



IAWN

August 2022

Women in Leadership



International Anglican Women's Network

'Thinking Globally and Acting Locally'

Bringing the Perspectives of Women and Raising Issues Affecting Them

Editorial



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'Women in Leadership' equates to 'disturbing leadership' – essentially what constitutes disturbance. Before you get disturbed by the familiar negative concepts of 'disturbance,' I invite you to reflect on what it can positively bring to a community. In praxis, positively disturbing a community can result in members experiencing new ways of thinking, acting, and being. Church leaders can contribute positively to this new way. An inspirational leader can 'disturb' a complacent community into positive action. When our beliefs, assumptions, and ideas are challenged, we can feel a sense of 'disturbance,' which leads to a broadening of our theological understandings – resulting in growing our relationships with God and with one another. Disturbance offers opportunities to get us out of our comfort zones to address the issues of our world, as Jesus did.

Women who lead bring a positive disturbance to a community, and this is a very good thing. As we see in the Lambeth Conference photos of Bishops who are women, we delight in how it has disturbed the view – away from the patriarchy. We see examples in this edition of inspirational women, such as the late Audrey Rebera from Sri Lanka. Audrey was known as a radical feminist activist. She bravely took risks in protecting democratic values, challenging the status quo, and inspiring future generations to continue the positive disturbance of power. We also hear from the Most Reverend Pat Storey, Church of Ireland, on how important it is for "women to be at the table." The Reverend Canon Camellia Flanagan says that we need to break the bias against women and "call evil out," and Sister Chandrani Peiris states that the church needs to step in to safeguard children. There are stories from the Anglican Church in Melanesia about women leaders working collaboratively to offer training and resources for the empowerment of women, which is one of the main IAWN goals. AMARE's mission is to encourage, motivate, affirm, and renew the unstoppable wave of women in leadership. The Global Mission Conference, the work of the Mother's Union, the resolution on Safe Church calling attention to violence against women and girls, and the recently published resource on '*Living God's Justice*' encourages us to offer leadership that positively disturbs our world.

International Anglican Women's Network (IAWN)

'Thinking globally and acting locally', the International Anglican Women's Network (IAWN) brings the perspectives of women and raises issues affecting them to the attention of the Anglican Communion's leadership and to the wider world. The Network strengthens friendship and solidarity among Anglican women across the world and seeks the equal participation, safety and wellbeing of women throughout the Communion and in their own homes and communities.

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Women in Leadership

Most Rev. Pat Storey

Bishop of Meath and Kildare, Church of Ireland

I wonder if anyone ever asks my colleagues what it is like to be a man in leadership? At the time of writing, I have been a bishop for nine years, and I am still the only female on the Irish bench. I am also always asked: 'what does a woman bring to the table?', which I find impossible to answer. You cannot answer this without generalising – women are more collaborative; men are more straightforward; women think more about the impact their decisions have on people. All of these are somewhat true, but of course, there are many men who are collaborative and think about the impact of their decisions, and there are many straightforward women!

However, it is my experience that just being a woman at the table is what makes the difference. It has to make a big difference when 50% of the population is represented at the decision-making level. I imagine that I do think, where appropriate, 'well, how will that affect women?', or perhaps I spend more time bringing forward the female point of view to a given subject.

I do know, however, that I am the recipient, much more so than my colleagues, of the unhappy experiences of women in ministry or clergy marriages. I imagine that ordained women feel that I would understand the particular challenges that they face, especially when attempting to combine ordained ministry and motherhood. When we did a report recently about the progress, or lack thereof, of women in ministry after 30 years of the ordination of women in the Church of Ireland, this was still seen as the greatest challenge that women faced. How were women to be clergy and mothers and excel at both? Even while asking this, we were cognisant of the fact that men never asked how they could be clergy and fathers. Women who have had destructive experiences of the behaviour of their husbands who are leading churches can turn to the female bishop because they feel that they will at the very least get heard. Clergy households are not exempt from the social and domestic problems that all marriages face, which destroy some. Clergy, male and female, and their spouses, can suffer from substance abuse, domestic abuse, and cruelty. Female clergy, much more than their male counterparts, have encountered unwanted attention and touching, sexual harassment, and even, on occasion, sexual assault. A female bishop may bring no extra solutions to these problems, but it seems that we can at the very least listen, bring empathy, and point in the right direction for help and support.

