for an address by Dr. Felix Adler and transcripts of the address (27 June 1925) Transcripts of addresses, prayers and readings (30 December1923, 28 March 1926 and 2 of unknown date) The Ethical Church Marriage Ceremony (unknown) Excerpt from funeral service (unknown) January 25th - Members who have promised to carry Flags (year unknown) 	
EC/4/3	Steward's duties	c. 1920- 1930
	 Steward's duties [1920-1930?]. Includes: Order of service with admittance instructions Steward's meeting 19th January. Handwritten list of those present. List of Stewards and Present Time of Service Duties Duties of stewards before each service Duties of stewards in charge during service 	
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- Duties of stewards after each service
- Locking up of church
- Collection
- First Steward Locking Up of Church **OPEN**

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EC/4/4 Maintenance

1927-1931

Maintenance (24 January 1927 - 10 September 1931). Includes:

- Letter from Wm. Hill & Son regarding the correct oil to use on the organ (24 January 1927)

- Estimate from R. Brightwell, engineer, for overhauling motor at The Ethical Church (21 March 1927)

- Handwritten notes on "New Organ. Ethical Church. Bayswater." in unknown hand (unknown)

- Letter to Dr Coit regarding damage to organ from fallen ceiling and costs of repair. Author unknown (10 September 1931) **OPEN**

EC/4/5 Press Cuttings & Images of Church

1925-1928

Press Cuttings & Images of Church (4 July 1925 - [?] 1928). Includes:

- Cuttings relating to the "St Joan" stained glass window unveiled on 5 July 1925 (4 July 1925 - [?] 1928)

- Cutting from the Manchester Guardian relating to the celebration of the Ethical Movement's jubilee at the Ethical Church (7 June 1926)

- Cutting relating to the "Florence Nightingale" stained glass window unveiled 4 July 1926 (5 July 1926)

- Cutting related to possible stained glass window representing Mrs. Pankhurst and other possible windows (20 July 1926)

- Cutting relating to the "Elizabeth Fry" stained glass window donated and unveiled by Mrs Stanton Coit on 3 July 1927 (4 July 1927)

- Photograph of the interior of the Ethical Church (1927) **OPEN**

EC/5 Internal Sub-organisations

Papers of sub-organisations of the Ethical Church including the Friday Club and the Library, (1923-1932) **OPEN**

EC/5/1 The Friday Club

1925-1932

Leaflets for the Friday club issued twice yearly with personnel, rules of the club and syllabus. Includes:

- Oct - March 1925/6

- Oct -Dec 1930
- Jan April 1931
- Oct Dec 1931
- Jan April 1932

- Two programmes of summer rambles organised by The Friday Club (April - June 1928 & Aug - Oct 1929)

- Friday Club balance Sheet 1930-31

- The Friday Club Balance Sheet 1931-32 **OPEN**

EC/5/2 Library

c. 1923

Paperwork relating to the library at the Ethical Church [1923?]. Includes:

- A notice regarding receipt and selling price of "An Ethical Philosophy of Life" by Felix Adler (18 October 1923)

- Lists of books in the library (unknown) **OPEN**

EC/6	Publications	1900-1926
	Publications collected by the Ethical Church by Stanton Coit and others, (1900-1926). OPEN	
EC/6/1	Dr Stanton Coit's Publications	c. 1923
	 Works of Dr Stanton Coit (May 1923 - 29 September 1933). Includes: The Religion of the Ethical Church: A Word of Explanation. Handwritten note with printing costs inside (unknown) The Ethical Message - Churches With Altars and Without: An Essay in the Psychology of Religion (May 1923) Five articles from Reynolds's Illustrated News under "Reynolds's" Pulpit' (8 September 1929 - 13 October 1929) One article from the Daily Sketch about the Oxford Group (29 September 1933) OPEN 	
EC/6/2	Other Publications	c. 1900- 1926
	Other publications from The Ethical Church ([1900? - 1926). Includes:	

- List of publications sold by the West London Ethical Society (unknown)

