



## Fulfilling God's mission in all we say and do without fear

I join my thoughts and prayers with all of yours for a world within which women and girls might someday know the unfettered joy of freedom to flourish without fear for any reason!

*Dr Jenny Te Paa, retiring Provincial Link for Aotearoa New Zealand & Polynesia*

The last few months have shown us how important it is to care for each other, share our stories and support each other as women and men of faith across the Anglican Communion. When we have stood together during times of natural disasters, joined together to confront issues of injustice or celebrated achievements together, our hope and strength in Jesus Christ has been found in acting together. The last months have made real the power of prayer and compassion and have reminded us of the commitment made by Anglican women gathered at the 51<sup>st</sup> Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in March 2007:

**We remain resolute in our solidarity with one another and in our commitment, above all else, to pursue and fulfill God's mission in all we say and do.**

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offering hospitality in other places in Aotearoa New Zealand for overseas visitors and people who need respite."

*Rev Carole Hughes, Provincial Link*

### ...in Japan



*Hairi Ohmachi, Rev Mei Miki and Sr Faith Anthony*

"I am deeply grateful for the prayers and the messages of sympathy sent from you and many sisters after the 11 March catastrophic Tohoku earthquake. Hairi and I had only arrived home in Japan on 8 March after attending the UNCSW in New York. After celebrating the holy eucharist in Sendai city on 15 March, Bishop Kato of the Diocese of Tohoku then had a disaster centre set up despite the cathedral having sustained heavy damage."

*Rev Mei Miki*

"Thank you for your prayers and heartfelt messages for the people suffering from this disaster. Bishop Kato also expresses his thanks to you. The lack of information still causes much confusion and the support structures are not yet in place. While it will take a great deal of time to have the support organized we are making preparations and determining what needs to be done. The people are exhausted from the continuing situation but we will pass on your messages as we check on everyone."

*Michiko Kikawadi and Kaoru Yoshitani, Women's Desk of the Nippon Sei Ko Kai, Dr Machiko Ikamoto*

## Reaching out to each other

as tragedy from natural disasters occurred...

### ...in Aotearoa New Zealand

"I want to thank those of you who have sent loving messages of concern to us in New Zealand as we grieve collectively for those who have suffered and for those who have died in this week's devastating earthquake. As Jenny Dawson has indicated our little nation mourns with our Christchurch families even as the full extent of loss is not yet known - your prayers for comfort and for God's hope are very, very special - thank you."

*Jenny Te Paa*

"We have been overwhelmed by the support we have received from international friends and colleagues who have sent prayerful messages of love, hope and concern, and wish to keep in touch with you and thank you for your support. The Anglican Church in Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia is responding with extraordinary leadership; there are prayer services around the nation; clergy and trauma support staff have been sent to Christchurch; financial support is coming in, and we are working together to respond to practical needs, including

## ...and as unrest continues in the Middle East

"We send you greetings from Jordan and from the Middle East, asking for your continuous prayers at these difficult times. We hope that things will settle well in the end and everything will end up for the Glory of our Saviour."

*Leila Diab, Provincial Link*

"Nigel and I are still serving at the chaplaincy in Yemen, although we are actually living in Dubai for the time being as the situation in Yemen has deteriorated. It was very difficult to leave Yemeni friends and colleagues behind who have no option to leave. For the time being we are managing the clinic in Aden from afar, and also providing cover for services in Dubai where the church is in vacancy."

*Rev Catherine Dawkins who is to be ordained as the first woman priest in the Province of Jerusalem & the Middle East in June 2011*

## "Break the silence, please"

### Advocacy for Christians in minority situations

Ayra Inderyas, Provincial Link for Pakistan and Steering Group member, has been at the forefront of seeking justice for Asia Bibi, a Christian woman sentenced to death under Pakistan's blasphemy laws. As part of a group who met with Asia in November 2010, Ayra is asking for the repeal of the blasphemy laws, fair legal representation for Asia and for her immediate release.