My experience as a female vicar and bishop has been overwhelmingly positive. I feel that my colleagues treat me as an equal and, on occasion, seek to protect me. We enjoy good relationships and support, and even at times have fun! Church leadership, especially in a parish, is a very difficult job, and I remember how demanding it was now that I am a little apart from parish ministry. The episcopal ministry is equally challenging and demanding, but in a different way. I seem to spend a lot of my time firefighting, problem-solving and persuading. I spend a lot of time doing things that I feel I wasn't really ordained to do or indeed trained and equipped to do, but that goes for all levels of ministry. Male or female, ministry is not for the faint-hearted.

Perhaps surprisingly, the episcopal ministry has brought me more joy than I expected. I feel a deep sense of vocation to the spot where I am placed, and I deeply care for those in ministry in the dioceses. It is a privilege, and when I lose that sense of wonder, it will be time to move on.

Spiritually, it is important for me to sustain a cycle of personal retreats – that is what sustains me through difficult periods of the year. Sometimes there is barely time to breathe, and you are doing very long days and missing your day off. Putting regular retreats in the diary where I go off by myself and remind myself that God thinks I am good enough and that I am loved and accepted brings me great peace.

We have come this far, but we must not rest on our laurels. Whether male or female in episcopal leadership, we all face challenges, and we all find our joys. I will welcome the day when I am not the only female bishop on the Irish bench, and that very fact is a sign that gender inequality is slowly but surely being phased out.



Breaking the Bias

The Reverend Canon Camellia Flanagan
TSSF Grafton. NSW



"If you are not pissed off at the world, then you're just not paying attention.... But just 'cos you don't see it, it don't mean it's gone away." - Kasey Chambers' hidden song.

I was born in 1939 in Sydney and learned "That I could achieve anything I put my mind to provided it embraced right precepts, and I asked God for help."

My first encounter with gender bias was when I could not sing in the church choir at age 10 because I *was a girl*. I accompanied the choir on the organ. My first paid job, at age 11, was organist at St Andrew's Cheltenham, enabling me to take lessons. In my last year at high school, I was an organist at St. John's Beecroft.

I wanted to study art, but my parents said, "Too many artists starve," so in 1955 I went to university on a science course. I studied organ at Christ Church St Laurence in Sydney and was appointed Organist and Music director at St James Croydon in Sydney from 1958 until 1971. Here I was treated as a treasure. Just before my final uni exams, I decided I had enough and joined Bond's Industries as Dyehouse Manager's secretary. Being one of two females in the complex, I learned how to travel a lift in safety.

I married in 1961. We purchased a unit in Sydney with vendor finance at 18% as young married females were considered risks by banks. I studied Millinery and sold hats to friends. Management invited me to design lingerie and swimwear. After a trade pattern cutting course, I joined the Hestia Company in Burwood ten years later to design and coordinate lingerie. I found myself in the world of sales conferences, fashion show deadlines, and fashion industry intrigue.

In 1971, I moved to Melbourne, the heart of the fashion industry. With my supportive partner, we enjoyed the sophisticated life of the '70s after surviving the wild 60s and the aftermath of Germaine Greer's book *The Female Eunuch*. Her zest for life had a part in changing mine and inspired women to challenge ties to gender inequality and domestic servitude. This broke marriages or caused them to be renegotiated. Women realised they did not have to be good girls, get married, have kids, be nice and shut up. As a female, I could not get a bank loan, own a car, or have a Myer Card in my own name. After 30 years as a designer, factory manager, and national retail buyer, I retired in 1989, bought a Mercedes Benz convertible, founded a property investment company with my husband, joined the embroiders Guild, and purchased a home in Port Macquarie.

After my husband died in 2000, I joined a group at St. Thomas Church, Port Macquarie, studying theology, was a palliative care volunteer, and a Lay Minister. As a woman, I was deemed unsuitable for ordination, although there were women priests in the Anglican church in Australia since 1992.

After discussion with the Bishop, I was to resign from Lay Ministry and move to Kempsey to pew sit for a year. Here I was blessed and encouraged. My Lay Minister's License was restored, and I was ordained Deacon in 2009, then Priest. In 2014, I joined the ministry team at Grafton Cathedral and was made Honorary Canon- Canon Pastor in 2020. I have experienced abuse, witnessed the pain of its aftermath, and now we see that the powerful *are* being challenged. Abusers have no place to hide. Survivors are still hesitant to tell their stories, and abuse is sometimes hidden. We all need to call evil out.

