

THE SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH

IAWN Provincial Link – Elaine Cameron

1. What are some of the achievements of Anglican women in your Province over the last 3 years? What work and programmes have women been involved in? Especially in the areas of:

- **equal representation of women in church decision-making bodies**

In June 2010, the General Synod of the Scottish Episcopal Church (SEC) received the findings of a gender audit, highlighting:

- Scarcity of women in executive leadership positions
- Preponderance of men in all matters financial; stereotyping of vestry roles
- Lack of women in Provincial & diocesan Boards and committees

Since then, we have had a female candidature for Bishop, though not her appointment. Now we have our first female Dean, a second female Synod Clerk, and a second female Provost.

- **elimination of gender-based violence**

Raising awareness of the need for a theological response to combat the injustices of violence against women, particularly concerning domestic abuse and human trafficking is a key Mothers' Union issue. Actions include:

- General Synod 2012 Motion 29, giving strong support to the Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS) work on Anti-Human Trafficking, and supporting parliamentary legislation to criminalise the purchase of sex.
- General Synod 2011 lunch-time drama offered by MU on effects of domestic abuse.
- Presentations in the Glasgow & Galloway diocese, leading to an invitation to work with the Diocesan Spirituality Group on this issue.

2. What are the main issues of concern for women in your Province? What are the biggest challenges women face? How do you think the Church might be able to address and work on these issues? Do you need help or resources to do this?

a) Church Leadership issues:

- We need to include more *women on the staff of TISEC*, our theological training institute – as teachers, chaplains and role models, for both ordained and lay women.
- At incumbent level, we need to *challenge outmoded perceptions of women's leadership* styles or lifestyles which can militate against their appointment. For example, while the institutional church is fine about flexible working around maternity issues, congregational expectations and thinking lag behind on this, resulting in women with young children having to fight a lone corner and refashion how they wish to serve their ministry.
- We also need to *challenge the working models of priests* (both female and male, especially) offering 24-7 availability. Alternative patterns could model a better work-life balance, and impact future expectations.

- Allied to this is the issue of clergy housing: with women as Incumbents, it is not always right or feasible for the family to live in a tied house.
- b) The whole area of domestic violence and human trafficking is of major concern throughout the Province, and is highlighted by Mothers' Union groups in all dioceses. Many Mothers' Union groups work closely with Women's Aid and their refuges. We are now aware that human trafficking is all over Scotland – not just the big cities. Research informs us that where prostitution is tolerated or legalised, trafficking increases. So trafficking cannot be tackled without tackling prostitution. Currently Scotland has legislation in process to criminalise the purchasing of sex, but we need lots of awareness-raising and lobbying our Members of Parliament to get this passed.
 - c) There is increasing concern about the sexualisation of children – through advertising and the media.
 - d) In these straightened economic times, poverty and workplace inequality, with many, particularly women, working part-time, with insufficient affordable child-care, are major concerns.
 - e) Burden of care: there needs to be awareness-raising of the unequal way in which caring falls on women, both health care of the young, and of the old; as well as the unseen domestic work that still falls heavily on women, jeopardising their own callings.

'Help or resources'?

Yes! Let us share resources and what proves useful; let us be aware of an inter-Communion focus.

3. What would you like to happen for women in your Province over the next 3 years? Try and be specific.

Worship:

- a) We are formed by how we pray, so we need continued work on inclusive language in liturgy: constant reorientation of attitude in our prayer life – we want women and men to appreciate the importance of language in our life and worship.
- b) We want services which lay women's issues before God's healing grace.
- c) We would like to see the recent trend in female appointments leading to the eventual election of woman Bishops.
- d) For women (and men) to appreciate the importance of Millennium Goal 3 (MDG3), the empowerment of women, and how it is unlikely the other MDGs will be met if this one isn't.
- e) The appointment of a Women's Desk Officer.

4. If you have been involved in UNCSW how has that experience been of assistance to you and women in your Province?

'The personal is political' is very real! My personal enrichment, I trust, feeds an enrichment of women in the Province highlighting:

- the global friendships formed, helping bind us as a worldwide Communion
- the significance of the ACC Networks' complementarity with the formal hierarchical church structures, and their interweaving issues
- how matters related to women are the same the world over, differing only in degree
- advocacy with *Ecumenical Women & with other NGOs in civil society* strengthened my sense of the importance of ecumenical working both ecumenically and with groups outside the church.

I want to communicate that:

- There is little likelihood of the MDGs being fulfilled by 2015 if MDG3, the empowerment of women, is not met.
- Rural women in developed countries are also disempowered – more subtly and stealthily than those in developing countries.
- The unagreed conclusions should alert us to the alarming increasing political polarisation in global understanding of the advancement of women, and the consequent importance of securing an Anglican UNCSW57 delegation which is well-informed on the priority themes and well trained in advocacy.

5. What action from the Anglican Church in your Province and across the Communion would be most effective in eliminating gender-based violence?

Across the Communion:

- a) Gender-based violence cuts across the work of several Networks – (eg, Family Network Newsletter recently focussed on violence and the family). Might there be a sharing/cascading of Resources, such as the excellent workshop which Terrie Robinson led at UNCSW56?
- b) The Primates' Letter to the Churches about gender-based violence was significant. Is there some way of the ACC following this up: eg, an ACC thrust to secure a well-prepared Anglican delegation at UNCSW57?

In the Scottish Episcopal Church:

- a) Confirm and select as soon as possible a delegate for UNCSW57.
- b) Liaison with the Churches' Parliamentary Office to secure the passing of the draft legislation to criminalise the purchasing of sex.
- c) Liaison with other civil society agencies and other denominations to raise awareness of this issue – too often swept under the carpet.
- d) Further inclusion of the MU as part of the Whole Church Mission and Ministry Policy. This highlights their part in mission strategy, and so helps to give gender-based violence a greater profile.