- List of publications obtainable at the Ethical Church (unknown)

The Ethical Message: A Souvenir of the Ethical Church with Thirty-Six Illustrations (Nov & Dec 1917)
Literature of Dr Coit supplied to the Scripture

- Literature of Dr Coit supplied to the Scripture Table (13 November 1926) **OPEN**

EC/7	Coit Papers	1926 - 1932
	Papers relating to Stanton Coit, (1926-1932). OPEN	
EC/7/1	Papers relating to Stanton Coit	1927-1932
	 Papers relating to Stanton Coit (May 1927 - December 1932). Includes: blank stationary for 30 Hyde Park Gate Papers regarding Stanton Coit's 70th birthday. Circular regarding donations to Dr. Coit's seventieth birthday fund (May [?] 1927) Letter to Dr Coit informing him of the gifts and requesting his attendance at a presentation meeting (11 August 1927) Letter to G. Spiller from Stanton Coit thanking the committee for the gifts and accepting their request for attendance at the presentation ceremony x 2 (17 August 1927) Press invitation to Coit's 70th birthday celebrations (15th October 1927) Programme for the celebrations (15 October 1927) Article about the celebrations in The Kensington News and West London Times (21 October 1927) Article about the celebrations in The Gazette (21 October 1927) Article about the celebrations in The Sunday Times (23 October 1927) Article about the celebrations in The Literary Guide by G. Spiller (July 1929) Advert for a minister at the Ethical Church in The Literary Guide with obituary for Adela Coit on reverse (December 1932) 	
EC/7/2	Other Coit family papers	1926-1932
	Other Coit family papers (17 March 1926 - 10 October 1932). Includes: - Article regarding the marriage of Stanton Coit's daughter at the Ethical Church (17 march 1926) - Funeral Service sheet for Fanny Adela Coit	

- Funeral Service sheet for Fanny Adela Coit (10 October 1932) (Misprinted as 11 October 1932 [?]) - Full funeral service for Fanny Adela Coit printed out for close friends (10 October 1932) - Photocopy of obituary for Adela Coit from The Literary Guide. For original see EC/7/1 (December 1932) **OPEN**

1922-1965

EC/8 Related Ethical societies and organisations

Papers of other ethical societies and organisations collected by the Ethical Church including the Union of Ethical Societies, other UK ethical societies, and international ethical societies, (1922-1965) **OPEN**

The Ethical Union/ Union of Ethical Societies (8

EC/8/1 Union of Ethical Societies

December 1922 - 24 February 1965). Includes: - Leaflet, published by the Union of Ethical Societies and written by Stanton Coit, entitled "The Ethical Movement Explained" (unknown) - Pamphlet issued by the Union of Ethical Societies of the Manifesto of the Delegates at the First Congress of the International Ethical Union in Zurich (September 1896) - Union of Ethical Societies Report of the Committee on Organisation (31 May 1913) - Flyer for an Ethical Movement Meeting (8 December 1922) - Report of the Joint Committee made up of representatives from various ethical groups including the Ethical Union from two reorganisation conferences with covering letter

(16 June 1925)Information relating to an ExtraordinaryCongress held on 10 November 1927 reg

Congress held on 10 November 1927 regarding the Ethical Union becoming an a legal Incorporated body. Letter to subscribers explaining how this will change their right to vote, an agenda for the Congress and a set of bye-laws to be presented for adoption at the Congress (3 November 1927-10 November 1927)

- Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Ethical Union (14 March 1928)

- Flyer for a celebration of the 300th anniversary of the birth of Spinoza at Conway Hall (30 November 1932)

- 2 annual reports of The Ethical Union from 1963 and 1964 (18 February 1964 - 24 February 1965)

- 7 copies of The Ethical Societies' Chronicle (April 1924, May 1926, April 1929, November 1929, January 1931, May 1942 and October 1942 plus one page of December 1930) **OPEN**

EC/8/2 Other UK-based Ethical societies and organisations

Papers from other Ethical organisations and societies. Includes:

