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Anglican Women's Studies Centre

Remember the Fall?

By Revd Annette Cater



Create in me a clean heart O God. And renew a right spirit within me – Psalm 51:10

This morning I got to watch my fearless daughter playing at the park. While using my mochaccino as a security blanket substitute, I watch horrified as she climbs and jumps and risks herself repeatedly. My heart pounding as she succeeds, smiles triumphant and does it again. When did my 3 ½ year old get braver than me?

Well, that's what being 3 ½ years old gets you. So far there hasn't been any experiences to contradict her risk taking. All she knows is the thrill of trying and succeeding. Long may that be her world.

Because it is my world no longer. No, I haven't fallen from the heady heights of a climbing wall, but I have been knocked around by

the jungle gym we call the Anglican Church. And it has left bruises, bumps and given me a wariness that was never part of the plan. My heart is clean no longer and my spirit seems to have been "gunked" up too.

When I consider what the biggest challenge facing women leading into the future, I call to mind the challenge of vulnerability. Of being willing to be open, and loving and brave time and again. Even while knowing that it's not always going to pay off. Sometimes you will get sucker punched. Sometimes you will be the last one picked for the team. And yes, sometimes you will even be told that you are "just not a good fit for this playground". And you'll see their vindicated smiles as you run off crying to your mummy.



If you think my metaphor is childish, its meant to be. I have seen some awful casualties of the changing landscape of the institutional church. Many of them friends. Not all of them women. To be frank, it makes me want to find the person in charge and take a piece off them. Mama bear styles.

Look, I get it. I know that Christendom is well past its use by date. And we need to figure out new ways of doing things. And that means that it’s going to suck if you were called to the old paradigm and are not ready for the new one. So what are we doing to name that? Because its not okay to yell “the rules have changed!” and then go tackling people for no good reason. And if they complain just respond with a shrug and move on to the next sucker. I wouldn’t let my daughter behave like that, so why are we?

The question this raises for leaders is: how do we risk being vulnerable when we know that it’s going to hurt as often as it thrills? If I can’t stop the tackling; how to I train to handle it better? Or to recruit friends to see a tackle coming and join forces yelling “defence!!!!!!”

Going back to the playground for a moment, if I was dirty or sore from a fall I would run home. And there would be a hug, and some cake and kind and loving words. I would fill up my love-tank and be ready to play another day. I would believe the promise they gave me that its worth trying again because imagine what we can do if we keep stretching and growing? And they would shout encouragement and share in my accomplishments to the point that I’d mostly forget the pain and even be able to see it as growth.

Come to think about it, they also encouraged me to hang out with good friends – just saying.

God knows. God has the eternal patent on being a parent. On loving and defending and letting us take risks – and then hugging us and giving us cake as we cry over our wounds. Then celebrating with us as we bravely go out and risk it again. And putting good people on our team. And, yeah, even going Ma-ma Bear a bit too.

To all of you who have grimy hearts and sludged up spirits, Arohanui. It really hurts, and it really sucks. But please hear me when I say that the playground wouldn’t be the same without you. So, eat cake, get hugs and words of encouragement then come back and play. I need you. And so does everyone else – even it when it doesn’t seem like they do.

In the beginning, God created the playground and everything in it. And God said, “It is good!” So much so, I will let my Son come and play in it too. No matter what.

Be brave. Be vulnerable. Kia Kaha.

Holy Saturday



Poor Holy Saturday,
hung out to dry between
Good Friday's drama
and Easter's miracle.

Not much going for it,
this empty day bereft of tradition,
just an in between time.
A day of waiting around,
a day of thinking we knew.

Welcome home.

This is the day we live most of our life in,
the wide space between tragedy and recovery,
the emptiness between the pain
and the healing.

We don't always know we're waiting
for something not in our hands,
that has already happened,
unknowingly included in a procession
toward someone who's already here.
Only later, not on this day, do we know
we're not waiting for a future;
we're watching God unfold.

That is enough.
That is why this day,
drab and ordinary,
is holy.

Anon.

This article is dedicated to all you brave friends who have shared your stories with me. I couldn't take the muck away, but I love you fiercely anyway. I will play in the playground with you anytime you want.



Haere Ra, Bishop Victoria



*By The Ven Canon Helen Roud
AWSC Tikanga Pakeha Co-Councillor*

Bishop Victoria Matthews and The Ven Canon Helen Roud at Helen’s at a Transitional Cathedral evensong

The Right Reverend Victoria Matthews, Bishop of Christchurch - discerning God’s call to lay down her current position of leadership - concludes her episcopal ministry in the Christchurch diocese of our Province on 1st May after nearly ten years of faithful, sacrificial servanthood. Her prayerful devotion to God, pastoral heart, humour and wise, Spirit-led direction have shepherded the people of that diocese through truly extraordinary times (‘earthquakes; wind, fire and floods to name a few’). In a diocese expressing diverse theological convictions, and a region left traumatised and grieving post-quakes, Bishop Victoria has led with fortitude, respect and grace.

Bishop Victoria will leave a legacy of ‘greening the Church’ through her strong encouragement of young leaders – both lay

and ordained, female and male. She has been constant in her call to grow disciples and passionate in her concern for the mental health and well-being of all people and particularly young people. She has enabled social justice and advocacy initiatives to grow, along with a continued commitment to social service ministries.

