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Council Spends Five Days in Suva

Photos & Words By Revd Numia Tomoana



Members of Council show off our lovely dresses—who needs purple shirts when you have Bula dresses!

From Left: Revd Numia Tomoana, Revd Amy Chambers, Archdeacon Carole Hughes, Revd Mere Wallace & Karena de Pont

ANGLICAN WOMEN'S STUDIES COUNCIL SPEND FIVE DAYS IN SUVA

Leaving home in our colder than usual Winter, with gale winds and floods north of Auckland and being told by our fabulous Fijian hostess to pack our togs and sunscreen, was something like winning lotto – a bit surreal. We were optimistic and ready for the sun and warmth. With our lovely Christ sisters, Convenor of the Women's Council, the Venerable Archdeacon Carole Hughes, our administrator, Karena de Pont, Revd Mere Wallace and myself, we were met at Suva Airport by Archdeacon Amy Chambers and her nephew, the Dean of Suva Cathedral, The Very Revd Claude Fong Toy, more well known as Father Claude. After receiving our welcome shell necklaces, we

were packed in the van and whizzed off to our home for five days, St John the Baptist Anglican Theological College and Hostel of Polynesia.

Rather than having our suggested 'nap' after refreshments (as we caught a very early morning flight), we were much too excited and warm to be still, we wanted to explore instead, stockings off, sandals on. Town, the city of Suva is only a 10 minute downhill walk

from St John's College and 4 minutes back in a taxi. Later in the after-

noon we visited the House of Sarah, an Anglican Women's Counselling and Welfare Services in the Diocese of Polynesia who say,

"Most of us don't share our pain or distress easily. If we do, we will look for someone we can trust, who we know will listen without judgement or condemnation. The House of Sarah offers a listening ear, support and a place of refuge to those who need it most. There are stories to tell, but we can't tell them as yet. It has drawn many people to its doors that have deep needs for prayer and counselling."

The House of Sarah also organises workshops for women to teach them basic knowledge and skills around topics such as: gender awareness,

gender based and domestic violence, child abuse, rape, and sexual harassment. These women can then help more people in their community when these issues arise. The workshops also teach UN Conventions on discrimination against women and children's rights. The House of Sarah was recognised by the United Nations for the wonderful work it is carrying out throughout Fiji. <http://www.angmissions.org.nz/?sid=413>

We were humbled to meet and see the mission outreach these women are committed to. It was truly inspiring and we learnt so much. The House of Sarah is opposite St John's College/ Hostel and next door to the Archbishopric of the Diocese of Polynesia, all within a drumbeat or 'cooe' distance of each other.

Revd Mere Wallace and I had the privilege of presiding at the 6.00am daily Eucharist for the resident students and their Principal, our host and friend Amy Chambers and her husband Revd George Chambers. Mere and I thoroughly enjoyed this sacred time with them as our Maori and Polynesian cultures blended with ease and respect. We shared our reo, mother tongue, our waiata/hymns, our stories, and most



Members of the WSC & House of Sarah
 From Left: Malinda Railala, Nai Cokanasiga, Revd Mere Wallace, Archdeacon Carole Hughes, Revd Anne Drummond, Revd Amy Chambers, Revd Numia Tomoana & Karena de Pont

plicity to understand scripture and the cultural richness that shapes our understanding. Carole gave us tools to be active participants and not just hearers of scripture and one person's perspective or historical account. We too can be part of the bible story.



Archdeacon Carole Hughes offered a brief overview into various ways to approach Bible Studies

meaningful the Gospel and Holy Communion. The stunning vista and changing sky added to the specialness of the dawn Eucharist.

One of our goals was to spend a day teaching the local Anglican community. First up was Carole's two hour session on different Approaches to Studying the Bible. We broke into small groups and fleshed out the various approaches. We enjoyed the sim-

Next session was by Mere Wallace who picked up a big palm tree leaf and skilfully started plaiting and weaving the leaves transforming them into creative patterns that could be used in a floral arrangement or even a sun visor. Whilst everyone was happily weaving, a young man intern, Warena Tumai from Hamilton, played the guitar and led us in songs of praise. We were swept along with the unity and beautiful harmony of the moment amongst those present, dads, mums, grandmothers, children, babies, young men and young women. I will always cherish that beautiful memory and moment.