- University College/student and young people ethical groups

- Flyer for the Young People's Group of the Ethical Union (date unknown)

- Leaflet setting out the aims of the Student Ethical Movement

- University College Ethical Union leaflet, "About Ourselves", written by President, Alexander F. Dawn (1929)

- The Constitution of University College Ethical Union (19 October 1927)

- Letter from Maxine Wilson to Miss Coit asking for advice on whether meetings of the Ohio State Ethical Union should be opened to non-members (21 May 1928)

- Cheque book for Westminster Bank Ltd with 1 cheque written to The Utopia Press by Virginia Coit on behalf of the Student Ethical Movement Committee and debit note for cheque stamps inside (January 1928)

- Letter from Westminster Bank Ltd to the Students Ethical Movement Committee asking for the return of the pass book for their account (September 1929) (in envelope with cheque book and letter from Maxine Wilson) - Forest Gate Ethical Church

- Draft Constitution of the Forest Gate Ethical Church (date unknown)

- Modern Religious Thinkers

- Third Conference of Modern Religious Thinkers (1 June 1923)

- The Free Religious Movement

- 50 Questions Answered About the Free Religious Movement by Rev. Walter Walsh (1928)

- Society of Ethical Propagandists

- The Principles and Aims of the Society of Ethical Propagandists (date unknown)

EC/8/3 International Ethical societies and organisations

Papers relating to international Ethical societies and organisations (23 January 1927 - 1 March 1933). Includes:

- The University Settlement

- Leaflet for the Fortieth Anniversary Celebration of the University Settlement. With loose sheet listing the activities of the University Settlement (23 January 1927) - Ethischen Gemeinde

- Mitteilungen der Ethischen Gemeinde. In German (May 1927)

- The Ethical Lecturers' Fund Committee

- Prospectus of the Ethical Lecturers' Fund Committee. One sheet (September 1927 with handwritten 18 October 1927)

- Prospectus of the Ethical Lecturers' Fund Committee (September 1927)

- Letter (from Stanton Coit) to unknown addressee regarding the change in name of the Foundation for Moral and Religious Leadership to Foundation for Moral Leadership (August 1928)

- Foundation for Moral Leadership

- Preliminary Prospectus issued by Professor John Dewey and Doctor Stanton Coit (January 1928)

- Draft version of Preliminary Prospectus (January 1928)

- Foundation for Moral and Religious Leadership Announcement and Appeal issued by Professor John Dewey and Dr Stanton Coit. 2 copies (March-April 1928)

- Foundation for Moral Leadership (International) Announcement and Appeal (November 1928)

- Foundation for Moral Leadership Leaflet I - Object and Method (c. 1928)

- Foundation for Moral Leadership Leaflet II -Budget and Financial Appeal. 2 copies (c. 1928) - International Moral Education Congress

- Flyer for the Fifth Congress, The Sorbonne, Paris. Hon. secretaries Mr G. Spiller and Mr F. J. Gould (23 September 1930)

- First Unitarian Congregational Society

- Calendar of events for the First Unitarian Congregational Society, Brooklyn, New York (c. 1930) - Ethical Society

- Newsletter, Philadelphia (October 1930) - Churchman Company

- Copy of The Churchman journal. Article on "Dr. Coit and Social Worship" by Lester Leake Riley. Published weekly in New York (10 August 1929)

- Copy of The Churchman. Article regarding Dr Coit's retirement (1 March 1933)

EC/9 Other Items

Papers collected by the Ethical Church, or created from the Ethical Church Archive, (1903-2013) **OPEN**

EC/9/1 Other Items

1903-2013

Other items found with the Ethical Church collections. Includes:

- Ethical Essays: Why Live a Moral Life? by William M. Salter (March 1903)

- A Summary of Six Papers and Discussions upon the Disabilities of Women as Workers (1909)

- Ethical Essays: The Mission of Children by Margaret McMillan (c. 1910)

- Jerusalem set to music by C. Hubert H. Parry (1916)

- Notes by Carl Harrison [?], Honorary Archivist at Conway Hall, (c.2013)