

## **The International Anglican Women's Network Report to the Anglican Consultative Council - 2005**

The International Anglican Women's Network (IAWN) links all Anglican women.  
It is a Network which cooperates for action.

web site [www.iawn.org](http://www.iawn.org)

### *Linking Women Around the World: Information Towards Action*

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## **The International Anglican Women's Network Report to the Anglican Consultative Council - 2005**

The International Anglican Women's Network (IAWN) links all Anglican women: it is a Network which cooperates for action. Via email and web site [www.iawn.org](http://www.iawn.org) information is shared, common needs emerge, and, by consensus, action is planned.

## **1.0 Organization of IAWN**

The Anglican Communion is divided into 8 Regions. A Representative from each Region and a Representative from the Mothers' Union serve on the IAWN Steering Committee.

### **1.1 Regions and Regional Representatives**

Latin America & Caribbean	Rev'd Canon Emily Morales
South America	Christina Winnischofer
North America & United Kingdom	Rev'd Nancy Acree
Africa	Priscilla Julie
Jerusalem and the Middle East	Eliane Abd El Nour
West Asia	Prabhjot Masih, Jyotsna Patro
Oceania	Janet Hesketh
East Asia	Esperanza Beleo
Mothers' Union	Marigold Seager-Berry

### **1.2 Work of the Steering Committee**

This group of 10 women forms the IAWN Steering Committee and will guide the evolution of IAWN as it links Anglican women, reports the challenges and joys of bringing Jesus' reconciling love to a troubled world, and advocates for justice for all. The future work of the Steering Committee includes fund-raising, writing of a Mission Statement, setting out the process by which decisions are made, and describing the position of the International Coordinator. All work is done by volunteers.

### **1.3 Request to the Anglican Consultative Council**

27 Provinces have Link women, or Link Teams. When 41 of these women were together in New York to take part in the UN Commission on the Status of Women, they spoke with united voice: it is time for the Communion to embark on a process for including more women in decision-making. They call on the Anglican Consultative Council to work towards 30% representation of women on the Council and on its Committees, and to encourage Provinces, Dioceses and Parishes to do likewise.

## **2.0 Reports from the 8 Regions and the Mothers' Union**

When disaster strikes, such as drought, environmental degradation, floods, disease and conflict, women work heroically to provide for their families. In cultures that are excessively patriarchal women struggle to maintain their dignity, and work creatively to ameliorate the problems. Through it all, their faith sustains them. The Regional reports speak compellingly of the huge difference that exists between the vision of God's Kingdom on earth, and the present reality.

The reports, in their entirety, are appended to this report. A brief summary, perhaps better described as a mere snapshot, appears below.

## **2.1 Region of Latin America & Caribbean**

### **2.1(a) Puerto Rico, The Episcopal Church in the USA, Province IX**

Puerto Rico stands out as a pioneer in Latin America and the Caribbean in the adoption of government policies on women rights in various areas that deal with the protection and advancement of women, thus creating better conditions for their life and their development.

### **2.1 (b) El Salvador, Iglesia Anglicana de la Region Central de America.**

The situation of women in Central America can be summarized as a constant struggle to reach a quality of life with the dignity that every human being should have at all levels of life: personal, within the family, professional, economic status, etc. We have yet to achieve a complete education system, less violent culture, more work opportunities where gender equity is the norm, and where international laws and covenants are applied.

### **2.1 (c) Costa Rica, Iglesia Anglicana de la Region Central de America.**

It was a blessing and a privilege for me to represent the Region of Central America at the United Nations 49<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women. Exchanging experiences with committed people is necessary for the betterment of women, children, youth, men, and the family as a whole. The event also strengthened the network of Anglican women all over the world.

## **2.2 Region of South America,**

### **Igreja Episcopal Anglicana do Brasil**

Although in the Igreja Episcopal Anglicana do Brasil there are clear advances for women, for example, ordination is open in the three orders, the General Secretary is a woman, and there are women sitting on the Executive Council, the Diocesan Council, and other committees, women are present in insufficient numbers to influence the decisions. Nevertheless, in April 2005, the Executive Council and the House of Bishops endorsed the Statement of the Anglican Consultative Council delegates to the 49th Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, which calls on the ACC “to adopt the goal of 30% representation of women in decision-making bodies at all levels in our Anglican Communion”.

In Brazilian society, the reality is still one of inequality between women and men. Domestic violence is of great concern, and indicates the lack of respect for women.

Anglican women in Brazil believe that education is the key to helping people understand that justice, peace and equality are in the hands of women. Persistence will be necessary. Within the Church, they are committed to the task of ensuring that women achieve 30% representation in all decision-making bodies.

We acknowledge the importance of the IAWN in empowering women throughout the Anglican Communion by strengthening the bonds of sisterhood amongst them through

prayer, and by sharing ideas, experiences and needs. Also, it is important that the Anglican Communion become aware of the suffering women experience, of their hope for a better life grounded in divine grace, and their God-given abilities to influence the world for good.

## **2.3 Region of North America and United Kingdom**

### **2.3 (a) The Episcopal Church of the United States of America**

In the United States of America the church is needed as never before. There is a growing sense of isolation and anxiety. The tragic events of September 9, 2001, commonly known as 9/11, have changed us as a nation. Fear seems to be the motivation for many personal and corporate decisions. One report says that one in six children in the USA lives in poverty. Many people lack basic health insurance. Gender equality in the work place has not been achieved. This is the richest country in the world and yet still has the second highest rate of infant mortality. In other words, far too many here suffer for and from the same causes as the other nations in the world. Much of the energy of the church has been spent being "against" whatever the local issue is. As the church, as the women of the church, we can be "for" the common good and IAWN offers us a platform from which to speak.

The Office for Women's Ministries of the Episcopal Church USA encourages and empowers the work and ministry of women within the church and beyond. It serves as a resource and staff support for domestic and global initiatives which seek justice for women in society and the inclusion of women at all levels of church life. The Women's Ministries Office collaborates in the work of the UN Anglican Observer, the Episcopal Church Office of Government Relations and all other relevant program clusters of the Church. The Office for Women's Ministries works ecumenically and seeks increasing interfaith partnerships. [www.episcopalchurch.org/women](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/women)

### **2.3 (b) The Anglican Church of Canada**

The Anglican Women's Network - Canada (AWN-CAN) was formed in 1996 as the Canadian component of IAWN. In 2003, when the Rev'd Canon Alice Medcof was asked to coordinate the IAWN as a volunteer, women of AWN-CAN volunteered to assist her in the coordinating tasks, and an executive body for IAWN was formed.