This year's International Women's Day theme 'breaking the bias' is working toward a diverse, equitable, and inclusive world. We have a feast of words. The change will come when it starts from the top and the heavyweights of management model behaviour of respect and equity. The change will be lasting when parents model broken bias to their children and teach them new ways of living together and relating to each other.

I am a professed Tertiary in the Order of Saint Francis, and I leave you with a prayer of St Clare of Assisi, *What you hold, may you always hold. What you do may you always do and never abandon but with swift pace, light step, and unswerving feet, so that even your steps stir up no dust, may you go forward securely, joyfully, and swiftly, on the path of prudent happiness.*

This was part of a talk given at the Grafton Chamber of Commerce and Industry Breakfast for International Women's Day 2022.



Sister Chandrani Peiris SSM

*The Right Reverend Dushantha Rodrigo
Bishop of Colombo*

The Sisters of St. Margaret's in Polwatte in Colombo, Sri Lanka, is a home of women dedicated to the service of humanity, called from East Grinstead in the UK in 1887 to begin work in the Diocese of Colombo.

Sister Chandrani Peiris hailed from an Anglican community in the suburbs of Colombo and watched the Sisters at work. Coming from a home that needed healing, she searched for that inner peace in the wider community. Her encounter with the sisters of St. Margaret's drew her into a life of service that has brought children, youth, and senior friends a home, sanctuary, and a place of succor to add life to years rather than years to life. Her years of formation made her a sturdy woman who became a catalyst for change.

The sisters of St. Margaret's were involved in education in different parts of the country, namely Bishop's College Colombo, Buonavista Galle, and S. Thomas' Matara. They provided a home to children who grew up in their care away from their parents.

Sister Chandrani said children from Homes are ostracized in their local schools and sometimes even in their Sunday schools. In the early days, the children used to go to church in the uniform given to them by the Home, and she feels that contributed in part to their ostracism. She quickly changed that policy so that they wore casual attire and improved interaction. To give the children a sense of family, she brings them from Moratuwa to Colpetty during the holidays so that they have inter-generational interaction with the elders.

She spoke of the difficulty they had when the courts handed them children from prisons. They were very aggressive and stubborn, wanting their own way. The other children also became unsettled. However, they got professional help and counselling for their staff on handling these children, and gradually they settled into the routine. The staff is also better able to handle any situation because of the professional advice and training in counselling they receive.

This year is the Centenary of St. John's Home in Moratuwa. Thinking ahead, Sister Chandrani feels the church should get more involved in the Homes linked to the Diocese, giving the children more professional input and advice. With education going online in the past two years, much more technology and hardware input need to be given to these homes, and the children's technical skills upgraded. Gifted children also need sponsorship to enter good schools or to follow a course in the career of their choice. With the breakdown of family life and many parents seeking employment overseas, the number of neglected children will rise. The church needs to step in to safeguard these children and ensure a happy childhood.

Sister Chandrani is a calm and unruffled person.

Despite shuttling between Moratuwa and Colpetty on most days, she always has time for others and is never harried. Though she seems unflappable, she is determined to do her best for the children in her care and make their lives better.

The phrase from Proverbs 31: 25 describes her best: *'She is clothed with strength and dignity.'* Praise God.



Isandlwana Isisa Children's Project

(Caring for the destitute, orphans, and vulnerable children)
Sr. Patricia CHN – Diocese of Zululand, South Africa

The Community of the Holy Name of Jesus in South Africa is a community of nuns in the Diocese of Zululand, and we have communities in England and Lesotho.

The Isisa children's project was started in 2008 by the Community of the Holy Name Sisters when they received a donation for funding from overseas friends of CHN. This donation was earmarked for orphans, destitute and vulnerable children residing in and around the Isandlwana area. This project targets children of Isandlwana Primary and Secondary School. This project is in progress, although the COVID 19 pandemic derailed it.

Two committees oversee this project. There are four Sisters and five women from the Isandlwana area, and the parish priest of St. Vincent Parish, Rev. M. Magubane, is also a member of the committee.

This project has contributed to the lives of the children in a beautiful way. The Sisters do the following for them:

- Buy school uniforms.
- Provide Christmas goody bags with some essential products, i.e., toiletries.
- Pay registration fees for those going to tertiary before they receive state funding (National Student Financial Aid Scheme.)