With half an hour left for my poi making and twirling lesson, we managed to complete each task, gleaming insights and gems from our scripture session, interweaving and plaiting them into our cultural stories and song with the flax, then giving them life and flight as we joyfully twirled our colourful poi in the air. Contextual theological and cultural fulfilment!

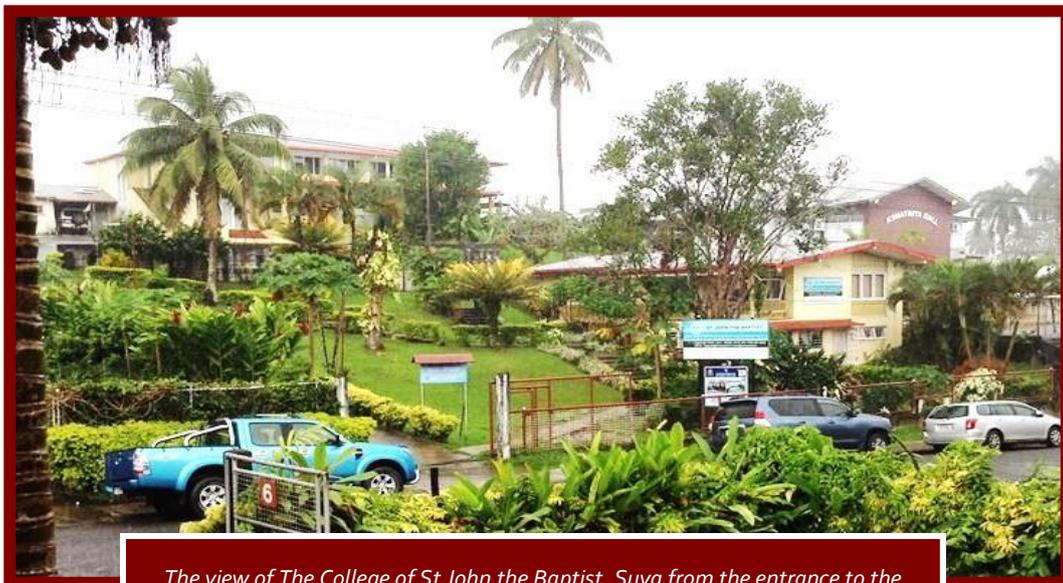
Manaakitanga from our awesome hostess Amy Chambers, her wonderful whānau at the College/ Hostel, Archbishop Winston Halapua for his spacious heart, Father Claude and our

Polynesian Church whanau, was as warm as the weather, as welcome as their happy joyous friendship, as tasty as the food and fun, and as sweet as their perfumed gardens - we were certainly humbled by their gift of graciousness.

Manakohia e te Atua ā mātou whakahere, whakamoemiti.

Ko tāu rourou, ko tāku rourou, ka mākona mātou.

Accept, O God, our sacrifice of praise. Accept our thanks for all you have done. Our hands were empty, and you filled them. Amen



The view of The College of St John the Baptist, Suva from the entrance to the Diocese of Polynesia's office across the road

Revd Erice Fairbrother, Tikanga Pakeha Councillor was in Tonga as part of our Mentoring Programme (see next months newsletter for her story) and Revd Evelini Langi, Tikanga Polynesia Councillor was in the USA visiting family.

Polynesia Teaches Us and Takes the Lead in Equity

By Karena de Pont

And Photos by Revd Numia Tomoana



Memorial Service in Suva for The Very Revd Lynda Patterson, Vilisi Latia distributes communion while Archdeacon Carole Hughes presides over the Eucharist.

As a three tikanga Council, it is beneficial to our decision making process to understand and be able to empathize with each of the contexts that we represent and advocate for. Spending time together, learning from each other, working together in combined projects helps the Council to be a far more effective

committee, then sitting in a meeting room in isolation will ever do, and that is why the Council tries to combine a Council meeting with a mentoring activity every two years.