AWN-CAN communicates with the Canadian Mothers' Union, Anglican Church Women of Canada, Evangelical Lutheran Women of Canada, Anglican Aboriginal Women and, through the members of the board, theological schools and artisans. We have contributed to dialogue at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in 2000, 2003, 2004 and 2005, on behalf of the Anglican Church of Canada and the ACC.

### **2.3 (c) The Scottish Episcopal Church**

The establishment of the Scottish Parliament in 1998 with devolved powers has led to a more accessible form of government and consultation papers are released to allow the public to respond before a Bill comes to Parliament. This allows Christians to have a

voice and express and opinion and there is often a collated response from the Mothers' Union (MU) members.

The Make Poverty History campaign is gaining momentum as many propose to attend the rally in Edinburgh on 2<sup>nd</sup> July just prior to the Gleneagles G8 summit. There are vigils and prayer groups organised to support these events.

MU members continue to work ecumenically in various community projects - they run a Family Contact Centre, play schemes at several prisons and mother and toddler drop in groups. Prayer is important and Lady Day services and Quiet days are held. A highlight of the year is the Provincial Retreat held at the monastery in Perth.

This year women from different churches in the UK will be meeting in Scotland at the 4 Nations women's conference and the WISE women's synod and the Sec and the MU will be represented at both of these.

### 2.3 (d) The Church of England

For women in ordained ministry in the Church of England, 2004 was a very significant and special year as it marked the 10th anniversary of the first women to be ordained as priests in the church. In February 2005, the General Synod of the Church of England debated the Rochester Report, "Women Bishops in the Church of England?" At the end of a very lengthy debate synod accepted the report on a take note motion and proceeded to look at ways in which legislation can be drawn up to allow those women with the right skills and gifts to fulfil their calling to serve as Bishop in the church.

## 2.4 Region of Africa

The Vision of our Region is "To be the Voice of the Voiceless". It is rooted in Scripture: "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute". (Proverbs 31.8)

Our Mission is to enable gender concerns to be voiced through churches, theological institutions, faith based organizations and any other available platforms. . We have for our objectives the following: -

1. Strengthen the church-life application of gender issues.
2. Encourage the progression of gender within the church
3. Promote health issues in the church and communities
4. Educate the church in gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting in all activities
5. Promote networking within our region

Africa has been the scene of much tragedy:

Tribal warfare, genocide, and millions of refugees.

HIV/AIDS pandemic

Drought and starvation

Poverty exacerbated by inflation, unemployment, collapsing government systems.

Cultural norms and patriarchy adversely affect women.

Professional women need to be vigilant about sexual harassment at work.  
 Widows have little respect and may be distanced from their children.  
 Men, having paid bride price, may sometimes treat his wife with little respect.  
 Incest is often not reported.  
 Marital rape and rape during war needs to be talked about openly.

At the grassroots level, faith-filled women work to alleviate these problems.  
 The Mothers' Union of Katanga Diocese, Congo, is teaching women about:

Peace and conflict resolution,  
 Gender justice,  
 Violence against women,  
 Micro-credit for those who want to do business,  
 Skills such as sewing and needlework.

In Uganda, discussions continue on the issues of:

Female poverty and economic empowerment;  
 The causes of domestic violence and on how to deal with the perpetrators;  
 Personal development, self-esteem, life skills and counseling skills;  
 How to access free legal aid from FIDA;  
 Home-based care services for families that are affected with HIV/AIDS.

## **2.5 Region of Jerusalem and the Middle East**

The Anglican Peace and Justice Network held a meeting in Jerusalem. The APJN report stated: "We note the continuing policies of illegal home demolitions, detentions, checkpoints, identity card systems and the presence of the Israeli military that make any kind of normal life impossible."

In search of a normal life, many Christians have emigrated. The population of Israel/Palestine is now less than 3% Christian.

## **2.6 Region of West Asia**

### **2.6 (a) The Church of North India (United)**

The Church Council of Asia is enabling women and men to reflect on the challenges of building communities of peace. However, CCA can do more and go beyond the commonplace. CCA is urged to continue to expand its concern over the impact of patriarchy and globalization on the lives of women and children in Asia. We call on the churches to repent its complacency and complicity to different forms of violence, and endeavor to end violence against women and children. We urge men to be truly our partners in the struggle for just and peaceful communities for women and children. Let the churches' practice of genuine solidarity with women be an embodiment of our faith in Jesus the Christ who showed us the Way to build communities of peace.

## 2.7 Region of Oceania

Women of the Anglican Communion in Oceania continue to work actively both in their churches and their communities. The major issues and challenges are:

- \*The rising cost of living & increasing impoverishment - costs of food, medicines, schooling, housing, are all rising

- \*AIDS/STIs on the rise and churches not actively promoting prevention.

- \*Violence & abuse against women & children is increasing and is frequently considered to be normal behaviour.

- \*In many countries there is ethnic tension, political instability and armed uprisings. Women have been active in the promotion of mediation and peaceful resolution.

- \*The tension between raising of children within traditional cultural values and modern western values. This is a source of major tension between younger and older generations.

- \*Churches losing congregations to Pentecostal churches.

## 2.8 Region of the East Asia

### 2.8 (a) The Episcopal Church in the Philippines

The common concern that we would like to present to the ACC is the approval/affirmation and implementation that women within the worldwide Anglican Communion have at least a 30% representation in all decision-making or important Commissions/Committees of their churches and its institutions. Lest we be misunderstood of just pushing women who may not be qualified for such positions or appointments, we would like to make it clear that qualified women be appointed or included in the list of nominations for memberships to the said Commissions/Committees.

It is disturbing to note that, when women share amongst themselves ideas and concerns about our churches, their voices seem to be silent. Most of the ideas that come out from such gatherings are not even relayed to the proper bodies (due to fear maybe of rejection?), or when the women do open up to their generally male leaders, they are not given the attention and importance they deserve.

