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Anglican Women's Studies Centre

Following Ruth's Example

By Revd Vicki Terrell



At the recent Treasuring Women in Ministry hui organised by the Women's Studies Centre, the Dean of Christchurch Cathedral, Revd Lynda Patterson presented a bible studies session on Ruth and Naomi: Ruth 1:1-19. Revd Vicki Terrell offers her reflection on this session and shares her story which will resonate with many women in ministry.

At the *Treasuring Women in Ministry* hui we did a biblical reflection on Ruth chapter 1. We were asked to name the character we most identified with. I found myself identifying with Ruth and Naomi being the church, Ruth clung to Naomi and would not let go, even though Naomi urged her to go back to her people. Ruth declared her loyalty and love to Naomi. Ruth said that she would go where Naomi goes, lodge where Naomi lodged; Naomi's people would be her people; Naomi's God would be her God and where Naomi dies, Ruth will die.

Having completed my first ministry placement I am looking for a position within church. This is not easy as I have a speech impairment. Some in the church are saying that it is unlikely that I'll find a position in stipendiary ministry and are encouraging me to apply for secular employment. However, like Ruth I am committed to the church and am not prepared to give up - yet! The church has recognised that I have call to the priesthood and has ordained me. The path is insecure, I walk in faith knowing that God calls me.

Doing this reflection I was surprised how strongly I feel about staying within the church, for like Ruth, I love and am loyal to the church. The church has nurtured and upheld me throughout life and I want to use the gifts and talents God has given me within the church.

I think a lot of "uppity" women in the church have had this attitude. When the church has wished we would go away we have held on believing that God's call to us is to be in the church. At times this is uncomfortable and we may only be holding on in by our fingertips. It is God's love and loyalty that enables us to love and be loyal to the church who at times seems to want us to go away because we are too much of a challenge. However, we are in good company with Ruth, the prophets and Jesus both didn't go away rather hung around for the sake of others! Often God uses uppity people who are difficult to get her message across.

Part of *Treasuring Women in Ministry* is hearing and honouring the story of women who love and who are loyal to the church even when the church may find it uncomfortable to have them round. It is often these women who pave the way for others to be accepted in the church.

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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.

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.*