



# IAWN

## International Anglican Women's Network

### IAWN Report to Anglican Consultative Council / Primates Joint Standing Committee February 2007

It is with great pleasure that I present this report on behalf of the Steering Group of the International Anglican Women's Network (IAWN).

Since our election in March 2006 we have been working towards achieving the objectives and vision of IAWN as outlined in our brochure (attached). Copies in Spanish or French are available upon request from the JSC member who reports for us.

To date 22 Provincial Link women have been appointed. We thank those Primates who have responded and we look forward to welcoming the remaining 16 Provincial Link women when appointed by their respective Primates.

During 2006 IAWN Steering Group Members attended and made presentations at the:

- ♦ Episcopal Church Women Triennial meeting in Columbus, Ohio, USA, June 2006
- ♦ First Women's Conference of Nippon Sei Ko Kai, Hakone, Japan, August 2006
- ♦ World Assembly of Religions for Peace, Kyoto, Japan, August 2006
- ♦ Australian Movement for the Ordination of Women National Conference, "Women in the Wings", Melbourne, Australia, June 2006
- ♦ Diocese of El Salvador, Women's Committee, El Salvador, May 2006
- ♦ The Compass Rose Society, London, England, 5 October 2006
- ♦ "Women and Ordination" Conference, Manchester, UK, July 2006.

Funding is of immediate concern. Various sources are being researched.

Congratulatory letters were sent to The Rt. Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori on her election as Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church (USA); to Hellen Wangusa, appointed as Anglican Communion Observer at the United Nations; and to Rev. Canon Nerva Cot Aguilera, who was appointed Suffragan Bishop of the Episcopal Church of Cuba.

Future activities include:

- ♦ 51<sup>st</sup> Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW), February/March 2007
- ♦ 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the birth of the Rev Dr Florence Li Tim-Oi, the first woman priest in the Anglican Communion, 5 May 2007, with commemoration services to be held in England, Canada and elsewhere.
- ♦ TEAM Conference in South Africa, March 2007
- ♦ Joint meeting of Anglican Peace and Justice Network and IAWN in Kigali, Goma and Bujumbura, including a consultation meeting for the Anglican women in the Great Lakes Region to discuss war and conflict and related problems that have degraded the humanity of women as well as girls, 25 September – 3 October 2007.

We are particularly grateful for the extraordinary work and fundraising of Anglican Women's Empowerment, in conjunction with The Episcopal Church, which has made it possible for Anglican women from throughout the Communion to gather together around the sessions of the UNCSW, to get to know one another, share concerns, and coordinate for the future.

Please find attached a report from The Mother's Union (**Annex A**) and the IAWN Provincial Link Women (**Annex B**) detailing progress towards empowering women across the Communion.

The Steering Group, on behalf of all women in the Anglican Communion, thank you for your continued support and prayers for this important work for God's Kingdom.

Grace and Peace be with you all.

Your Sister in Christ,

Priscilla Julie  
Coordinator, IAWN Steering Group  
8 February 2007

## Report of The Mothers' Union to the Joint Standing Committee, February 2007

The Mothers' Union (MU) organisation is the voice of 3.6 million members around the world and is now active in 77 countries. Below is a summary of highlights from 2006.