### 2.8 (b) Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui

There is no structure, neither explicitly in constitutional provisions nor in implicit practice, to prescribe or encourage the participation of ordained, or lay, women in Church decision-making bodies such as vestry membership, diocesan committees, or provincial committees, despite election to these organs through a democratic process. Since the Beijing Platform for Action aims at equal participation between genders in government and NGOs, and the Millennium Development Goals have set 2015 as the target date, a mere 10 years from now, we have to hasten our process and we have a long way to go.

Even though Hong Kong was the forerunner in women's ordination, statistics show that women priests are in a marked minority. More active effort, it seems, needs to be put towards identifying, nurturing and preparing suitable candidates for such calling.

Social issues affecting women are:

Domestic Violence is so serious in some cases that wives commit suicide.

New Immigrant-wives from Mainland China are overwhelmed with culture shock.

Overseas Domestic Helpers, mostly from the Philippines, Indonesia and Sri Lanka, are increasingly reporting physical abuse by employers.

Care for the Aged is a great concern.

## **2.9 Mothers' Union** [www.themothersunion.org](http://www.themothersunion.org)

*Report from The Mothers' Union for the past three years, printed here in its entirety.*

The Mothers' Union members throughout the world continue to look to the needs of their communities and reacting to them. Engaging with the communities in which we live is one of the keys to growth in the church, and it is because of this that we have seen spectacular growth in Mothers' Union membership during the last few years.

Many of our members are Anglicans but some belong to ecumenical groups linked to the Anglican Communion. A particular example of this is the recent formal affiliation to membership of the Women's Fellowship in the Church of South India. There, the Protestant Churches are united and their women have now followed the example of North India and rejoined the Mothers' Union. Women's groups in Peru have also become members through affiliation. The MU in the USA has been officially inaugurated and is growing fast. This means that we have now reached over 3.6 million members in some 76 countries all united in prayer, fellowship and Christian service and a common link of concern and care for family life worldwide.

The major projects initiated from our Centre in London, Literacy and Development, Parenting Group Facilitation, and Relationships and Marriage continue to move ahead strongly. The Literacy and Development Project in Burundi, Malawi and Sudan has now enabled over 16,400 learners to become literate and numerate.

We continue to support/employ more than 300 indigenous MU workers – they are the backbone of our work overseas. We have recently employed two field workers in the UK. This initiative recognises the very real growth in numbers of members wherever a worker is operating – workers are able to make clear links between the needs of the community and our programmes.

The Mothers' Union Social Policy Unit under the umbrella of Prayer and Spirituality is a way of welding policy and spirituality together. Over the last few years the team at the Centre has encouraged the voluntary membership and we have responded to numerous government consultations as well as working on, under our own accreditation, statements for the UN Commission on the Status of Women. This year has been particularly encouraging with MU having representation with the ACC on this Commission in New York. This has enabled the MU, the Anglican Observer and the ACC delegates to unite with a common voice on world issues which affect women and families. They unanimously reaffirmed the Beijing Platform for Action.

The MU has joined a mass mobilization of church groups, development agencies and civil society, generally, to declare 2005 the year to MAKE POVERTY HISTORY. Throughout the year, members of the coalition are challenging Tony Blair and other world leaders to tackle poverty through real policy change.

As the leaders of the world's richest countries gather in Scotland for the G8 Summit, MU members will join tens of thousands of others in Edinburgh in July to demand trade justice, debt cancellation and more and better aid for the world's poorest countries.

Our Worldwide President, Trish Heywood, has a full programme of visits around the world, which unites and encourages the membership. She sees ordinary people doing extraordinary things, bringing ministry and mission into their families and communities.

### **3.0 In Gratitude**

3.1 IAWN thanks the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Reverend Rowan Douglas Williams, for his kind words of support, and the Rev'd Kenneth Kearon for including IAWN in the roster of Networks.

3.2 The Anglican delegation to UNCSW 2005 was thrilled to see themselves on the cover of Anglican/Episcopal World. Thank you, Jim Rosenthal.

3.3 Thanks to the Rev Joan Fraser, of the Diocese of Long Island, New York, USA, [FrasJ6@aol.com](mailto:FrasJ6@aol.com), for volunteering to administer the web site.

3.4 We note, with deep appreciation, the work of Mrs. Liz Barnes, of South Africa, International Coordinator of IAWN, 1997 - 2003.

3.5 Communicating via internet technology lacks one important factor: personal, face to face conversation. Whenever link people are together, enthusiasm for the network rises, organizational details can be worked through, and plans for the future proposed, as happened when 41 women from 25 Provinces attended the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, 2005. We thank Phoebe Griswold and the Anglican Women's Empowerment Team of ECUSA for making it all happen.

3.6 Archdeacon Taimalelagi Fagamalama Tuatagaloa-Matalevea, Anglican Observer at the United Nations, has been unwavering in her insistence that women be included in the Councils of the Church. Thank you, Tai. We share your vision and count it a privilege to work with you at the Commission on the Status of Women.

Respectfully submitted,

IAWN Steering Committee

Emily Morales, Christina Winnischofer, Nancy Acree, Priscilla Julie,  
Eliane Abd El Nour, Prabhjot Masih, Jyotsna Patro, Janet Hesketh,  
Esperanza Beleo, Marigold Seager-Berry

Jolly Babirukamu, IAWN Link to the Joint Standing Committee and the Anglican Consultative Council.

IAWN Coordinator, Alice Medcof, [amedcof@national.anglican.ca](mailto:amedcof@national.anglican.ca)

## **2.1 Region of Latin America & Caribbean**

### 2.1(a) Puerto Rico, The Episcopal Church in the USA, Province IX

Puerto Rico stands out as a pioneer in Latin America and the Caribbean in the adoption of government policies on women rights in various areas that deal with the protection and advancement of women, thus creating better conditions for their life and their development.

One of the biggest problems in our island is the high incidence of domestic violence and violence with children and aging. Even though women are educating themselves and graduating from college in a higher percentage than men, we have yet to achieve the goal of equity in the areas of employment.

