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GENERAL SYNOD 2014: Equal Representation for Women & Men

By Archdeacon Carole Hughes

Photos supplied by Julianne Clarke-Morris / Taonga



Archdeacon Carole Hughes, Council Convenor of the Anglican Women's Studies Centre introduces the motion to Synod calling for equal representation within Church governance

Mr President, members of Synod, Guests and all who gather in this place, Kia ora, Bula Vinaka, Greetings...

I stand here to speak to Motion No. 16 entitled 'Equal Representation for Women and Men'.

Here we go again some of you might be thinking. I certainly am! And you may be wondering why I am making a statement at all about gender representation in our Church. Because as well as having

many great men in leadership we have two women bishops, women deans, we have many women in senior positions in the church including my own role, we have many, many, awesome women priests and deacons in this province and we have lay and ordained women leading in educational roles, a huge number of women leading groups, parish rosters and the list could go on and on. We have a three tikanga Women's Studies Council that this body, General Synod Te Hinota Whanui,

initiated to promote women in leadership, and theological education. Hopefully most of you have seen our publications (books and magazines), and are familiar with our hui gatherings, and mentoring opportunities.



Revd Wendy Scott

So why am I bringing this resolution to you today? As many of you know I am the Convenor of the General Synod Council for Anglican Women's Studies, and one of the roles of the Council that we have been invited to do by this body is to monitor women's participation in the church and more particularly our provincial and diocesan gatherings, liturgies and meetings. Now I want to say that this is not a fun role – I am definitely not called to be a 'police' woman; I don't want to be. And it is probably not very nice to feel that someone, or some group, is monitoring or policing you either.

So why have we been asked to do this task? Why is there a need to monitor gender representation in our church? Why am I standing here today? Well, to begin with the General Synod Standing Committee recently received the Women's Council survey on *Gender Representation in Leadership* across our province and particularly in our three tikanga councils and meetings. (Please refer to the *Anglican WSC Newsletter March 2013, Vol.3/Issue 2* on www.anglican.org.nz)

This is not good news! The summary is that only one council out of 28 had a woman as Convenor and that was Women's Studies! And that is still the case as from today. I want to be clear that I am talking about one woman and 27 men who convene our provincial councils and commissions. And the total number of women on each council is significantly less than men – you can see in the survey results that the numbers speak for themselves. What does this say to us? What is this saying to our wider church whanau and more particularly what are we modelling to the young women

and men in our midst, who are being formed by our leadership and the role models we are offering? How can we be honest with ourselves and honour our resolutions? Indeed have you all here today read the standing resolution I am referring to and do you understand its history and desire for implementation in our Church in Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia?

To make it 'real' I am now going to highlight a few of my personal experiences, some just in the last four months in our church – so it is very recent, not a story from the past.

The first experience reflects a huge omission on our part as a three tikanga Church who desire equal representation for women and men. At a recent large provincial liturgical gathering of our Province, there was an invisible group. And that group was the women clergy. There were no women priests from this land administering the Eucharist out of a total of 30 people, which included 26 men. There were only seven women priests in the sanctuary out of a total of 53, not including the choir and servers. There was only one women priest, and one women deacon involved in upfront leadership in the whole event, and they did a biblical reading each. There were lay women present liturgically, but ordained women were scarce. Now this was hosted by tikanga Pakeha so I need to own it as a senior tikanga pakeha woman priest whether I like it or not, and so I wish to publically apologise to all women clergy and to this body.