This time together is always precious and appreciated, knowing that we each juggle our commitments to be there. However, our journey to Fiji became more poignant as we learnt that The Very Revd Lynda Patterson, Dean of Christchurch's Transitional Cathedral, had passed away unexpectedly on the Sunday. Lynda was our sister in Christ and friend, who shared her talent for theological reflection in leading the Bible Studies that inspired so many women at the *Treasuring Women in Ministry* hui in June 2012. Coming to terms

with her sudden passing was difficult for each of us—we all liked and loved her, it felt so unfair, too soon, a future of missed opportunities stretched out before us as we appreciated the shared, and now all the more, treasured times together of our past. How, can we honour her? So we were heartened by the response of the Diocese of Polynesia and

Dean Claude Fong Toy to offer the Wednesday mid-day service in the Holy Trinity Cathedral, Suva in memorial to Lynda. Archdeacon Carole Hughes celebrated the Service and Archbishop Winston Halapua offered the Eulogy. He spoke of the many gifts and qualities that Lynda had and shared with us all, her sense of humour and her sharp theological mind, *“Lynda was one who never lead from the front, always from the back, she exercised her uniqueness, a theologian who contributed significantly to the theology of our three tikanga church, a beautiful baptised Christian”*.

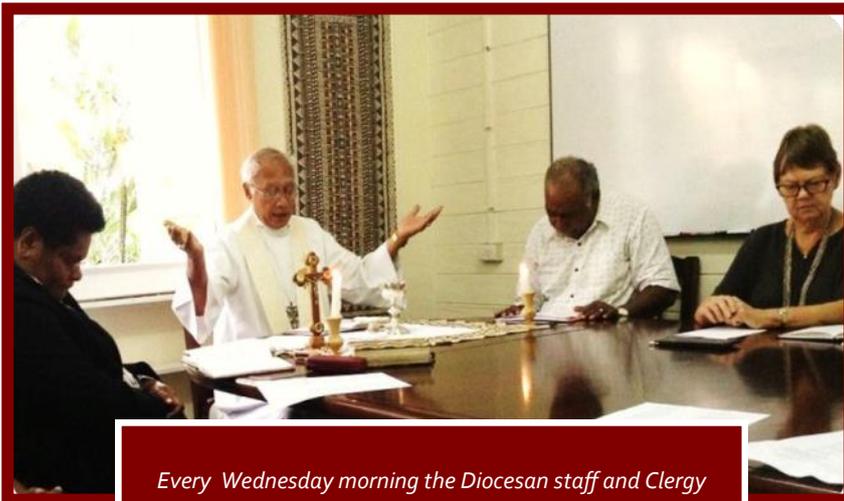
A significant event for the Anglican Church in Suva that week was the funeral for Revd Joji Robo Mateiviti, the father of Eseta Mateiviti-Tulavu, College Chaplain at St John's Theological College in Auckland. Our hearts went out to Eseta and her family and we felt very privileged and humbled to be included in the tangi ceremony, on the eve of Revd Joji's funeral. Our understanding, is that it was unusual for women to take a prominent role in this ceremony and to be invited to do so for our sister Eseta, was very special and we hope that our contribution lived up to the responsibility placed in us as we honoured her father.

It was also lovely to see, that some of the skills learnt in the previous day's teaching session by Mere Wallace, were shown off as Johnathan and Lily-Anne made the raranga and flower bouquets for Revd Joji's funeral.



There is a real genuine commitment to have equal representation within Diocesan governance and in ministry. To follow through, so that the Diocese is seen to “walk the talk” and in fact, the Diocese is leading the way across the tikanga in it's advocacy for women in ministry to advance the roles of women from mere tokenism.

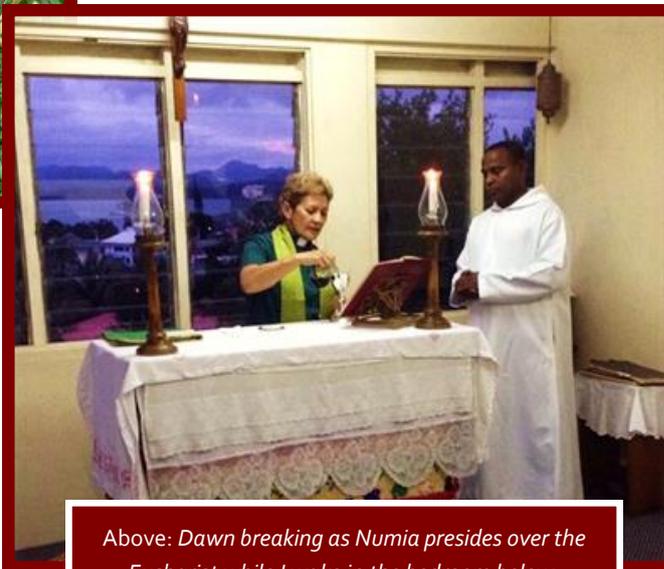
Dawn is not a good time of the day for me, but I will hold in my