The church, through Episcopal Social Services, Episcopal Health Services and Parochial Schools, is working in areas and issues concerning child care, health and education. The church has organized training for clergy and laity at diocesan and local levels to deal with these issues.

The list of link women from the different dioceses is growing.

### 2.1 (b) El Salvador, Iglesia Anglicana de la Region Central de America.

The situation of women in Central America can be summarized as a constant struggle to reach a quality of life with the dignity that every human being should have at all levels of life: personal, within the family, professional, economic status, etc. We have yet to achieve a complete education system, less violent culture, more work opportunities where gender equity is the norm, and where international laws and covenants are applied.

The number of non-governmental organizations (NGO's) has increased as well as women's associations. Activities undertaken by women have a positive impact in the development of our country, making the empowerment of women the key for better conditions of life and a more just society.

Women outnumber men on the parish roles. The Anglican Church is actively developing programs with, and for, women.

### 2.1 (c) Costa Rica, Iglesia Anglicana de la Region Central de America.

It was a blessing and a privilege for me to represent the Region of Central

America at the United Nations 49<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women. Exchanging experiences with committed people is necessary for the betterment of women, children, youth, men, and the family as a whole. The event also strengthened the network of Anglican women all over the world.

## **2.2 Region of South America,**

### **Igreja Episcopal Anglicana do Brasil**

Although in the Igreja Episcopal Anglicana do Brasil there are clear advances for women, for example, ordination is open in the three orders, the General Secretary is a woman, and there are women sitting on the Executive Council, the Diocesan Council, and other committees, women are present in insufficient numbers to influence the decisions. Nevertheless, in April 2005, the Executive Council and the House of Bishops endorsed the Statement of the Anglican Consultative Council delegates to the 49th Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, which calls on the ACC “to adopt the goal of 30% representation of women in decision-making bodies at all levels in our Anglican Communion”.

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We acknowledge the importance of the IAWN in empowering women throughout the Anglican Communion by strengthening the bonds of sisterhood amongst them through prayer, and by sharing ideas, experiences and needs. Also, it is important that the Anglican Communion become aware of the suffering women experience, of their hope for a better life grounded in divine grace, and their God-given abilities to influence the world for good.

## **2.3 Region of North America and United Kingdom**

### **2.3 (a) The Episcopal Church of the United States of America**

In the United States of America the church is needed as never before. There is a growing sense of isolation and anxiety. The tragic events of September 9, 2001, commonly known as 9/11, have changed us as a nation. Fear seems to be the motivation for many personal and corporate decisions. One report says that one in six children in the USA lives in poverty. Many people lack basic health insurance. Gender equality in the work place has not been achieved. This is the richest country in the world and yet still has the

second highest rate of infant mortality. In other words, far too many here suffer for and from the same causes as the other nations in the world. Much of the energy of the church has been spent being "against" whatever the local issue is. As the church, as the women of the church, we can be "for" the common good and IAWN offers us a platform from which to speak.

The Office for Women's Ministries of the Episcopal Church USA encourages and empowers the work and ministry of women within the church and beyond. It serves as a resource and staff support for domestic and global initiatives which seek justice for women in society and the inclusion of women at all levels of church life. The office convenes the Council for Women's Ministries, a consortium of women's organizations in the church and serves as staff support for the ECUSA Committee on the Status of Women. New program initiatives involve Internet Conversations seeking to listen to and engage the voices of young women in shaping the church today. The Women's Ministries Office collaborates in the work of the UN Anglican Observer, the Episcopal Church Office of Government Relations and all other relevant program clusters of the Church. The Office for Women's Ministries works ecumenically and seeks increasing interfaith partnerships. [www.episcopalchurch.org/women](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/women)

### 2.3 (b) The Anglican Church of Canada

The Anglican Women's Network - Canada (AWN-CAN) was formed as the Canadian component of IAWN. In 2003, when the Rev'd Canon Alice Medcof was asked to coordinate the IAWN, women of AWN-CAN volunteered to assist her in the coordinating tasks, and an executive body for IAWN was formed. Although still in it's infancy, the potential for IAWN continues to grow, as does the necessity for such a powerful communication tool in the Church.

AWN-CAN currently communicates with the Canadian Mothers' Union, the Anglican Church Women of Canada, the Evangelical Lutheran Women of Canada, the Anglican Aboriginal Women and, through the members of the board, theological schools and artisans. We have circulated prayer requests, conference information, dates and locations of events of interest to Christian women as well as supporting campaigns such as "Sisters in Spirit", and "Make Poverty History". We have contributed to dialogue at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in 2000, 2003, 2004 and 2005, on behalf of the Anglican Church of Canada and the ACC.

### 2.3 (c) The Scottish Episcopal Church

In Scotland fewer people are attending Church services on a Sunday but more of the population are seeking a spiritual dimension to their lives, this is set against a background of fears about increased consumerism and debt, local violence and unruly teenagers. As fewer candidates are coming forward for ordination the Church is moving to a more developed and structured Lay Ministry and the Scottish Episcopal women feature in this trend and are involved in raising social awareness and engaged in many projects at local level.

The establishment of a Scottish Parliament which includes devolved powers on health, education, women's issues and voluntary sector, has led to a more open form of government. When a Bill is proposed, a consultation paper is released and made available for the public to respond with their views. It is important, in the face of so much secularism, that a Christian viewpoint is made. The Mothers' Union (MU) members in Scotland have responded over the last 2 years to the Sexual Health Strategy, the Family Matters Consultation, Work and Families: choice and flexibility (relating to Maternity benefits and time off work). They also responded recently to the proposal that Retail Trading should be made illegal on Christmas Day and New Year's Day as it could discriminate against the poorest who should be allowed this time with their families.

The MU members are also involved in the Make Poverty History Campaign and hope to have a large presence at the rally in Edinburgh in July prior to the G8 Conference at Gleneagles Hotel. This campaign seeks to put pressure on rich nations to cancel the debt of the poorest countries and encourage fair trade and justice.