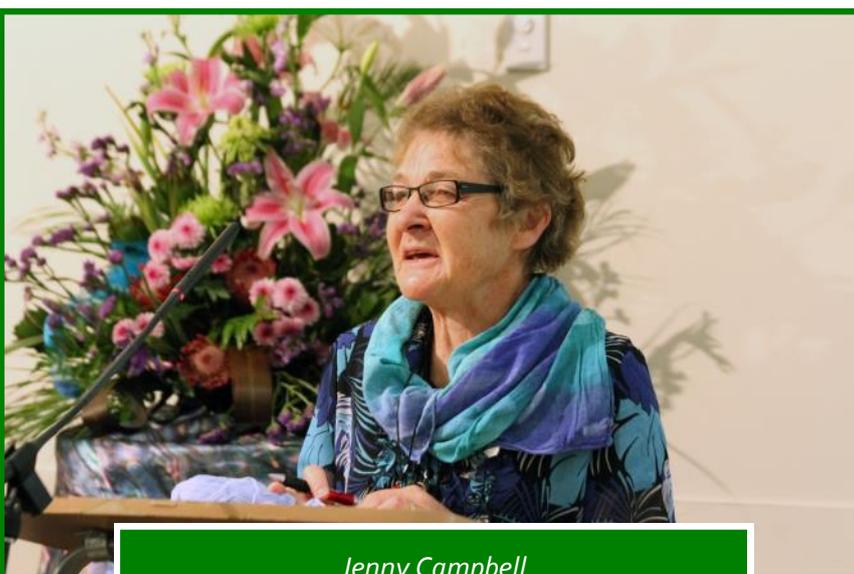
Revd Pane Kawhia

Why are we excluding our women in clerical leadership? When I was ten years old, I was told by a senior woman in my whanau that I could never offer Eucharist, as I was a girl. And this liturgy bought all those emotions of sadness to the surface again. But of course it is not about me, it is about a collective 'we'. If

it was just about me I would laugh and get over it, because that is what I often do. We all need to own it and address it. I must say though that when I alerted our tikanga Pakeha Archbishop he could not have been more responsive. He 'got' it. He got that excluding women priests at such significant events is a huge omission. It is in times like this that the church is very exposed to public critique. In fact our Archbishop Philip 'got it' to the point that he even offered to fly up the following week to talk to some of us women about it – not sure whether that was because he genuinely was shocked at the oversight, once it was pointed out to him, and he wanted to work out some positive ways forward or because he is scared of me – I am sure it was both! Kia ora, Archbishop Philip.

And I know from my conversations with women from other tikanga that our Archbishops are working really hard at not just including, but also encouraging, and resourcing, and building relationships with women in leadership. Archbishop Winston is doing some stunning work in Polynesia equipping and empowering women, and Archbishop Brown is encouraging women in tikanga Māori to the point that whenever the next bishopric comes up a woman will certainly be considered. But they need our help – all of us, the whole church. Our archbishops and our women clergy cannot do it alone.

The second recent experience may be regarded on the surface as trivial and good for a laugh, and to be honest I laughed about it too. I was publically introduced, not by name, but as the General Secretary Michael Hughes' wife, as was another



Jenny Campbell

senior women priest – not as Michael Hughes' wife, but someone else's wife!! It subtly, or actually not so subtly, models that it is ok for women leader's mana to be overlooked in our gatherings. Don't get me wrong, I love being married to Michael,

but I want to be acknowledged as Carole in this context and in all places when we gather as province and diocesan church.



Revd Jacynthia Murphy

The most important point here is: what are we modelling to our young women and men in training for ministry? Is it ok to laugh about it as I ended up doing, and in fact many people have joked with me since? Or do we need to challenge this subtle overlooking of women in leadership roles in our gatherings, even it is not meant that way or is done in genuine oversight which I think it was?

Other experiences involve me in my role as Archdeacon of central Auckland; I have some responsibility for 45 ministry units across Auckland city. And Bishop Ross is very conscious of how women can be overlooked and he does his very best to ensure this does not happen – half of the Episcopal team are women and I deeply value and enjoy working with him and them. Like every Hui Amorangi and Diocese many of our parishes and chaplaincies have inspirational men and women doing ministry in their local context. There are some places and people though, that when I lead a future directions consultation as a Parish looks for a new Vicar for example, think it is ok for all their references about their 'new vicar' to be solely masculine. "We want HIM to do this, and HIM to do that". And there are some places in our nations that still struggle with having a woman in the sanctuary.

And at the other end of the spectrum there are other places where the women are doing all the work, more particularly in small rural ministry units, because the ministry unit can no longer afford paid ministry. They have little status and recognition but they do the hard work, and often they

don't even get acknowledged let alone get to attend our diocesan and provincial events, and 'important' occasions.

Now don't get me wrong, we have come a long way but the struggle is still alive and well, and particularly when we as a church feel under threat – we go back to what we know and love – to the good old times without even knowing it sometimes! And women clergy particularly don't have a great story to tell about 'the good old times'.