In a news article "Break the silence, please" Ayra has also reported on the recent killings of prominent liberals in Pakistan who spoke out against the country's controversial blasphemy laws and the misuse of these laws. There is increasing fear and silence among Pakistani Christians especially in identifying themselves as religious minorities and in any overt criticism of unjust religious laws and policies. "It is time to promote reasoned-based thinking, freedom of speech and accommodation of diverse views." For the full text of Ayra's article go to

[www.jang.com.pk/thenews/mar2011-weekly/nos-06-03-2011/she.htm#5](http://www.jang.com.pk/thenews/mar2011-weekly/nos-06-03-2011/she.htm#5)

Support and advocacy on behalf of Christians in minority situations was raised by Mrs Clare Amos, Director of Theological Studies at the Anglican Communion Office during the recent Standing Committee meeting, which agreed to encourage further discussion of the issue at the 15<sup>th</sup> Anglican Consultative Council meeting in 2012.

## Responding to the challenges of HIV/AIDS in Kenya

*As International Aids Day was marked around the world on 1 December 2010, Rev Rhoda Luvuno Dzombo who is a Project Officer in the Anglican Church of Kenya's Department of Social Services reported on the response of her Church.*

The Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK) has contributed to the reduction of the national prevalence rate from 13% in 2003 to the current 5.9% in 2008, and in the care of more than 2.4 million orphans in the country. The Church has remained in the forefront in the fight against the HIV pandemic in the country by continuing to build the capacity of church leaders to respond to health and HIV

challenges. Regions, dioceses and congregations have been trained to reach out to communities through behavioural change and effective services delivery messages.



Community discussions on gender issues in Meto

The year 2010 saw two projects: 'Gender, Religion and HIV - a Christian Response' and 'SAVE and SSDIM' which concentrates on stigma reduction. Challenges and problems still to be addressed include stigma, gender concerns and the increased vulnerability of women and girls, the role of men in prevention, and leadership capacity in church and family.

## Referendum in Sudan

*Reported by Provincial Link Harriet Baka who, as a member of Sudanese Network for Democratic elections (SuNDE), was involved in the training of hundreds of domestic observers for the Referendum.*

As the people of Southern Sudan voted for independence on 19 January 2011, many women actively participated in the Referendum. In this transitional time before independence, women continue to work for constitutional reform and are standing for seats in the new parliament. Women have been accessing lands and working in small businesses. The Mothers' Union held workshops to train women in emergency preparedness and in providing help to those people who have been displaced.

## Primates' commitment to tackle violence against women and girls

**"This is a great manifestation of our common life"**

*Standing Committee member, Bishop Ian Douglas*

Anglican women across the Communion welcomed the commitment by the Primates at their meeting in Dublin to join and provide leadership in the work to eliminate violence against women and girls. The Primates' Letter to the Churches can be found at

[www.aco.org/communion/primates/resources/downloads/prim\\_gbv.pdf](http://www.aco.org/communion/primates/resources/downloads/prim_gbv.pdf).

IAWN Provincial Links and members have ensured that the Letter to the Churches has been widely distributed throughout the Provinces of the Communion and are working with their own leadership to consider 'What is already happening in our Church to eliminate gender-based violence? What else needs to happen? How can

that happen? What resources are already available? What other resources do we need?’

Several Links and members have met with their Primate and Bishops to discuss in their own context the implementation of this commitment to eliminate gender-based violence, including building on programmes already in place. The Letter to the Churches has been presented and spoken to at synods, diocesan councils and meetings of bishops as well as being sent to government agencies and theological institutions.

It is clear that each Province has its own setting and will develop its own priorities for this work. Some may be able to work ecumenically, some may be able to influence their wider society through access to their government while others will develop significant programmes of best practice.

All Provinces however will need first to look to themselves – individually and collectively – so that church leadership is no longer compliant, whether by silence, ignorance or active participation, in permitting violence against women and girls to continue. IAWN also is concerned that any theology expressed or taught does not somehow ‘give permission’ to excuse any form of expression of gender-based violence. We look forward to a time when, as Jenny Te Paa writes:

“no-one [would] be permitted to be ordained or to hold leadership positions in any of our church agencies or institutions unless they have undertaken gender justice/anti-violence/appreciative respect for women and girls/equal opportunity type training!”