The MU's involvement in social concern and welfare is balanced and enriched by our emphasis on prayer and worship. Our Provincial Retreat this year was on the theme "I am: seeking God and knowing myself". We were encouraged to discover who we were and how God was calling us. Apart from Retreats and Quiet days, the MU has regularly held events such as "Celebrating the Family"; "Looking at ways to encourage children in church"; developing our prayer life and exploring new ways to meditate. We also run training days to enable women to volunteer for project work and know their responsibilities when working with children and vulnerable adults and to ensure their own personal safety.

MU members in Scotland are involved in a variety of projects including helping in play schemes in several prisons, running a Family Contact Centre which helps maintain children's contact with estranged parents, Parenting courses and Mother and Toddler groups etc.

The MU members in Scotland are active ecumenically and seek to work with other Christian denominations on such committees as the World Day of Prayer, groups involved in such areas as prevention of domestic violence, Refugees, drug addiction, prostitution and at present the proposed extensions to the Gambling Laws. This year women from different churches within the UK will be meeting in Scotland at two events - a 4 Nations' Women's conference and a WISE (Wales, Ireland, Scotland and England) women's Synod. The Episcopal Church and the Mothers' Union will be represented at both of these events.

We endeavour, with God's Grace, to work to his praise and glory here in the Province of Scotland.

### 2.3 (d) The Church of England

For women in ordained ministry in the Church of England, 2004 was a very significant and special year as it marked the 10th anniversary of the first women to be ordained as priests in the church. Each diocese marked the anniversary with a service of Holy Communion in their Cathedral, and most though not all had the support of their diocesan and Suffragan Bishop.

In February 2005, the General Synod of the Church of England debated the Rochester Report, “Women Bishops in the Church of England?” At the end of a very lengthy debate synod accepted the report on a take note motion and proceeded to look at ways in which legislation can be drawn up to allow those women with the right skills and gifts to fulfil their calling to serve as Bishop in the church.

### 2.4 Region of Africa

It was a wonderful experience for the Anglican women from the Region of Africa to have had the opportunity to meet and share experiences with each other. We are very thankful to everyone who made it possible to happen. This was historic, as 16 women from 9 African Provinces met (English and French speakers – Egypt joined the Arab speaking region). As a result, we unanimously decided to congregate as a Region to discuss important issues that concern ourselves, our families, churches, countries and Region.

The Vision of our Region is “To be the Voice of the Voiceless”. It is rooted in Scripture: “Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute”. (Proverbs 31.8)

Our Mission is to enable gender concerns to be voiced through churches, theological institutions, faith based organizations and any other available platforms. We have for our objectives the following: -

- 1.Strengthen the church-life application of gender issues.
- 2.Encourage the progression of gender within the church
- 3.Promote health issues in the church and communities
- 4.Educate the church in gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting in all activities
- 5.Promote networking within our region

To achieve these goals we undoubtedly have to work together, that is, the Anglican Communion in our Region in collaboration with the Anglican Communion worldwide.

Since our parting in New York in mid March 2005, we have been networking with each other within our Region, via email or post. The Anglican women of Africa are determined to realize our objectives and have planned to gather before the end of October 2005 to continue the work.

We therefore, request the ACC13 and the Primates to support our cause by providing work facilities for the Provincial representative and maintain contact with her.

2.4 (a) Zimbabwe, The Church of the Province of Central Africa.

1. **Poverty:** In the face of a deteriorating economy with a high rate of inflation (over 100%), unemployment (over 70%), a collapsing health system and recurrent droughts, poverty levels are rising at an alarming rate, and the women are the ones to bear the brunt of having to fend for their families, especially where husbands are unemployed, sick or deceased. The wife/mother often becomes the breadwinner, a role traditionally taken by the husband.
  
2. **Professional women** find themselves overburdened as, unlike their husbands, they also have to look after the home and raise the children in addition to often demanding jobs. Especially in previously male-dominated professions, they have to be several times better than their male counterparts to get promoted. They are also exposed to sexual harassment at the work place, and when they do rise to the top, they are suspected to have done so through giving sexual favours to men in important positions.
  
3. **Widows:** Widows get shunned by the late husband's family and are often accused of having killed their husband and end up being deprived of all their possessions. Even the children may be taken away from her. This is a distortion of cultural practice as traditionally the husband's family would have to take care of the widow and her children.  
 There is also little recognition of wives who are professional and have made substantial contributions to the matrimonial home. It appears the extended family is out to gain as much as they can in material terms from the death of their son/brother.  
 All this happens within our so-called good Christian families. Our own MU members may be the ones who are inflicting misery on their daughters-in-law. In addition, widows, no matter how young they are, are not expected to re-marry, and this impacts further on the spread of HIV & AIDS.
  
4. **HIV/AIDS:** Poverty is directly linked to the spread of HIV/AIDS as most of those infected with the virus are not able to afford anti-retroviral drugs. Women are the victims in most cases contracting the virus from their husbands. Even where a woman is aware that her husband is HIV positive or has full-blown AIDS, the husband may not be willing to use a condom, and at the same time she cannot refuse him sexual intercourse. This issue comes up regularly at our MU gatherings.  
 Women end up being the caregivers to those who have AIDS including the unfaithful husband who will return to his wife once he is sick. The women also have to fend for the children whether the husband is sick, loses employment or eventually dies. She herself may also be infected with the virus. Anti-retroviral drugs are not available to those who cannot afford them.

In addition, people are afraid to speak openly about their status due to stigmatisation which is still rampant. This means they cannot be given adequate counseling and medical advice.