To give an example, exclusive language for humanity and also for God has been an enormous step forward for us in our provincial church over many, many years. It is a fight way before my time – at least starting 35 years ago and may be more, and many of us believe that it has helped heighten the profile of women in this church and consequent leadership opportunities. And yet I am aware that some Bishops and clergy do not see it as a priority, or even important anymore. Now I fully understand why they don't, because there is more than enough to do. But actually many of us know that the language and the symbols we use deeply affect our theology and our sense of self worth. Language reflects what we think about each other. And if we use exclusive language then we exclude women in what we say, and then we actually start 'doing' it; excluding them in what we do. And we are doing just that, which is reflected in our survey and in our gatherings.

So my intention in highlighting and amending the resolution is for us to recommit to seeking equal representation of women and men in decision making at all levels - when electing or appointing representatives to governing and consultative bodies in this church and beyond (which is one out of eight United Nations Millennium Development goals), and amending it by adding the words, 'Further to this representation in decision making, equal representation in liturgical leadership and leadership of official gatherings of this Church is also a goal' is so that we will all know and own our best intentions, and seek to implement them in all we 'say' and 'do'.

Because I want my 14 year old daughter to say 'yes' there are many fabulous women role models in the church, as well as men, and 'yes' the potential is always there for women to offer Eucharist, make decisions, and be given mana in all gatherings, and particularly when we gather as Provincial and Diocesan Church.

But please do not support this motion unless you are committed to working towards 'living' it. Some have said to me, 'it is just how it is, it's reality' but if you don't think it is the ideal, then please affirm this motion.

Kia ora.

Motion on representation of Women to GSTHW 2014

Whereas, GSTHW in 2008 resolved SRO5:

Representation of Women (SR49)

The GSTHW encourages Tikanga and Episcopal, and parochial units to give effect to this goal, the Millennium Development Goal of equal representation of women and men in decision making at all levels - when electing or appointing representatives to governing and consultative bodies in this Church and beyond. (2008)

This GSTHW 2014:

Recommits to the goal stated in SRO5 of seeking equal representation of women and men in decision making at all levels - when electing or appointing representatives to governing and consultative bodies in this church and beyond, and

Amends said SRO5 by way of addition after the words 'Church and beyond.', the words, 'Further to this representation in decision making, equal representation in liturgical leadership and leadership of official gatherings of this Church is also a goal.'

PLEASE NOTE: The Anglican Women's Studies Centre intends to invite Diocese and Hui Amorangi to participate in another Gender Representation Survey in Leadership towards the end of the year as part of our bi-annual commitment to Te Kotahitanga and Synod. The results of this survey will once again be published in our newsletter after they have been lodged with Standing Committee.

Affirmation

By Revd Ann Drummond & Akanisi Tarabe

Photo: Revd Dr Eleanor Sanderson

We believe in the Creator God
Weaver of the cosmic mat of life
Who weaves together our varied gifts
Our disparate lives,
Our differing points of view.
Our changing world
In the mat of connective Love.

We believe in Christ Redeemer
Restorer of the damaged mat of life
Who reweaves the damaged warp and weft of our living,
Our broken relationships, our bruised bodies, our broken hearts
Our family conflicts, our community disputes, our world at war.
Re-weaving the mat of kinship with resurrection hope.

We believe in the ever present Spirit of God
Sustainer of the mat of life
Fragile, temporary, we hold together for today.
Tomorrow the winds, the rain, or human folly
May destroy the fragile mat
Reminded us – O God our Friend – that brokenness is a part of life,
But what is enduring is Your assurance
That You will re-weave the mat again, and again, and again
And Your promise
That our lives we will always be interwoven
With You, with each other and with all creation.
Amen.

*Inspired by last month's article on **Anglican Women at Prayer: Weaving the Bonds of Affection** conference by Revd Dr Eleanor Sanderson, Revd Ann Drummond and Akanisi Tarabe of the House of Sarah, Fiji Islands share this Affirmation they developed and used at their Ecumenical Service of Worship during the **16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence** last December.*

Family Violence & Faith Communities

By Revd Vicki Terrell

In late May, I attended a **Family Violence and Faith Communities Workshop** in Auckland for people working in the Family Violence Sector. It was hosted by Auckland City Council and the Ministry of Social Development's **It's Not OK!** campaign about stopping violence. The purpose of the workshop was to introduce some new resources for faith communities on family violence, and talk about how faith communities can be allies in addressing family violence.