Every Wednesday morning the Diocesan staff and Clergy gather together for worship in the Diocesan Office

treasure box the fond memory of waking to singing and the familiar tones of service in the chapel above my bedroom at St John's College in Suva. It is a lovely way to wake up to the day and I'm sure that those who attended service would then say, it's a lovely way to start the day, to be **IN** chapel, Karena!

I will always remember the generosity shown by Dean Claude Fong Toy and his wife and our friend, Umamila Rokotakala who taxied us all over the place in their van and invited us to share dinner in their home with their family one evening; the hospitality of Archbishop Winston, who opened his home to the women of the Diocese for a dinner; the soft voice of Litimai Sanegar, one of the College students who presided at the first Eucharist service we attended at Holy Trinity on the day of our arrival and the worship we attended at the Diocesan's office on Wednesday morning; the welcome and sharing of ideas with some of Nai Cokanasiga's team at the House of Sarah, Malinda Railala and Revd Anne Drummond. I was greatly impressed by the programmes they provide to their communities and am really looking forward to working together in the near future (watch this space—2015).



Above: Dawn breaking as Numia presides over the Eucharist while I wake in the bedroom below.

Left: One of the bouquets made for Revd Joji Robo Mateiviti funeral.

On my journey home, I was able to reflect that our time spent in Suva has been one of the most fulfilling times I have had with the Women's Studies Centre over the years. It was good to stay at St John's College, to be in the heart of the Diocese and all it's coming's and going's, to enjoy the hospitality provided by Emily, Siteri and Aunty Amy. It was great to be able to put faces to names that I have only emailed in the past and now I have smiles and voices to go with them, to hug old friends and acquaintances that I met when I worked at St John's Theological College and from past Women's Studies hui, and to be inspired by projects that they have under way has left me feeling very fulfilled and hopeful for the future of women in ministry.

Te Pihopatanga o Aotearoa Kahui Wahine Runanganui



By Revd Mere Wallace

Navara Resort, Gold Coast, Australia
6-8 June 2014

For the first time in 25 years, Kahui Wahine met outside of Aotearoa New Zealand for its National Kahui Wahine Hui. The destination of the Gold Coast fitted the theme based around the **Great Migration** perfectly and around 180 women from across Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand journeyed there. The migratory theme is relevant to many of our Maori people who over many generations have exercised their right to move out of their tribal areas to places further afield. It is a well walked pathway and has many of its origins based on biblical ancestry and whakapapa. As kahui wahine we were able to relate to life in foreign places. Our hosts, *Kahui Wahine o Piripane (Brisbane Maori Anglican Women's Group)*, challenged us to reflect on our own journey and place ourselves as 'people on the move'.

Each of the five hui amorangi within Te Pihopatanga offered a presentation and keeping the tradition of Kahui Wahine Runanganui, many were presented as drama skits and also in song. My hui amorangi, Te Waipounamu looked at the migration patterns of each generation in our presentation:

Generation A: Ancestral Migration—Te Hikoi o nga Tipuna

Abraham's migration from his homeland (Te Ahi Kaa) to a foreign land is recorded in Genesis 12: 1-2 *The Lord said to Abraham: 'Leave your country, your relatives, your father's home and go to a land that I am going to show you. I will give you many descendants, and they will become a great nation. I will bless you and make your name famous, so that you will be a blessing.'*

Mai ranoa, our tipuna, were migratory people. If you were to ask them "No hea koe", 'Where did you come from?', they would say "I anga mai ahau i Hawaiiiki nui Hawaiiiki pamaroa". 'I come from the great Hawaiiiki, the long Hawaiiiki, the very distant Hawaiiiki'.

Upon arrival in Aotearoa New Zealand, our ancestors surveyed the land and established their maara kai, their kainga and their whanau whanui. This became their Ahi kaa.

Generation B: Country to City

With the coming of the colonisers bringing their developments to urban areas, the industries and economic stability of the rural ahi kaa sectors deteriorated. This has a major effect on

the lives of our rural whanau. Many had no choice but to seek sustenance and a living in the cities and in so doing an exposure to a foreign culture of individuality.