Beyond the Diocese of Christchurch, Bishop Victoria currently serves both our Province – on St. John’s Theological College Governance Board, Te Kaunihera - and the wider Anglican Communion (as a member of the Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Unity Faith and Order) and has spoken out on issues of gender justice.

Over the years, the Anglican Women’s Studies Centre has been honoured by her support which included her speaking at an AWSC Link Representative gathering some years ago as well as contributing to two AWSC publications by writing a promotional piece for the back cover of our *Leaders Like Lydia* book and a chapter entitled “Spirituality and the Office of Bishop” for the book *Vashti’s Banquet – Voices from her Feast* marking Bishop Penny Jamieson’s 25 years as a Diocesan Bishop.

We give thanks for Bishop Victoria’s ministry of courageous leadership and pray for her as she discerns God’s next call on her life.

International Women’s Day— 8th March 2018

*By Kelera (Nai) Cokanasiga
AWSC Tikanga Polynesia Co-Councillor*

FRIEND (Foundation for Rural Integrated Enterprises & Development) is a NGO based in Tuvu, Lautoka in Fiji where Nai Cokanasiga, AWSC tikanga Polynesian Co-Councillor works as the Human Resource Manager and Staff Counsellor at FRIEND overseeing 56 staff based in the FRIEND headquarters based in Tuvu, Lautoka in Fiji. Her mission is for all staff to have a free





Kelera Cokanasiga receiving a lei from Eremaya Ratawa at FRIEND as part of their International Women's Day celebrations

and healthy work relationships within the FRIEND organisation, environment and link into their family and the communities which they call home. So Nai thought it was an excellent opportunity to empower and encourage the male staff to organise the celebrations for International Women's Day at FRIEND, to demonstrate to their female co-workers and communities that they care and do value the life and contribution of the women in their lives. The celebration also provided a platform for women to speak about their own needs and development in their community like access to clean water, roads and infrastructure, education, electricity and agriculture. Each speaker had 10-15 minutes to talk about issues that affected them and how this impacted on their hopes and aspirations. The men provided some entertainment doing a few skits before serving a cassava cake with cool tamarin juice sweetened with local honey and the local Indian community cooked rice and curry chicken for the shared lunch which was enjoyed by all. As is typical in the friendly islands of Fiji, the celebration ended with music, song and dancing.

FRIEND fosters a variety of homegrown social enterprises initiatives working towards poverty alleviation through sustainable development programmes. The aim is to empower families around Fiji to improve their social economic and health status so that everyone can enjoy a sustainable livelihood through linking resources to opportunities and where communities take ownership and responsibilities for their own development. FRIEND was originally established by Director and Founder Ms Sashi Kiran in 2000 in the aftermath of the second coup in Fiji to cater for women in the Western Division of Fiji who lost their jobs because of the closures of factories and stores after the coup. Now these women have the opportunity to grow and sell their produce under the *FRIEND Fiji Style* label which includes jams, pickles, chutneys as well as cassava, taro, breadfruit and banana chips. Another addition to the organi-

sation is the restaurant in Lautoka called *Tukuni* which serves only local cuisine made from the organic vegetables supplied by local farmers trained by FRIEND in another joint venture with four other programmes called GROW = Agriculture, Governance, Medical, Training & Production. Buoyed by the success of these programmes, FRIEND is now establishing a base in Labasa, in the Eastern Province of Fiji.

This is like a 'coming home' transition for her as Nai first worked for FRIEND from 2005-2009 as Programme Manager delivering the 'Restorative Justice' workshops to a core group of 25 prison inmates at Lautoka Prison before accompanying her late husband, Revd Mataiasi Cokanasiga to St John's Theological College in Auckland for his theological studies. On her return to Fiji in 2012, Nai had a 6-month contract with FRIEND working for the Youth Employment Network which delivered the Sugar Cane Farmers Children's Scholarship, a joint venture between FRIEND and the University of the South Pacific and funded by the European Union. She then moved to Suva with her family to continue her ministry partnership with her husband and became involved with the Diocese of Polynesia's *House of Sarah* where her training as a social worker with pastoral care skills and Counsellor provided a depth of understanding of the issues and dynamics involved in violence against women. All her 21 years of experience as National Health Coordinator for the Fijian Red Cross Society has also helped her support the staff of FRIEND in their endeavour to provide holistic programmes overseeing training for farmers, breaking the cycle of re-offending for released prisoners, or promoting organic farming techniques and diet and exercise, trying to reduce rising Diabetes rates (currently 20 amputations occur daily in Fiji due to Diabetes). Nai says, 'Working for FRIEND gives me great pleasure. To be in touch with the local communities, to teach, advise, care and protect people, to help them improve their lives through healthy living and life styles. Having healthier people of Fiji, that too is part of my mission. I also do a lot of counselling too on domestic violence, as most of our women and men are going through these problems in their communities and lives and you can see that FRIEND is taking a holistic approach to people's lives. Just this morning I gathered all our staff in the conference room to talk about Easter which I called the 'Road to Easter' to give them an opportunity for reflections on their lives and be prepared to rise again with Christ on Easter Sunday. These morning reflections will go on till Maundy Thursday for 15-20 minutes before they are dispatched for work. This is the first time it is happening as we're all of mixed race, religion and beliefs, this is my mission and to witness Christ wherever I am'.





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The Centre for Anglican Women’s Studies, commonly known as the Anglican 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.

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 Anglican 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 fulfil 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 web 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 Anglican 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 AWSC does not exercise editorial control, rather we welcome as many voices as are willing to contribute.