We have success stories of children who are now young adults. There are three who are now qualified teachers: Thobeka Njoko is a maths and science teacher. As the eldest child, after tertiary completion, she assisted her siblings. One of them, Siphesihle Njoko, is currently a medical doctor at Charles Johnson Hospital in Nqutu. She changed her home from a rundown little dwelling to a big house. The other siblings, Sabelo and Ntuthuko, completed degrees of Bachelor of Science and Engineering, respectively.

Siyabonga Jiyane is also a teacher at a Primary School. He has a Bachelor of Education from the University of Zululand. He was identified as in need while he was at primary school. He lives with his siblings and grandparents. He built a big house for his grandparents, replacing the rundown rondavel.

Nombuso Ntshangase was identified and profiled while she was at Primary School. She completed her Bachelor of Education degree in 2020 and is still unemployed. She lives with her grandmother and siblings while looking for a teaching post in Kwazulu Natal and other provinces like Mpumalanga Province.

Another is Nkosingiphile Dladla, who was identified and profiled while she was in Secondary School. She wanted to gain sewing skills and was put in Further Education Tertiary (FET) by the Sister. She partnered with a friend to make school uniforms.

Sifiso Hadebe is also another young man who

benefitted from the program. After graduating with a Public Admin Diploma at Richfield College, Sifiso broke ties with the Sisters. We are only hoping that he is doing well wherever he is.

Currently, there are four young adults (Siyabonga Ngobese, Sinethemba Mnculwane, Sidudla Mayise, and Nokuthula Ntshangase) who are waiting for acceptance at different tertiary institutions. The other four (Sifundo Sigubudu, Ndabenhle Mazibuko, and Nontobeko Zulu) are already studying for various degrees at the University of Free State. They obtained financial aid from the government.

Besides helping children, we also help destitute families in collaboration with other church organisations such as the Mothers Union at Kwamagwaza Mission and Isandlwana. We provide food, blankets, and clothes to them.

Some cases of these children are harrowing. While others are staying with their grandmothers, some are on their own. Sinethemba Mnculwane has six siblings. Her mother died when she was very young. She said she could not really identify her.

The Isisa children's project committee members visited a destitute Msimango family at Isandlwana to give them food, clothes, and blankets. The family's father, a pensioner breadwinner, passed away. The Sisters are trying to find employment for the daughter, because nobody is working.

Besides humanitarian work, we also preach, teach and evangelise in different parishes. The priests and pastors from different parishes and dominations invite us for mission work, especially from Lent to Easter. In the Convent, we pray for the sick, the young, and the old, but because of COVID 19, we have not accepted many visitors who need prayers to stay with us.



Stories from the Anglican Church of Melanesia

Marilyn Chuchuni

ACOM, Women's Desk

Trauma Counseling Training for Survivors of Sexual Abuse

In 2021 the Solomon Islands Christian Association (SICA) Ecumenical women, including women leaders from the Anglican Church of Melanesia, came together for a one-week training workshop on counselling survivors of sexual abuse with around 60 participants. It was an excellent opportunity for women from the five mainline Churches to come together and discuss social issues that are alarming in our nation today. Issues included youth lawlessness, gender-based violence, domestic violence, sexual abuse, teenage pregnancy, and so on. This gathering helped women realize that there is an urgency to pursue trauma counseling training for women, because it is believed that most of the issues coming up are a result of stress, unemployment, urban drift, and so on. The source of the problem is not the nation. It is the home that has lost control of children's upbringing. Counseling is believed to be a way forward. The women who attended the training were both from the rural areas and the urban centers. These women are living witnesses and testimonies to tell the nation that they must start addressing major crises and stop being just onlookers. That women must be partners to dig out and tackle the root causes of such increasing social issues in the communities that spoil the peaceful nation once called Happy Isles.



ACOM Women Leaders' Consultation May - August 2022

The ACOM (Anglican Church of Melanesia) is conducting baseline assessments and consultations from May to August 2022. The consultations are expected to be done in every diocese within the ACOM.

The purpose of this consultation is to raise awareness about the responsibilities of the Desk to all female organizations and institutions and identify ways we can work collaboratively. This consultation gives ACOM women an opportunity to dialogue freely and identify gaps within their on-mission groups, such as the Mothers' Union, the two female religious communities (The Community of the Sisters of Melanesia & the Community of the Sisters

of the Church), the GFS – Girls Friendly Society, Female reps from the Sunday School and Youth Ministries and representatives from community women.

The key idea of this consultation is to have women leaders talk and listen to each other, to discuss and share their needs, priorities, and experiences. It is also an opportunity for me as the desk officer to learn first-hand needs regarding trainings, workshops, and resources available for women empowerment.