Generation C: The Hikoi from Urban to e Wahi

Many of our people were soon on the move again as a result of the impact of global economic changes and many found themselves with no employment and little or no means of providing the basic necessities for their whanau. Often having to leave their relatives and loved ones to go where opportunities beckoned, they soon became aware that once they had left their turangawaewae a Tangata Whenua, they now had become Manuhiri in a foreign land Te Whenua moemoea.

Generation D: Te Hokinga Mai the Karanga to Return to our Roots

For many of our people the impact of environmental changes and the loss of tikanga, whanaungatanga and wairuatanga has been a great rift. For others this awareness of loss has been a spiritual awakening, a hunger from within to know who we are, where we come from and a longing to learn our tikanga and reo which Te Atua has gifted us. Our karanga to you our Taa wahi whanau.

A PRAYER FROM US OF TE HAU KAINGA

Kaua e wareware
Hoki Mai Ki te Kohatu i Haua mai ai koutou i te Atua
Do not forget to return to the rock our God from whence you were hewn.
Ki Nga Maunga Tapu a Matua Tupuna.
To the scared mountains of your ancestors.
Nga awa wai hoki i unumia koutou.
To the scared waters that quenches your thirst.
No reira e te whanau ka nui te mihi, ka nui te aroha, kia kaha koutou, tatau katoa hoki i roto i te karaiti, me ki penei pea te korero.
Ma Te Atua tatou Katoa e manaaki e tiaki i nga wa katoa.

Being in a foreign land we had the opportunity to learn from our hosts what life is like for many of our whanau in Queensland, Australia. The Gold Coast has the highest concentration of New Zealanders and over 48,000 Queenslanders have identified themselves as being of Maori ancestry. Vicky Rose from *Neranga Neighbourhood Centre* told us that "50% mahi is for New Zealand citizens who do not qualify for federal support or

relief". The Centre provides support by way of food parcels to anyone who needs them. There are 23,000 kiwis in *Te Kupeka o Tahu* alone, and the centre's four paid staff relies on lots of volunteer support to meet the needs of the community. New Zealanders have long enjoyed the ease of trans-Tasman travel and are eligible to apply for a SCV (Special Category Visa) for permanent residency. Unfortunately there have been many modifications to SCV's over the years and those issued since February 2001 are regarded as non-protected SCV holders and are ineligible for benefits and government assistance or support despite their contributions over the years. The reality for rangatahi when they leave school in Australia is that they are ineligible for unemployment benefits, student loans and there

is often ongoing education issues.

As our President of Te Kahui Wahine Mihi Turei says "The Great Migration was about whanau getting together, rediscovering their whakapapa, being connected in body, spirit and prayer", which sums up this time together perfectly.

The Mission Statement across the five Amorangi has been:

*Proclaim the good news of the Gospel
Teach, baptise and nurture new believers
Respond to human needs by loving service
Seek and transform unjust structures of society
Preserve and care for our world*

The Anglican Women's Studies Centre presents the

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As We Remember Lynda



Photo: Anglican Taonga

The Anglican Church lost a great Taonga when The Very Revd Lynda Patterson, Dean of Christchurch's Transitional Cathedral passed away unexpectedly last month.

I am grief stricken at her loss to us all. Lynda was one of the finest theological thinkers in our church and yet was never fully recognised as she so deserved to be. Her own personal humility and profound depth of faith were ultimately her most impressive gift to those of us so proud and privileged to be called as her friends.

Dr Jenny Te Paa Daniel—former Convenor of the Council for WSC

Ue lei, It is a privilege to join you my sisters in remembering with much fond memories this great woman of God who was a role model to those that shared in her life and especially her wisdom as well as spiritual guidance. May she rest in peace and rise again in glory.

Revd Tai Tuatagaloa—former Tikanga Polynesian Councillor for WSC

Thank you for your panui and those shared tributes to a blessed gift such as Lynda.

Revd Haane Porter

Lynda was truly a taonga for the Anglican Church.