5. **Wife-beating/abuse:** This is rampant in a lot of families if not most. It is considered to be normal by many that wives need to be beaten from time to time. She too may accept it as a token of the husband's love for her!! Generally women are not expected to speak out against such treatment and in most cases silently endure and suffer abusive relationships. Sermons rarely address such issues as they are considered too sensitive, or may be the priest himself considers wife-beating as normal.  
With increasing poverty and unemployment, husbands experience high levels of frustration which in turn is taken out on the family and the wife in particular. Cases of serious injury and even death resulting from husbands' assaults are not uncommon.
6. **Rape:** Rape too is on the increase especially during times of political tension like elections campaigns. If women are raped, they often do not dare to report it to the police lest they be thrown out by their husband suspecting them of having an affair. This also makes women easy victims to contracting HIV. Rape within marriage is hardly talked about at all or recognized as an issue. Again many women suffer in silence.  
At our MU gatherings women have complained about the increase in fathers raping their own daughters and granddaughters. Their mothers may not dare report such cases to the police.
7. **Migration of women to other countries:** Many women, especially those with skills like nursing leave Zimbabwe to work abroad. While they will all give economic reasons for their migration, in some cases they are trying to escape from an HIV positive husband, or indeed they are already HIV positive themselves and hope to get easier access to medication abroad. They often leave behind their husbands and children which is not conducive to stable family life, and in itself compounds the spread of the virus.
8. **Absence of ordination of women in the Province of Central Africa:** Our women would benefit a great deal if we had women priests as women do not find it easy to confide in male priests, especially concerning very private and sensitive issues. They have often expressed their desire to see women ordained to the priesthood, especially since women are in the majority in the church and in the rural areas are often leaders of congregations. It appears that the special gifts women could bring into the priesthood as complementary to those of men would go a long way in offering a more wholistic ministry to our people. While our diocese voted in favour of women's ordination, to date the issue has not received majority support in the Province.

## 2.4 (b) Province de L'Eglise Anglicane Du Congo

Greetings in the name of our Saviour Jesus Christ. I thank God for giving me the opportunity to share with you the difficulties we are facing.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo people are living in extreme poverty causing hunger and starvation because of the political and economic instability. Armed conflicts aggravate the situation because of displacement, loss of properties, burning of farms and villages, and sexual violence. Women and children are the victims of conflict: they are suffering without end.

In Congolese society women bear all the responsibility for caring for the family. Poor women work hard to ensure family survival. She must leave home early to get her goods to market, and return late in the night, having left her children alone at home. Meanwhile the husband plays cards, until his wife comes back. He expects her to work hard for him because he bought her from her family. Sometimes she becomes a prostitute in order to earn money. HIV/AIDS is often an inevitable consequence. The Mothers' Union of the Diocese of Katanga is working to alleviate the problems. The initiatives include teaching women about:

- Peace, and conflict resolution,
- Gender justice,
- Violence against women,
- Micro-credit for those who want to do business,
- Skills such as sewing and needlework.

With these initiatives we will achieve our four objectives in order to alleviate the poverty that affects our sisters in the Diocese of Katanga.

We need to explain our situation to the International Anglican Women's Network. If our voices are heard and if we give the information about women from the Democratic Republic of Congo, IAWN will be able to share with us and to propose ways forward.

The Network will be strengthened if we manage to spread it to UFPPS Union des Femmes pour la Paix et la Promotion Sociale, Women United for Peace and Social Promotion, throughout all the Province of the Anglican Church of Congo.

We need to organise training sessions and conferences in the various dioceses to explain what the Network means and to establish a representative in each diocese. Through the representatives, women in different dioceses can learn about their Anglican sisters around the world, and we, in turn, can share with the IAWN.

Please we need your help

#### 2.4 (c) The Church of the Province of Uganda

The goal of the organization known as Family Empowerment and Development is to create and restore family values and sustain a stable family life. It is addressing the issues of:

- Domestic Violence.
- Parenting skills and styles.
- HIV/AIDS.
- Poverty eradication.

In rural areas, women are victims of HIV/AIDS because of economic dependence on their husbands. They have no sexual bargaining power. Husbands, who have paid bride price, believe that the words “marital rape” do not exist in marriage. The Domestic Relations Bill has yet to be passed by Parliament.

Discussions continue on the issues of:

- female poverty and economic empowerment;
- the causes of domestic violence and on how to deal with the perpetrators;
- personal development, self esteem, life skills and counseling skills;
- how to access free legal aid from FIDA;
- home-based care services for families that are affected with HIV/AIDS.

With minimal resources, the workers have not given up hope that God will provide the funding at His timing.

#### 2.4 (d) Province of the Episcopal Church of the Sudan

Extreme disappointment has been expressed by Sudanese Church leaders at the needless deaths and injuries incurred in the Khartoum suburb of Soba Aradi in May, 2005, as police attempted to evict internally-displaced residents of the area by force.

The Bishop of Khartoum, Rt Revd Ezekiel Kondo, visited Soba Aradi and consoled residents still traumatized by the incident.

"The deaths of civilians and police like this is a terrible thing at any time, but is completely wrong at the present moment as concrete progress is being made towards peace," decried Bishop Kondo. He expressed condolence to all the bereaved.

Soba Aradi is a well-established area for internally-displaced Sudanese on the South East edge of Khartoum. Over the last twenty years, war-displaced people from Southern Sudan and Nuba Mountains have made their homes there, being joined more recently by displaced people from Darfur. Schools and churches have grown up to serve the local community. However, in September 2004, bulldozers were sent in to destroy some 7,500 homes in that area in the name of town planning. Land was to be re-allocated to residents through a process of registration, while schools and places of worship were left standing.

With the lack of subsequent progress on land allocation, residents who have remained in the area were recently instructed to rebuild one room each for protection against the heavy rains due in the coming months. Many had begun to do so when police arrived unannounced to evict them.

Residents awoke on the morning of Wednesday 18th May 2005 to find the entire area surrounded by the army, including three tanks. Armed police then moved in to evict people from their homes. As no advanced warning had been given, many residents determined to resist forced eviction. In the ensuing violence, both civilians and police were killed and many more injured. Official figures set the number of police killed at 14 while the number of civilian deaths is unconfirmed. State authorities announced only 3 civilian deaths while reports from media and local communities have put this figure at between 15-22, including several children.

The Constitutional Review Commission, tasked with creating a new national Constitution under the terms of the Sudan Peace Agreement, was meeting as these events took place and suspended discussions for the day out of concern. The UN Secretary General's representative on the human rights of internally displaced persons has also expressed serious concern and called for any relocation not to be undertaken in an atmosphere conducive to violence and only to be carried out in full consultation with those affected.

## **2.5 Region of Jerusalem and the Middle East**

The Anglican Peace and Justice Network held a meeting in Jerusalem. The APJN report stated: "We note the continuing policies of illegal home demolitions, detentions, checkpoints, identity card systems and the presence of the Israeli military that make any kind of normal life impossible."