“I think we need to have a strategy in place which is both preventive and appropriately reactionary otherwise we will simply continue to react and to rage at what seems such an intractable situation for women. Whereas if we were able to assure ourselves of an unavoidable educational presence/requirement for all in ministry then this has the potential of being not only a momentary transformative opportunity in time but it provides also for ongoing influence upon the hearts and minds of all those in leadership roles in ministry – good theological education and training for ministry is after all a lifelong activity and not just a one off experience.”

IAWN looks forward to working cooperatively and with intentional long-term strategies to “become the agents of change and the agents of hope” spoken of by Archbishop Rowan Williams at the launch of a Tearfund report *Silent No More* – see: [www.wewillsspeakout.org](http://www.wewillsspeakout.org).

## **United Nations Commission on the Status of Women 2011**

### **– intersection of life and faith**

*Through the efforts of the Anglican Communion Office at the United Nations (ACOUN) and The Episcopal Church’s Anglican Women’s Empowerment (AWE), 80 Anglican women and girls from around the Communion gathered around this year’s meeting of the UN Commission on the Status of Women in New York, 22 February to 4 March 2011.*

The Theme for this year’s meeting was: ‘Access and participation of women and girls to education, training, science and technology, including for the promotion of

women’s equal access to full employment and decent work’.

The review theme was: ‘Elimination of all forms of violence and discrimination against the girl child’.

Once again, this year’s attendance around UNCSW by Anglican women and girls highlighted the role of our Church in understanding, advocating for, and taking direct action with respect to the Millennium Development Goals (especially MDG 3: ‘Promote gender equality and empower women’, and the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA). As Gospel-based documents, our knowledge and implementation of them ensure our participation in God’s mission across the world. The comments below remind us of the many ways in which Anglicans from around the Communion can be partners in this task.

*Caroline Christie, USA, member of the ACOUN group and the Girl’s Caucus reported on behalf of the girl delegates:*

“The ability of girls to access science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education is critical for women and girls if they are to participate fully in their communities. When girls (and women) can take up employment opportunities in all areas, they are able independently to provide for their families and themselves regardless of their life situations. This positive model empowers the whole community to counteract the cycle of poverty. Yet, even in communities where women have employment opportunities a discrepancy still exists.

“Equal access will be achieved by ensuring:

- strong government and community policies and programmes
- targeted financial resources
- female professional role models
- gender-sensitive educational facilities and curricula
- freedom from violence, including traditional practices
- positive community attitudes about the place and value of girls
- rehabilitation and re-integration programmes for girls and women”

*Naomi Langley, England, accompanied eight girl students:*

“This experience, especially with the advocacy training, has changed the girls’ lives. When we go home, they plan to lobby for the issue of girl-child trafficking and prostitution as it will pertain to the 2012 Olympics in London.

They are starting to brainstorm about writing letters to Parliament, linking up to NGOs and getting their whole school activated. The women of AWE have been energizing and empowering models.”

*Rev Alicia Sibeann, Philippines:*

“Being here with all of you at AWE is actually an empowerment in itself. Listening to stories of women from around the world is very moving for me. I come from a culture of women’s silence and shame.

“How can you be empowered if you are told to shut up even by your mother? We must tell our stories. And thanks to my experience here, I will go back and focus on the girl-child. This has been missing in our advocacy, but now I will always include it. I am so blessed to be here.”

*Pauline Hassan, member of The Episcopal Church Youth Delegation Team:*

“My family were victims of the civil war in Sudan. I was born in a refugee camp in Kenya and came to California in 1994. Just being a part of this conference, I have learned that perseverance builds character and hope. I have been able to see where I’ve come from and learn about other people’s suffering, and I know I can advocate for social justice. Being with AWE and the Episcopal Young Adults has really called me to step up in my college and diocese to promote change and be proactive. I will bring that home.”