The facilitator for the workshop was Kara Duncan-Hewitt. Kara has been working in this area for twenty years and offered a powerful presentation as she

Using faith, religious beliefs, mana etc. to justify the abuse. Misusing sacred writings, objects or sayings to hurt or control the person. Destroying/desecrating sacred items. Cursing. Controlling prayers. Making victim think God is against them.

introduced some resources specifically adapted for faith communities. Kara also shared examples from her own experience as a woman who had encountered family violence as a member of the faith community. She dealt with both the positive and negative sides of dealing with the issues being in faith communities.

There are many damaging beliefs that underlie a theology that has been warped through authority. Although all people are made in the image of God, the person who is abused may believe that they are not worthy of this. It is to challenge this warped belief and to help people to realise that they are made in the image of God and that being abused is not okay and neither is it their fault. Abusers need to be challenged about the inconsistencies between their faith and their own behaviours.

The abuse needs to be correctly named as abuse.

Along with other resources about Family Violence, Kara has developed a resource chart "Abuse and Control in Relationships: A resource for Faith Communities" (a very edited version of this chart is shown here). The chart is clear and concise and is useful reference for people to have. There was some good material taken from the Greater London Domestic Violence Project: www.avaproject.org.uk about theological issues relating to relationships, marriage, suffering

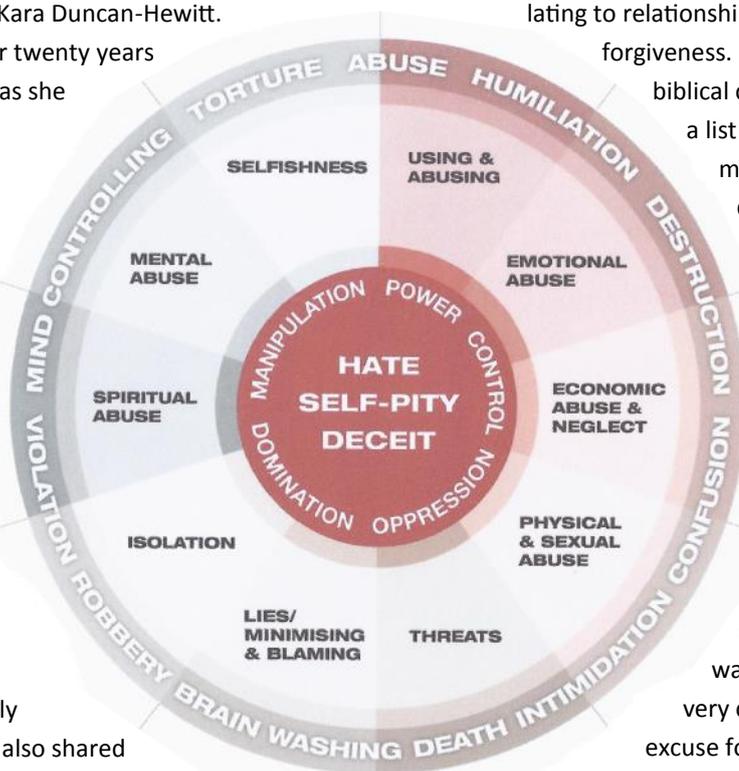
forgiveness. It provided some clear biblical commentary. Also it has

a list of faith resources on domestic violence. I did wonder if there is any New Zealand material.

Taliaoa Filipo Tipoi and Vic Tamati from **Safe Man, Safe Family** spoke about domestic violence from a Pacific Island perspective. They described growing up in a culture where violence was a way of life. They were very clear that culture is not an excuse for violence. Both of them also work within the **It's not OK** campaign. <http://www.areyouok.org.nz/>

Jenny Janif, the Community Relationships Manager for Family and Community Services, talked about issues of faith and culture in refugee and migrant communities. She offered a very strong message that religion does not support violence. Confidentiality is a big issue because in many cultures, women have coped with violence by sharing and talking it over with other women. Talking is part of the healing.

The workshop was worthwhile and I gained new insights into the complexes around family violence and faith communities.



However I was slightly troubled that I heard about this workshop from a secular organisation more or less by accident. This was not advertised through the church channels and there was no one from the pakeha church there. How do we as a church deal with family violence? I am aware that in both tikanga Maori and Pacifica there are initiatives to stop violence but what about Pakeha? Are our churches safe and supportive places for people who experience family violence?

Kara Duncan-Hewitt is available to do workshops and can be contacted by phone 027 479-9135 or email duncan-hewitt@clear.net.nz

For a pdf version of the full chart "Abuse & Control in Relationships: A resource for Faith Communities" please email Karena on anglicanwomenstudies@gmail.com

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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
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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.