In search of a normal life, many Christians have emigrated. The population of Israel/Palestine is now less than 3% Christian.

## **2.6 Region of West Asia**

### **2.6 (a) The Church of North India (United)**

The Church Conference of Asia (CCA) held its 12th assembly. The theme was Building Communities of Peace. Prior to that, in Chiangmai Thailand, the Pre-assembly Women's Forum was held. Before reading the message from the women's forum in the General Assembly, women entered the hall with banners held high while the singing:

"Women are now arriving through the doors and through the windows,  
From the streets and from the alleys,  
Women are now arriving, women are now arriving."

Truly we are still in the process of arriving. There is so much that we have yet to do towards building communities of peace in Asia. But as we dream, pray, study and work together, our dreams will come true.

Women of Asian Churches said that we are expected to build Communities of Peace in the Midst of Suffering.

Women in Asia struggle against the day-to-day hardships standing at the crossroads of different forms of violence and discrimination, namely: sexism, heterosexism, race, class, caste, religious violence and ethnocentrism. We deplore the complicity of the church in inflicting violence on the vulnerable and those it deems as “the other” by using the Bible and religious and theological traditions to legitimize such cruelties. We deeply understand that women’s experience of violence is profoundly connected with the degradation of the Earth. One has to have a deep sense of justice to be able to see the forces that cause the extreme poverty and suffering of the vast majority of Asian people, especially women and children.

We believe that it is not God’s will for women and children to suffer any form of violence. We are created in God’s image; therefore we claim our place as equal partners with men in the task of building communities of peace. We have the potential and gifts to offer to the church to promote justice, peace and to make community life flourish in its fullness. We are endowed with God’s gift of dignity and human rights to experience the fullness of life (John 10:10) and to be the salt of the earth (Mark 19:50b). Women are able to experience the abundant life that Jesus the Christ has spoken of, only when we commit ourselves to choose life rather than death (Deuteronomy 30:19). This demands that we continue to resist the evils that denigrate life, and to affirm our potential to build communities where justice, love and peace flourish. We condemn all forms of violence inflicted on women and children as sin. Even as we nurse our own pains, we are called to be agents of healing and bind the wounds of others.

The contributions of Asian women in doing theology are still not taken seriously. Our method is not only contextual and transformative; it is also integral and inclusive. Asian theologies have emerged, but still the voices of women are rarely listened to. We women are called by our faith to condemn patriarchy and empire. In this light, we commit ourselves to collectively transgress the boundaries of structures set by patriarchy and the hegemonic control in church and society.

It was recommended that the Church Council of Asia General Assembly should:

Re-affirm and strengthen its commitment to gender justice and ensure full participation of women in the church.

Endeavor to bring an end to all forms of violence against women and children in church and society.

Continue to encourage resistance to the forces of globalization that denigrate the dignity of women and children, and of the Earth.

Guarantee support for women victims of abuse and violence, especially in situations of conflict and war.

Engage in serious study on the broader issue of human sexuality.

The participants acknowledged the efforts of the Church Council of Asia in enabling women and men to reflect on the challenges to build communities of peace. However, we challenge CCA to do more and go beyond the commonplace. We urge CCA to continue to grow in its concern over the impact of patriarchy and globalization on the lives of women and children in Asia. We call on the churches to repent its complacency and complicity to different forms of violence, and endeavor to end violence against women and children. We urge men to be truly our partners in the struggle for just and peaceful communities for women and children. Let the churches' practice of genuine solidarity with women be an embodiment of our faith in Jesus the Christ who showed us the Way to build communities of peace.

The Bride School at Aurangabad teaches the girls about marriage, health, kitchen work, etc. There are 16 girls and Mrs. Sharda C. Aswale the Bride School teacher informed me that they are taking 10 years old girls and helping them till the age of 16. There's a question in my mind that India's marriage age for a girl is 18 years, so we should continue to keep these girls till the age of 18 and give them proper guidance about marriage and family. I am thankful to the teacher Mrs. Sharda Aswale and Warden of Christ Church Ms. Khare for their help for these little girls.

## **2.7 Region of Oceania**

The Anglican Church in Aotearoa, Polynesia, and New Zealand, of Australia, of Melanesia, and of Papua New Guinea.

Women of the Anglican Communion in Oceania continue to work actively both in their churches and their communities. They do not confine this activity to their local situation, but are frequently contributing their skills nationally and internationally. In Australia and New Zealand the increasing commitments expected from women to care for their families, to be active in their communities, to be efficient and capable employees/employers, and to contribute to their church community frequently means that involvement in church activities declines even to the extent that worship becomes an infrequent activity. 'Church' is often considered to have nothing to say to the pressures of life in an increasingly secular society.

The representative from Diocese of Polynesia reports "Women's ministry has been undergoing a lot of change in the last fifteen years. With the emphasis on partnerships between the laity and the ordained, women and men, young and old, the Diocese spearheaded its awareness and training programmes to equip all the baptised for their different ministries. This resulted in creating an environment that was positive for women to pursue their own ministries. This is evident in the increased number of women in the ordained ministry, those with formal theological education, number of lay ministers and those in decision-making bodies such as vestries, issue committees, standing committee and synod. The democratization of church institutional structures, though slow in pace, is

commensurate with the changes that are happening in the wider socio-political and cultural milieu."

The major issues and challenges listed from Polynesia are also those of women in the Provinces of Melanesia and Papua/New Guinea, and for groups within Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand.

\*The rising cost of living and increasing impoverishment - costs of food, medicines, schooling, housing are all rising

\*AIDS/STIs on the rise and churches not actively promoting prevention.

\*Violence & abuse against women & children is increasing and is frequently considered to be normal behaviour.

\*In many countries there is ethnic tension, political instability and armed uprisings.

Women have been active in the promotion of mediation and peaceful resolution.

\*The tension between raising of children within traditional cultural values and modern western values. This is a source of major tension between younger and older generations.

\*Churches losing congregations to Pentecostal churches.

