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Looking Back...

By Karena de Pont



November 2009—Taking a break from our Strategic Planning Session

As with many bright ideas, the Anglican Women's Studies Centre was born out of wishful thinking; the wish for more women leaders throughout our Province who were adequately resourced and mentored, who could represent us on the world stage and within our Province with integrity and intelligence. The women leaders we had at the time were well aware that theirs was a lonely place and wanted to have more 'sisters' standing alongside them that could speak into a three tikanga or international context with confidence from a scholastically theological position. Who would join them or follow in their footsteps to be the future women leaders of this church?

It was to this end that the first motion on women in theological education was originally submitted by Dr Jenny Te Paa to the General Synod in 2004. It was intended to specifically address the need for access to all levels of theological education for women and to ensure adequate and realistic levels of support for those already in theological education, especially for those not based at St

John's College. But it wasn't until the 2006 General Synod that Dr Jenny Te Paa's Bill No. 11 was passed without amendment that led to the establishment of the Council for Anglican Women's Studies.

Dr Jenny Te Paa became the first Convenor and Tikanga Maori Councillor for the Women's Studies Centre Council and through her role as Ahorangi for Te Rau Kahikatea, St John's College, I first became involved as her PA in helping her and the Council start the work of the Women's Studies Centre. As this was a General Synod initiative rather than a St John's College initiative, it was agreed early on that the Centre would not be a "centre" - a physical place but rather a network, although the College has played and continues to play a significant role in providing a venue for many of our hui.

As a three tikanga initiative, the Synod endorsed the recommendation of two representatives from each Tikanga forming the governing Council



Jenny Dawson leads the discussion while Tai Tuatagaloa, Ema Hala'api'api and Jenny Te Paa look on (2009)

tives along with other invited women in the early years, all had a strategic planning or visioning focus coupled with Bible Studies. These were necessary first steps to ensure that we had a clear direction of how and why we work together as a three tikanga common life body.

In February 2011, the General Synod on behalf of the Council asked that I become their part-time administrator. Up to this point, I had assumed the tasks associated with this role within my position at St John's College but this was no longer appropriate with the structural changes occurring at the College. Since that time the Council has been able to offer a dedicated hui for women in ministry within this Province. Each hui has been tailored for a particular niche; Pastor & Prophet—Women in Ordained Ministry (2011), Treasuring Women in Ministry (2012) and Leaders Like Lydia (2013).

One of the main factors to the success of these hui has been the congeniality of the three tikanga model that has been established. There is a real appreciation of the richness that comes with inter-tikanga relationships. We have at times also extended invitations to representatives of Kahui Wahine, Mother's Union and AAW to participate in WSC events as we understand

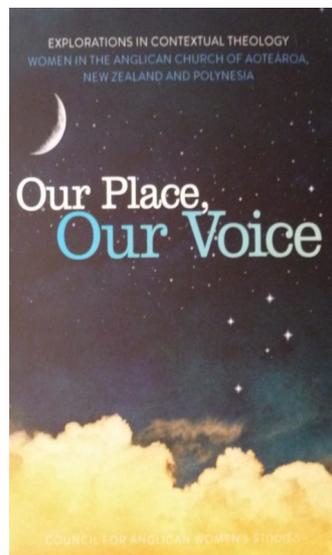
and a Link Representative from each Diocese and Hui Amorangi as the foundation stones for our network within the Province. Along with Dr Jenny Te Paa, the other foundation Council members included Revd Cecilia Rooderkerk (Tikanga Maori), Revd Jenny Dawson and Revd Carole Hughes (Tikanga Pakeha), Revd Amy Chambers and Revd Tai Tuatagaloa (Tikanga Pasefika).

Through the groundwork of Dr Jenny Te Paa and Revd Tai Tuatagaloa, the Council and Links have a real understanding of how the WSC fits into the global infrastructure of the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) through its ties to the International Anglican Women's Network (IAWN) which Revd Tai Tuatagaloa helped revive during her tenure as Anglican Observer to the United Nations. Our relationship with IAWN continues to grow through the work of our current Link Representative to IAWN and WSC Convenor, The Venerable Carole Hughes and we were happy to welcome members of the IAWN Steering Committee to New Zealand prior to ACC2012 at a special dinner at Vaughan Park last year. It was a great opportunity to meet first hand some of the women who we have networked via email over the years.