- ♦ **77<sup>th</sup> member country:** Canon Andrew White inaugurated Iraq as the 77<sup>th</sup> member country at Easter 2006. Its 400 plus very enthusiastic members in the Baghdad branch are based in St George's Anglican Church. As the main organisers of the Children's Church, which is large and growing, these MU members are one of the few signs of hope and a true ray of light in the darkness against the background of the increasing tragedy of Iraq.
- ♦ **The 5<sup>th</sup> Instrument of Unity:** At the World Conference of Churches in Brazil in February 2006, the Archbishop of Canterbury repeated the comments that he had made several times before that he sees the MU as the 5<sup>th</sup> Instrument of Unity of the Anglican Communion.
- ♦ **Ethnic workers:** The MU has 321 trained ethnic workers worldwide.
- ♦ **The Family Life Programme:** the pilot in Uganda has had an amazing effect on the communities of Central Buganda, Luweero, Mbale and Sebei within a very short time frame. Reports say that families are healthier, disease in the communities has been reduced, fertile soil is not being washed into streams or rivers and food is available all year round.
- ♦ **The Adult Literacy & Development programmes:** now extended into new communities in Burundi, Malawi and Sudan. In recent elections in Burundi many women voted for the first time with their new-found skills and helped their illiterate friends as they could now read the candidates names. The Batwa community is now building a future for themselves as a result of the Literacy & Development programme ending countless years of marginalisation. In Malawi relationships between husband and wife and between different faith groups and denominations in the community have been positively affected. The empowered learners have joined together to address key challenges in their surroundings such as AIDS orphans and have set up an AIDS orphans feeding programme.
- ♦ **Parenting Programmes:** communities in Britain and Ireland are benefiting and this programme is now being offered worldwide and a pilot scheme is being run in Guyana. Good sensitive parenting is at the heart of stable family life and these skills can be encouraged and enhanced by careful debate and guidance.
- ♦ **"Understand and Affirm" booklet:** produced to redress issues of social injustice and helping the disadvantaged, it is a guide to disability awareness.
- ♦ **"Fair Enough?" book:** on fair trade, it looks at the global issues of good stewardship and sustainable development and calls for the restoration of ethical practices among workers and producers by changing legislation and daily practices that harm the rest of the world.
- ♦ **"For better not for worse – a wider understanding of marriage" booklet:** produced to explore the MU's objective to uphold Christ's teaching on the nature of marriage and promote its wider understanding. The booklet gives the MU policy perspective on marriage and considers the questions that the Government, Church and others should be doing to support marriage in Britain and Ireland.
- ♦ **Faith and Policy Unit:** Spirituality and prayer are at the heart of the MU and the Faith & Policy Unit at MSH is exploring how this crucial strand flows through all the MU work and projects.
- ♦ **UN accreditation:** Members of staff and trustees attended the 50<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW) in New York, 2006, joining with members of the ACC and the Anglican Observer at the UN. They took part in debates and produced a side event around the theme of gender equality. The MU is committed to empowering women and thereby enabling them to raise their living standards and implement the recommendations for action set out at the Beijing Platform in 1995 and thereby reach the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).
- ♦ **Worldwide representation:** In 2006 the members of the MU have ensured the views of the organisation truly represent their world-wide membership by electing members from Central Africa, Uganda and Australia to the Central Trustee Board which is the governing body of the MU, and also elected a Representative member to World wide Council from Canada.

Charmian Paterson, MU member of IAWN Steering Group, November 2006

## Vignettes from the Provinces

Throughout the Communion, Anglican/Episcopal women yearn to contribute their God-given talents in all arenas of Church ministry and governance. ACC Resolution 13/31 has been greeted with joy and has given impetus to their work. Some brief vignettes follow.

### Great Lakes Region of Africa

- ♦ Organising a joint consultation meeting with the Anglican Peace and Justice Network for the Anglican women in the Great Lakes Region to discuss problems related to war and conflict that have degraded the humanity of women as well as girls.

### North India

- ♦ Programmes are in place to assist women and children in overcoming the issues they face in day-to-day living. These programmes work at the individual, parish, diocesan and government levels to bring about changes to ensure that the rights of women and children are respected and met.

### Canada

- ♦ Anglican women work to alleviate the scourges of poverty, racism, environmental degradation, human trafficking and other social justice issues, both within the parish and with nation-wide coalitions. Working collegially with the vast spectrum of races and cultures within Canada, especially our First Nations peoples and the francophone, brings rich rewards.

### Hong Kong

- ♦ Although Hong Kong was a forerunner in women's ordination, women priests are still in the minority, with more effort needed in identifying, nurturing and preparing suitable candidates for this calling.
- ♦ Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui (HKSKH) Women's League programs include:
  - information and assistance to new immigrant wives who are at risk of domestic violence
  - sheltering overseas domestic helpers who have suffered physical abuse
  - supporting the ageing population by delivering meals and health care at home centres.

### Australia

- ♦ The Women's Commission was re-established to provide advice and a voice to the national church on issues and concerns regarding women. It will also bring forth strategies to the 2007 meeting of General Synod to progress ACC 13/31. The question of the legitimacy of ordaining women as bishops with respect to the Church's Constitution continues to be investigated and will hopefully be answered in mid-2007.

### Wales

- ♦ A presentation on ACC 13/31 and the role of Anglican Women at the UNCSW was made to the Governing Body of the Church in Wales. A motion was passed on action to be taken towards implementing ACC 13/31 and reporting back to ACC 2008 on progress towards equal representation in Wales. A group with representatives from every diocese is taking this motion forward.

### Philippines

- ♦ Episcopal/Anglican women work both in the Church and ecumenically on common prevailing women's issues such as Trafficking of women and children, violence against women, HIV-AIDS, gender issues and fostering indigenous women's leadership development in the third world countries.
- ♦ The National Episcopal Churchwomen also work closely with the women in its dioceses on making equal representation of men, women and youth in their local church committees a reality.

### Aotearoa, New Zealand, and Polynesia

- ♦ It was agreed that a shared resource base such as the Women's Studies Centre with both ecumenical and inter-faith dimensions is essential for all women involved in the sacred work of theological education, ministry practice and formation. Further, it will enable mutually enriching relationships between all the people of this Church to flourish.