## **2.8 Region of the East Asia**

### **2.8 (a) The Episcopal Church in the Philippines**

The common concern that we would like to present to the ACC is the approval/affirmation and implementation that women within the worldwide Anglican Communion have at least a 30% representation in all decision-making or important Commissions/Committees of their churches and its institutions. Lest we be misunderstood of just pushing women who may not be qualified for such positions or appointments, we would like to make clear that qualified women be appointed or included in the list of nominations for memberships to the said Commissions/Committees. Our church must acknowledge that the women comprise the biggest group in the congregations, that the women have proven their leadership skills in the various church projects undertaken (mostly with flying colours!), and that the women are now equipped and empowered to participate in major bodies affecting their local churches. We ask only for more understanding and acknowledgement of our gifts which we have been trying to extend to our churches.

The women in our churches have long stayed in the background in view of the accepted tradition of keeping to our places. There are a few women who have been recognized by the church and have been appointed to decision-making bodies but the number of such "recognized" women has not grown or increased. A significant number of these appointments have been to committees that are thought to be "for women".

It is disturbing to note that, when women share amongst themselves ideas and concerns about our churches, their voices seem to be silent. Most of the ideas that come out from such gatherings are not even relayed to the proper bodies (due to fear maybe of rejection?), or when the women do open up to their generally male leaders, they are not given the attention and importance they deserve.

## 2.8 (b) Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui

### A) Within the Church:

There is no structure, neither explicitly in constitutional provisions nor in implicit practice, to prescribe or encourage the participation of ordained or lay women in Church decision-making bodies such as vestry membership, diocesan committees, or provincial committees, despite election to these organs through a democratic process. Since the Beijing Platform for Action aims at equal participation between genders in government and NGOs, and the Millennium Development Goals have set 2015 as the target date, a mere 10 years from now, we have to hasten our process and we have a long way to go.

Even though Hong Kong was the forerunner in women's ordination, statistics show that women priests are in a marked minority. More active effort, it seems, needs to be put towards identifying, nurturing and preparing suitable candidates for such calling.

### B) Social Issues Affecting Women

Domestic Violence is a serious matter as witnessed by a number of extremely tragic cases in which families of mother and children commit suicide after being abused.

New Immigrant-wives from Mainland China, very often young wives married to old husbands, and with very young children, experience severe problems adjusting to a highly urbanised environment.

In both of the above, government resources, to alleviate the problems, are insufficient.

HKSKH has responded promptly and pro-actively to the plight of immigrant wives by providing centres of information and assistance in Mainland China even before their departure for Hong Kong, and follow-up care and assistance after arrival.

Overseas Domestic Helpers, mostly from the Philippines, Indonesia and Sri Lanka, are increasingly reporting physical abuse by employers. There is a shelter set up in the Cathedral as a safe haven where the women can tell their stories. Betty Chan, our Chairperson of HKSKH Women's League, is planning a seminar to educate local employers about better treatment of overseas helpers and the promotion of deeper understanding, sympathy and care for these women.

Care for the Aged is a great concern. The demography of Hong Kong population is aging fast like an inverted triangle with the family structure of fewer young people taking care of aged parents, grandparents. Young people are struggling for their own livelihood and care for the aged is often neglected. Older women are overworked as they end up looking after their husbands who are ill, and tending to grandchildren. HKSKH has responded to this need by rendering all sorts of relief such as delivering meals, health care at home, centres for child-care, and centres for aged folks.

C) Participation in last 49th Session of UN Commission on Status of Women

Betty Chan and I, Fung-yi Wong, and members of HKSKH thank the Anglican Observer for organising the Anglican delegation to the UN Commission on the Status of Women, 2005, the American and Canadian sisters' and church's generosity for making this meeting possible for us, and our Archbishop the Most Revd. Dr. Peter Kwong for encouraging us to take part in this meeting.

Betty and I and hopefully, in turn, members of HKSKH, will become more sensitised to issues women face in Hong Kong and we pray we shall become God's instruments in realising the goals as set down in the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Goals which our Church and the wider secular human society have endorsed as evidenced in United Nations' resolutions.

We shall communicate to IAWN our progress in the above causes and the progress of HKSKH Women's League in joining the worldwide organisation of Mothers' Union.

**4.0 Region Name and Steering Committee Link for the Region, followed by a listing of the Provinces of the Region, and the extra-territorial churches (XT).**

**Region of Latin America & Caribbean, Rev'd Canon Emily Morales**

Iglesia Anglicana de la Region Central de America  
 La Iglesia Anglicana de Mexico  
 The Episcopal Church in the USA, Province IX  
 The Church in the Province of the West Indies  
 Iglesia Episcopal de Cuba (extra-territorial)

**Region of South America, Christina Winnischofer**

Igreja Episcopal Anglicana do Brasil  
 Iglesia Anglicana del Cono Sur de America

**Region of North America & United Kingdom, Rev'd Nancy Acree**

The Anglican Church of Canada  
 The Church of England  
 The Church of Ireland  
 The Scottish Episcopal Church  
 The Episcopal Church in the USA  
 The Church in Wales

**Region of Africa, Priscilla Julie**

The Episcopal Church of Burundi  
 The Church of the Province of Central Africa  
 Province de L'Eglise Anglicane Du Congo  
 The Church of the Province of the Indian Ocean  
 The Anglican Church of Kenya  
 The Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)  
 L'Eglise Episcopal au Rwanda  
 The Church of the Province of Southern Africa  
 The Episcopal Church of the Sudan  
 The Anglican Church of Tanzania  
 The Church of the Province of Uganda  
 The Church of the Province of West Africa

**Region of Jerusalem and the Middle East, Eliane Abd El Nour**

Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East

**Region of West Asia, Link Team Prabhjot Masih, Jyotsna Patro**

The Church of Bangladesh  
 The Church of the Province of Myanmar (Burma)  
 The Church of North India (United)  
 The Church of Pakistan (United)  
 The Church of South India (United)  
 The Church of Ceylon (extra-territorial)

**Region of Oceania, Janet Hesketh**

The Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand & Polynesia  
 The Anglican Church of Australia  
 The Church of the Province of Melanesia  
 The Anglican Church of Papua New Guinea.

**Region of East Asia, Esperanza Beleo**

Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui  
 The Nippon Sei Ko Kai (Japan)  
 The Anglican Church of Korea  
 The Episcopal Church in the Philippines  
 Church of the Province of South East Asia