Grief and Loss Counseling Sessions for Women who lost their Husbands during the Height of the COVID-19 Pandemic

A two-week grief and loss counseling session was held for women who lost their beloved ones during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Women who attended the sessions were from all faiths, and most of these women were young mothers. The counseling sessions concluded with a service conducted by a Catholic priest. The theme for this service was *"From Horror to Healing."* It was a very emotional service. The most moving part was when the women lit candles that symbolized the life of their loved ones and brought them to the altar. The other part was when the women wrote messages expressing their feelings and also brought them to the altar, and then they burnt those messages as a sign of *'letting go.'*



An Unstoppable Wave of Women

Despite growing pressures, hundreds of indigenous women in northern Argentina are stepping up and putting their faith and love into action for their communities.

What began with a handful of women in northern Argentina in 2016 has grown into a movement of more than 1,400 women across the Anglican Province of South America.

AMARE (affiliated with Mothers' Union) seeks to gather women and help them experience and understand God's love for them and how important they are, so that they can love and serve others. (Matthew 22:37-39 is foundational) When women become members, they promise to bless their families, churches and communities, with forgiveness and reconciliation also integral. AMARE stands for Anglican Women's Group Renewed in the Spirit. The acrostic describes its mission: Animar, to encourage, Motivar, to motivate, Afirmar, to affirm, Renovar en el Espíritu, to be renewed constantly in the Spirit.

The greatest membership is in rural areas of the Diocese of Northern Argentina, among the Indigenous peoples. One Wichi woman, Isabel Vilte (died 2020), was an inspirational leader who blazed the way for women. Having been part of Mothers' Union under the leadership of early missionaries, contact was re-established around parenting programmes. Women had continued to pray for their families, with many feeling perplexed about guiding their children in a changed world. Women were encouraged to begin AMARE as a local identity to give them a voice and dignity.

Navigating a new world

Indigenous communities face increasing Western influence. Families feel this acutely – parents are ill-equipped to guide their children in interacting with unfamiliar culture and technology. Traditional skills are sidelined and parents feel powerless as they see their way of life eroding.

Gathering in community is hugely important to AMARE members in northern Argentina

AMARE parenting facilitators have held training groups to help parents navigate this new world. One parent saw this as, "a great blessing... [it] helped us feel good, it shows us how to live each day as family." Yet facilitators increasingly faced discouragement, with lack of time or acceptance in their communities, and challenges with materials and language limiting their effectiveness.

In early 2020, 28 AMARE training facilitators (including Wichi and Toba) came together to evaluate the training, consider the challenges facing families and develop strategies to increase outreach. Facilitators adapted the format to connect better – and some held a group soon afterwards that greatly helped parents and carers.

Changed Challenges

As 2020 progressed, the COVID-19 pandemic

changed the picture for AMARE. Prior to the pandemic, gathering in community was hugely important and members undertook uncomfortable journeys, slept on church floors and accepted uncertainty around food to be together. So, with tight restrictions on movement and gathering, how could they connect?

Part of Mothers' Union's rhythm is a daily "wave of



prayer", and in the AMARE WhatsApp group (with members across South America), the pandemic prompted women to begin posting and praying daily at noon. This was intended to sustain the group during the early days of the pandemic, but it continues more than 18 months later.

To reach those they couldn't visit, mission partner Catherine Le Tissier reported, "[women] are finding creative ways of keeping in touch and caring for those in need. Some of the AMARE women have started a regular radio programme, which allows for a much wider sharing of news, testimonies, teaching and prayer, and reaches all those not able to go out during lockdown."

Radio broadcasts helped AMARE leaders to reach women during lockdowns

Love in action

The heart of AMARE's vision is to put love into action. Prior to the pandemic, as well as supporting parents, praying and visiting the sick, members ministered to young people caught in addiction, were involved with health education or helped in Sunday schools. The anniversary of AMARE each year sees members offering to pray for the authorities, and visiting local hospitals and schools.

During the pandemic, the enforcement of restrictions in some areas was heavy handed. Both indigenous and Criollo communities feared being taken away to enforced quarantine in unsanitary conditions if it was suggested there was a case of COVID-19. Yet still, the women of AMARE found ways to put love into action. Sent to an isolation centre, Wichi members took time to talk and pray for others at the centre who were scared.