In October 2007, the Council first hosted a small gathering of women at Tuia, General Synod Office for a two day meeting. It was at this meeting that the cornerstones of the kaupapa of our Centre were formed and which guide us to this day in:

- ⇒ Advocacy
- ⇒ Networking
- ⇒ Publishing
- ⇒ Leadership
- ⇒ Teaching
- ⇒ Scholarships
- ⇒ Mentoring
- ⇒ Accountability Processes

Following on from this first meeting the subsequent meetings of the Council and Diocesan and Hui Amorangi Link Representa-



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that Anglican women in ministry encompasses many areas and have something of value to contribute to our wider discussions.

The Council still strives to encourage women from within this Province to put themselves forward for governing and leadership roles within our Diocese's and Hui Amorangi. Unfortunately, there is still a lot of work to do in this area as was evident in the findings from our Gender Representation Survey taken last year (see *March 2013 newsletter*).

In the past there has been some criticism for being 'elitist' in our endeavours to mentor women scholars through exposure to international conferences but I often wonder that unless women receive these experiences and support, then will we ever be in the position to confidently recruit from within our shared shores? Where are our future church leaders coming from and what qualifications and experiences are they going to bring to

their roles? These are questions that the Council still endeavours to respond to.

Rather than taking 'three tikanga turns' to prove or justify equality—the Council looks at shared ways of doing things together to ensure equality, respect and genuine support across tikanga as needs arise. This kaupapa means that you always have to be prepared to step forward to help rather than 'sit back' waiting your turn—it is a more active response to need.

However, it is clear that tikanga differences matter less than our commonality and that the common life Anglican Women's Studies Centre is well placed to be a beacon of common life hope for us all to look forward to. Women's voices are needed in leadership more than ever and now, together with your continued support, we have the opportunity, the responsibility and the resources to ensure that this happens.

Leaders like Lydia

Leaders like Lydia are not confined they

Meet outside

They are not afraid to begin again or

To invite

Strangers to join them and engage together

In conversation

Or to ask them to come home to learn and share

Extended hospitality



Lydia and women like her know

Their place

That their authority is wide and beyond any

Save God

These are the ones who not seeking recognition

Are recognised

On the outside and most often from

A distance

Lydia is in the coffee houses in Mount Maunganui

And Gisborne

She serves in the chemist in Woodville, sips wine among vines

In Napier

She walks the streets of Flaxmere and Taupo

Hearing stories

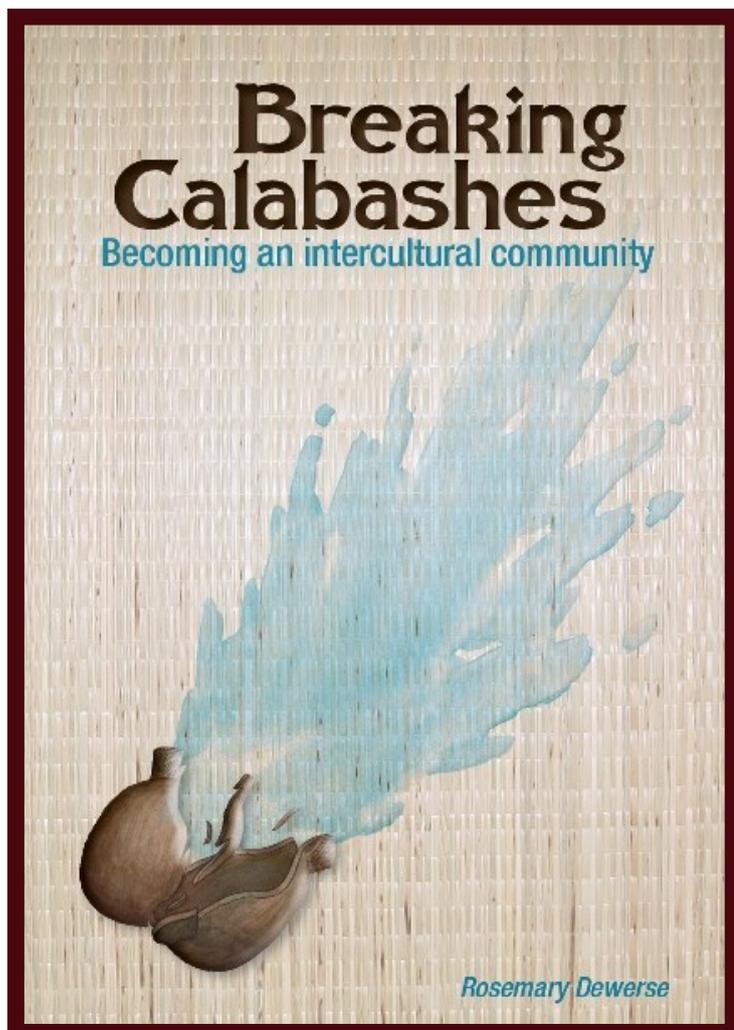
Telling stories weaving them lightly into garments of freedom:

And hope

Book Review:

Breaking Calabashes:

Becoming an Intercultural Community



Rosemary Dewerse's *Breaking Calabashes: Becoming an Intercultural Community* is a new book offering practical ways to break our assumptions about others in the interests of becoming communities in which all are genuinely valued and included. Drawing strongly from its Oceanic context, the book includes questions for individual reflection and an accompanying Leader's Guide for those who would like to grapple with the book in a group setting.

What others are saying:

This is a readable and stimulating book, full of intriguing stories on how we can live together more kindly in our world. I found this book to be inspiring, provocative and practical in its emphasis on how we



Dr Rosemary Dewerse

can make a difference if we are willing to break our own sacred calabashes for the sake of the other.

Cathy Ross, Kiwi Anglican missiologist based in the UK
General Secretary of the
International Association of Mission Studies

Rosemary offers up a superbly timely literary taonga for all who would care to see God's gloriously created human diversity genuinely understood, celebrated, embraced. Her writing is warmly invitational even as it challenges; it is beautifully theologically nuanced even as it is perfectly grounded in contemporary sociological reality. Rosemary writes as she speaks and she speaks as she feels so passionately; always with an eye for God's justice. She teaches determinedly throughout her book about practical and achievable ways of ensuring that all are ultimately invited and fully enabled to be authentically and justly, 'members of the household of God.'

Jenny Te-Paa Daniels, Maori Research Fellow
National Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies
Otago University

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The Centre for Anglican Women's Studies (WSC)

Karena de Pont, Administrator

Email: anglicanwomenstudies@gmail.com or anglican.wsc@clear.net.nz

Home Office Phone: + 64 9 422-0102 Cell Phone: 027 631-3083

General Synod Office Phone: + 64 9 521-4439

Postal: General Synod Office, P O Box 87-188, Meadowbank, Auckland 1742, New Zealand



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.



Women's Studies Centre Council Members — 2012/2014

TIKANGA MAORI -

- Revd Mere Wallace
mere.wallace@westcoastdhb.org.nz
- Revd Numia Tomoana (alternate)
numia_5@hotmail.com

TIKANGA POLYNESIA -

- Revd C. Amy Chambers
mumsy@connect.com.fj
- Revd Brenda Sio
brendareedsio@gmail.com

TIKANGA PAKEHA

- Revd Erice Fairbrother
ecfairbrother@waiapu.com
- Revd Carole Hughes (Convenor)
carolesunrise@xtra.co.nz

Women's Studies Centre Diocesan & Hui Amorangi Link Representatives

Diocese of Auckland -

- Revd Nyasha Gumbeze
tamarisk1999@yahoo.co.nz

Diocese of Christchurch -

- Revd Megan Herles-Mooar
MegHM@gmx.com

Diocese of Dunedin

- Jenny Campbell
jennycam@xtra.co.nz

Diocese of Nelson

- Revd Dr Sue Patterson
registrar@bishopdale.ac.nz

Diocese of Waiapu

- Revd Oenone Woodhams
oenone@waiapu.com

Diocese of Waikato & Taranaki

- The Jacqui Paterson
craeqd@xtra.co.nz

Diocese of Wellington

- Revd Jenny Chalmers
jenny@clear.net.nz

Diocese of Polynesia

- Refer to Tikanga Polynesia Councilors
(see above)

Hui Amorangi o te Tairawhiti

- Ruihana Paenga (alternate)
ruihana@tairawhiti.org.nz

Hui Amorangi o te Tai Tokerau

- Revd Jenny Quince
quincemail@xtra.co.nz

Hui Amorangi o te Manawa o te Wheke

- Revd Lyn Toki
lyntoki@yahoo.com

Hui Amorangi o te Upoko o te Ika

- Revd Leonie Joseph
raulee04@xtra.co.nz

Hui Amorangi o te Waipounamu

- Revd Mere Wallace
mere.wallace@westcoastdhb.org.nz

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.