*Marion Little, Canada:*

“Participating in UNSCW through AWE, IAWN and the Anglican Consultative Council is a way of putting our faith into action to advocate for basic human rights issues for women around the world.”

The Agreed Conclusions of UNSCW 55 can be found at [www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/55sess.htm#agreed](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/55sess.htm#agreed)

The Anglican Communion News Service article is at [www.anglicancommunion.org/acns/digest/index.cfm/2011/3/28/Anglican-Communion-women-welcome-Primates-commitment-to-tackle-violence-against-women-and-girls](http://www.anglicancommunion.org/acns/digest/index.cfm/2011/3/28/Anglican-Communion-women-welcome-Primates-commitment-to-tackle-violence-against-women-and-girls)

*Rev Penny Lewis, Canada:*

**“I will become an echo for all the voices that I heard”**

## Women’s action for peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Mugisa Isingoma of the Province de L’Eglise Anglicane Du Congo reports on the extraordinary courage which she and other women have shown as they have confronted the widespread violence which has been perpetrated against women and girls as “acts of war” in the DRC. Here is an extract of the report Mugisa gave at the launch of the Tearfund report *Silent No More* at Lambeth Palace in March 2011:

It is estimated that in 2010, 15,000 women and girls have been raped as violence against women and girls has become a terrifying weapon of war in our country, the Democratic Republic of the Congo.



The Anglican Church of Congo began an initiative in 2006 to address the suffering of women and girls who experienced rape and the consequent displacement. The Women’s Union for the Advancement of Social Peace, known as UFPPS, in partnership with the Mothers’ Union, has worked to rehabilitate the troubled spirit of

Congolese women and give them hope for life. The Word of God mentally and spiritually transforms the whole community, including rapists.

For the full text of Mugisa’s report see:

<http://iawn.anglicancommunion.org/news/index.cfm/2011/4/8/Mme-Mugisa-Isingoma-addresses-the-launch-of-Tearfunds-report-Silent-No-More>

## World Day of Prayer in the Philippines

*Francisca Bawayan, IAWN Steering Group member, reports:*

As part of a celebration across 170 countries, women from Christian churches in Manila came together at the Central United Methodist Church on 4 March to mark the 2011 World Day of Prayer. This year’s focus was Chile and was based on the theme “How Many Loaves Have You?” which was the question Jesus asked his disciples. ‘Sharing bread’ was seen as a sign of solidarity and hope in Christ, challenging people to share whatever gifts they have. The women reflected on this as they shared in prayer their joys and sorrows, and their dreams and hopes for a better world.

## 100<sup>th</sup> International Women’s Day in Australia

*Ann Skamp, IAWN Steering Group member, reports:*

While parishes around the Australian Church marked the 100<sup>th</sup> International Women’s Day, 8 March 2011, Bishop Kay Goldsworthy (Assistant Bishop, Diocese of Perth) was one of 100 inductees into the Western Australia Women’s Hall of Fame. Bishop Kay was also invited to functions in Canberra hosted by the Governor-General to mark the Day and also the commencement of the Australian National Committee for UN Women. Afterwards Bishop Kay and Ann Skamp attended a Parliamentary Forum hosted by the Minister for the Status of Women.

A panel of emerging women leaders led the discussion on future directions of equality in Australia. While many achievements were celebrated, challenges still remain in the areas of violence against women and girls, economic freedom and security especially for older women and the lack of women in leadership – especially in the corporate sector. Emerging issues identified were aging, pressures on young women and equality and diversity.

**The Resources and Links sections** of IAWN’s website at <http://iawn.anglicancommunion.org/resources/documents.cfm> and <http://iawn.anglicancommunion.org/links/index.cfm> continue to gather theological and practical materials and models of practice working against gender based violence that could be adapted to local contexts.

**If you have comments or an item you would like to be considered for the next issue, please send them by 1st July 2011 to**

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