Catherine continues, "Two leaders of AMARE, Gladys and Mirna, continue to attend to all those who call at their door, looking for prayer or support. I am full of admiration for those amazing leaders who continue

daily to be there for others, despite their own challenges.”

Joining Global Voices

In addition to serving their own communities, the women of AMARE have joined with others around the world in the Mothers' Union “No more 1 in 3” campaign against gender-based violence. In 2020, AMARE women spoke out on social media and took part in web-based events focused on eradicating abuse and violence towards women. In 2021 they reached out into their communities with prayer diaries and more information. Their presence was widely appreciated, as domestic violence and abuse are rife.

AMARE has also grown an online presence with a YouTube channel that is home to resources including workshops, Bible studies, Wichi hymns and prayers. Many members have mobile phones to access online material. In one rural Toba community, AMARE women gather around a laptop to listen to recorded workshops.

Catherine comments, “One great blessing of the pandemic has been the way the women have responded to keeping in contact, especially through prayer, across different countries and churches.” The wave continues from woman to woman across cultures and continent, as remarkable, resilient indigenous and urban women continue live out their name: “AMARE! I will love!”

<https://churchmissionsociety.org/stories/unstoppable-wave-of-women/>

Restored Lives Restoring Lives

Three young women who found faith and purpose at a Brazilian safe house are now mentoring other young girls at risk

ReVive, founded by CMS mission partners Andy and Rose Roberts, opened



its first safe house for girls suffering from abuse or exploitation in Olinda, Brazil in 2014. Now three of those girls have returned to work at ReVive. Joyce, Bela and Ana shared their stories with Andy.

First Memories

Ana: I remember we arrived on a rainy evening and it was all very new. It was complicated at the time because I didn't really know what was happening. I created a lot of defence mechanisms. I was pretty aggressive at the beginning. I remember it dawning on me that I wasn't going back to a family, that I was

going to be here for a while. I remember throwing a bag of books out of frustration! But there was a gradual process of chatting with the staff, especially the therapy sessions with the psychologists. I was able to talk about all that I'd gone through – the aggressions, both physical and verbal – and realised that being aggressive to those around me was a way of expressing that.

Joyce: As soon as I arrived here I felt a real peace. Even though Ana was really upset, I knew it was going to be the best place for us. Everything that happened was really good.

Bela: I remember who was on shift the day that I arrived and I remember Joyce being the first person to greet me. I remember not caring about much and not wanting to get involved with anything. I was a bit suspicious, but with time I started to open up and to trust the staff. I began to accept their advice, to recognise my errors and to make friends.

Highlights

Ana: I remember being very happy. I remember that you never gave up on me. Even on my worst days or in my most aggressive moments – hitting walls, kicking things, dislocating fingers – when no one could stand me, you guys never gave up faith in me. My psychologist talked to me about how to get better, and told me I'd need a lot of people supporting me. I remember you telling me off about something and we had an argument. Then I told you that I wanted to be a mirror of good things to the other girls and not of bad things. It was that strength of character that made me who I am today.

Joyce: I really enjoyed being able to talk to all the staff. It's very different now being a responsible adult! I realise now how much you were all trying to prepare us for what was to come through all the activities and courses – so many opportunities which we would never have received in other places.

Coming back to ReVive

Ana: I was at school when Elise (ReVive's coordinator) called me, but I missed it. I called her back straight away and she told me that there was an opportunity to be back at ReVive as a young apprentice. I didn't think twice and started jumping around the school, I was so happy! As an apprentice, I've realised how much work behind the scenes there actually is! I used to think that you guys didn't do anything in the office but now I know. I've learned so much doing the admin, the kids' legal processes – so many things.

Andy: I remember that during your time at ReVive you told me that one day you would work here and be one of the educators. Now you've completed your 18 months as an apprentice, I hear that you've been offered a job and your prediction has come true!

Ana: Yes, I'm so happy! When Rose and Elise called me into the office, I thought they were going to tell me off. But then Rose told me about the vacancy and asked if I'd like to be an educator. I started to cry

because I'm so grateful – you guys have been with me through the ups and downs. With my experience of being a kid at ReVive, I'm sure I can help the current girls to show them what is possible, with God, with our own strength and that there is light in the darkness. That they can be more than they can imagine and can achieve their dreams.

Bela: I was having lunch with my aunt when Elise got in touch. I was so happy, I couldn't believe it. I was really nervous – it's my first job. I never imagined you would want me back after some of the stuff I did here when I was younger. Like Ana said, I'm just so grateful. I was really rebellious, but this opportunity has changed so many things. I didn't make the most of some of the opportunities when I was younger, but I'm going to make the most of this one!