Revd Moana Hall-Smith

Such devastating news. I loved her sense of humour and I remember vividly how she led us in Te Reo for the closing liturgy at the Treasuring Women in Ministry hui in 2012. What an accent, and pronunciation was fluid and impressive. She always led seminars as thought provoking with depth but no outside the understandn of her audience—sensitive always. She is such a loss to the women's network with her theological knowledge, laced with humanity, humour and insight. I have a huge respect for Lynda and her gift to us all—especially the women in Christchurch.

Jenny Campbell—WSC Link Dunedin Representative

Grounding the Sacred through Literature and the Arts Conference

Thursday 23 July – Sunday 26 July 2015 inclusive
Australian Catholic University,
25A Barker Road, Strathfield NSW 2135, Australia

Grounding the Sacred is the third in a series of conferences presented by The Sacred in Literature and the Arts (SLA), a community of interest that brings Australian and international writers, artists, musicians, academics, religious and members of the general public together to discuss the interplay between the arts and the sacred.

Call for Papers and Presentations

'The sacred' is a term we often use when we want to talk about God, about worship, and about the mystery that defies naming but which has the power to transform our understanding of life.

The *Grounding the Sacred* conference asks how literature and the arts can make the sacred tangible: are they a conduit between the divine and the everyday, a means of enabling us to touch the sacred? Do the arts offer a way of structuring – earthing – our experiences of the sacred? Do they provide a common ground for people of different faiths – or maybe none – to explore the ineffable? And where does creativity sit in relation to religion and the search for meaning? Are a sense of the sacred and the means to express it essential for human flourishing?

Abstracts of 250 words are invited for 20-minute papers and presentations that address the conference theme. They may be from artists talking about their work as it expresses the sacred; from researchers seeking to explain the

relationship between creativity, religion and well-being; and from interpreters bringing to light the sacred dimensions of pre-existing creative works. **Abstracts** should be sent to Elaine Lindsay at SLAConference@acu.edu.au by **27 February 2015**, using the subject header 'SLA 2015 abstract'. Submissions should include the author's name, affiliation, email address, title of abstract, body of abstract, and a short biography. Acceptances should be advised by 10 April 2015.

Selected conference contributors may be invited to expand upon their work for a special 2016 Australian edition of the Oxford journal *Literature and Theology*, <http://litthe.oxfordjournals.org/> which will be edited by Michael Griffith and Elaine Lindsay. Presenters who wish to have their work considered for inclusion should forward their **full papers** to SLAConference@acu.edu.au by 13 March 2015, using the subject header 'L&T 2016 paper'. Please follow the journal's instructions on formatting, to be found on its website.

Full details of the conference, including conference registration, are being updated on <http://www.acu.edu.au/groundingthesacred>. Inquiries can also be directed to the conveners, Associate Professor Michael Griffith (Michael.griffith@acu.edu.au) and Dr Elaine Lindsay (Elaine.lindsay@acu.edu.au), Faculty of Education and Arts, Australian Catholic University. *Grounding the Sacred* is part of ACU's 25th anniversary celebrations in 2015.

The Centre for Anglican Women's Studies (WSC)

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The Centre for Anglican Women's Studies, commonly known as the **Women's Studies Centre** was set up to serve and to advance the interests and needs of the women of this Church particularly those undertaking Theological training.

"Church, Women & Leading?"

29 Sept-1 Oct 2014

The Link Representatives from each Diocese and Hui Amorangi have been chosen for their leadership ability to identify, gather, facilitate, resource and encourage women in their educational preparation for ministry whether lay or ordained. It is hoped that the Women's Studies Centre can continue to enjoy the support of each Diocese and Hui Amorangi in this endeavour.

The issue of increasing numbers of women in representative positions across the councils and committees of the Church is seen as a high priority and the practice of intentional mentoring by those already in national and international representative roles is seen as a good way to expose women of this church to fulfill their potential as leaders.

Ensuring that women's voices and stories are heard now and in the future is also one of our continued aims whether it be by traditional methods of publication or using more contemporary technologies like website publication. We remain optimistic that through continued support, the needs of women throughout this Province will be valued and recognized.



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EDITORIAL DISCLAIMER: The Women's Studies Centre is committed to encouraging and enabling women's voices and perspectives from across the diversity of the Church to be shared more widely. We acknowledge that women's experiences of church differ considerably and that resultant theological perspectives also differ considerably. In general the WSC does not exercise editorial control, rather we welcome as many voices as are willing to contribute.