

## **OPEN LETTER TO THE EPISCOPAL-ANGLICAN CHURCH OF BRAZIL (IEAB)**

*"Awake, awake, Deborah!*

*Awake, awake, utter a song!"*

(Judges 5,12)

### **Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,**

At our meeting from 8 to 11 September 2005, in Itaára, State of Rio Grande do Sul (RS), we, Anglican women, theologians, clerics, and laywomen, representing all the dioceses in our province, together with our peers in mission in England, Canada, and the United States, celebrated and evaluated the call God has made to each one of us to construct a new society and a Church committed to the needs of the suffering poor; and we found, through study and reflection on the IEAB's current state of affairs; women, power, and service; missiology and ministry; testimonials and talks by various colleagues, and a reinterpretation of the Bible through critical hermeneutics, that:

The Ordained Ministry of women currently represents 30% of the national clergy, which brings the Igreja Episcopal Anglicana do Brasil closer to the ideal Christian community. The feminine, more inclusive, way encompasses those who stand out, shows a different pastoral, theological, liturgical, missiological, and ecclesiological face, and contributes to the construction of an engaged, prophetic, ecumenical, merciful, and inclusive Church.

We believe that, over the past twenty years, we have had many achievements. Yet, this journey makes us aware that the Church needs to go even further; thus, we recommend that:

- the IEAB's educational training include the issue of gender, which entails a revision of the curriculum and the addition of a chair of Feminist Theology at our Seminaries and Theological Studies Centers in our Dioceses; and that the Center for Anglican Studies (CEA) foster deeper discussion of the matter by holding regional and diocesan seminars; and that the National Board for Theological Education (JUNET) include in its scholarship program training in other areas of knowledge, as a way to help develop the ministry.
- the IEAB upholds the resolution of the Anglican Consultative Council, of June 2005, which requests that half of all decision-making positions: parochial, diocesan, and provincial offices and commissions be filled by women.
- the salary policy of the dioceses justly and fairly reflect women's exercise of ministry by paying dignified salaries at the same levels at which men carrying out the same functions are paid; and that the labor entitlements and supplemental pension plan benefits (FAPIEB) also be upheld;

Believing that this Church has sought daily to carry out the will of God, who ignores neither justice nor mercy, we write this letter to disclose our achievements, dreams, and challenges, so that the IEAB may effectively receive women's ministry at its most intimate level, under equal terms, and with respect toward our differences. We renew our commitment to be, like Deborah, witnesses of courage, love, mercy, goodness, justice, equality, solidarity, and service in the awakening of a prophetic Church, and to be committed to the Kingdom.

In God, the Mother and Father, who loves all women and men unconditionally.

*Clergy Women of the IEAB*

*Santa Maria, 10 September 2005*