Joyce: Coming back has been great and strange. I remember praying when I was younger – I wanted God to bring me back here one day as a volunteer or as a member of staff. I spent four years praying for this and asking God for it, to be able to give back all that I've received here. So, when I received your message asking for my CV and to go through the selection process I was so nervous... and then so happy when Elise told me that I'd passed and had the job offer. Over time I've realised that I have something the other staff don't – I know what it is like to be a girl at ReVive.

<https://churchmissionsociety.org/stories/restored-lives-restoring-lives/>

Audrey Rebera

*The Right Reverend Dushantha Rodrigo
Bishop of Colombo*



Audrey Rebera was a humble warrior who dedicated her life to witnessing Christ's commitment to social justice. In the early 1970s, Audrey gave up her well-paid job at the Central Bank to take over one nominally paid as Secretary of the Student Christian Movement. The Student Christian Movement is a network of organizations in schools across Sri Lanka with a mandate to nurture and cultivate Christian students.

Audrey became a leader of the movement during that decade when the country and the world faced a lurch to radicalism.

Audrey has been known under various labels, a Christian, a feminist, a left radical, to name a few, but most of all, she represented the best of humanity. One well-known personal story related by a youth activist says it best. Though belonging to a left group hunted by the anti-government group, the youth activist was also on the Government's wanted list,

going from refuge to refuge. Then famished and a stranger to Audrey, he knocked on her door in the dangerous year of 1988. Audrey did not ask who he was, but asked if he had eaten and invited him in. That portrays in miniature the singularly compassionate and courageous nature of Audrey.

Audrey's politics came from her having been a devoted Christian. She was voluntarily poor, but immensely rich in important ways. Her life reminds us of the story of Christ feeding the five thousand. The first thing that confronted a visitor to her home was her prayer desk before which she knelt, a Bible, and monthly bible-reading notes. That was how she helped many people in need. You told her a difficult problem, and to one's surprise, she found an answer. She knew whom to tap. She helped many in need and had immense credibility.

There is a long list of individuals (both well-known and not-so-well-known) in Sri Lanka to whom she provided comfort, shelter, and support. She bravely took risks in protecting democratic values, challenging the status quo, and inspiring generations of Sri Lankan activists.

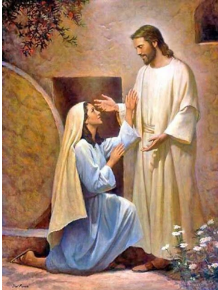
Audrey died last year during the pandemic and left a lasting legacy.



Women's Leadership

Mary Magdalene: A Female Apostle of Apostles Feast Day - July 22

*Maria Gabriela Merayo
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What does Tradition say about her?

A story that became an event in the Western Church occurred when Pope Gregory the Great identified Mary Magdalene with Mary of Bethany and the public sinner in a homily in 591 A.D. (Homily 25; PL 76, 1188). This theory gained popularity in the West and prevails until today, despite not having a Biblical foundation. On many occasions, a middle name was one's place of origin in the Bible. The same was true for Mary of Bethany and Mary of Magdala: 'of' refers to their place of origin. We know these are two different Mary: one came from the town of Bethany and the other from Magdala. There is no reason to make this connection regarding the identification with the public sinner mentioned by Luke. We know that the evangelist Luke based his work on Mark's text, and they recognized Mary Magdalene as one of the most relevant leaders in this first Christian community (65 A.D.), even more than Peter. We might then think that the identification with the public sinner was due to ignorance, or if we are wrong—and maybe we have to be—the intention was to diminish her name with a dubious reputation because she was an important person for the first Christians. She continued to be a benchmark during the first centuries of Christianity.

What does the Bible say about her?

She was a disciple of Jesus

Mark was the first evangelist to mention Mary of Magdala as a disciple in the context of the cross at the end of the gospel (Mk. 15:40-41). Every time the evangelist talked about the disciples of Jesus, he included the women who followed him, served him, and came up with him to Jerusalem. Therefore, we find Mary of Magdala throughout the gospel.

Only the evangelist Luke mentioned her away from the context of the death and the resurrection. In chapter 8, he says she was one of the disciples who accompanied Jesus with the Twelve, and she served him with her assets. Only Luke described that Jesus cast out seven demons from her. This information appears in Mark 16:9, an appendix of the gospel. Years later, someone added this information about Mary, which does not coincide with Luke's description of her previously. What is evident in this pericope is that men and women could be disciples and that the Twelve were not the only ones following

Jesus. Mary Magdalene was a disciple too.

She was with Jesus in his crucifixion

Matthew and Mark described that she and other women walked with Jesus until his death. They followed him from Galilee and served him during his ministry. The evangelist John placed her next to the cross. In a crucial moment, the disciples abandoned Jesus, not the women. Mark used three powerful verbs in this verse: follow, serve, and come up (Mark 15:40-41). They talked about the ideal model of discipleship in the gospel. For Mark, the true disciples are those who *follow* the footsteps of Jesus, *serve* like him, and are willing to give their lives for others (*come up* to Jerusalem). And he did not use these verbs regarding the Twelve, but the group of women led by Mary Magdalene. The evangelist John (19:25) said that only the women could stand next to Jesus in the moment of extreme pain. They formed the model community in this gospel, a community that stood next to those who suffered, an unbreakable body. They were strong and united as Jesus' tunic—a one-piece and seamless garment soldiers had to raffle because they could not split it—

She looked after Jesus' burial

Mark and Matthew agreed by affirming that Mary Magdalene looked after Jesus' burial. She saw where they buried his body. It was customary to anoint the deceased bodies with perfumes and myrrh. Therefore, Mary followed the ritual taught and came out of her pain to honor her master's body.

She was the first to witness Jesus Christ's resurrection

Each evangelist described Mary Magdalene as the first to witness Jesus Christ's resurrection and proclaim the Good News. It was hard for the four evangelists to come to an agreement, so such a great coincidence can only be possible if the fact had a high probability of being historical or if the Christian traditions of the first century considered Mary as a relevant character. Jesus Christ chose Mary Magdalene to become the first female apostle, the first to proclaim his resurrection, and the first person sent to announce the new life in Jesus to the disciples (Mt. 28:1-10; Mk. 16:1-10; Lk. 24:1-10).

And we women, what do we say?

Mary Magdalene was a relevant leader of the first Christian community. Jesus chose her to be the first witness of his resurrection. She was and continues to be a female apostle of the apostles. Let's celebrate her feast day, our feast day...

The Canaanite Woman

*Maria Gabriela Merayo
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As women, we need to reread the Biblical texts critically to proclaim the dignity of every person without hesitation. In the Anglican Community of All Saints (Quilmes, Argentina), we women allow the Word to circulate through our stories. Thus, it becomes alive, compelling, and liberating.

In Matthew 15:21-28, there is a discussion on the destiny of salvation. The ethnic issue comes up in the pericope, as well as gender. Did Jesus only come for the Jews, or did the foreigners deserve him, too? Let's read the text:

"Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, 'Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is demon-possessed and suffering terribly.' Jesus did not answer a word. So, his disciples came to him and urged him, 'Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us.' He answered, 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.' The woman came and knelt before him. 'Lord, help me!' she said. He replied, 'It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs.' 'Yes, it is, Lord,' she said. 'Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table.' Then Jesus said to her, 'Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.' And her daughter was healed at that moment."

A foreigner woman, a Canaanite, walks and cries out behind Jesus and his disciples, showing despair because of her daughter's suffering. She does not care what people may believe. She looks for help, and she knows where to find it. Her cry is also an announcement. She proclaims Jesus is *Lord* and the *Son of David*. This foreign woman recognizes Jesus as the promised Messiah. Yet, despite the despair, the Messianic proclamation, and her cry for justice, Jesus remains silent. What's going on with him? Is he too much of a man or a Jew of his time? Is he testing her faith? Does he enjoy feeling important? Is he astonished by the fact that a woman calls him 'Messiah'? Why doesn't he react? Such is his indifference that his disciples approach him to ask him to assist her and send her away. He did answer them, even if it was with a negative, 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.'

The woman sees that he continues his way, so she quickens her pace, kneels before him, and humbles herself. Thus, she gets a word from this man, even though it's offensive, 'It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs.' Far from being offended or withdrawing, the woman confirms his words and adds, 'Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table.' The Jews contemptuously called heathens *puppies* or *dogs*—far from be-

ing today's beloved pets, they were vagabonds and ate the leftovers of meals that no one gave them—.

This determined and tireless woman gets a miracle for her daughter because of her faith. The miracle happens because of a mother's perseverance, who is willing to do anything for her daughter's salvation. Jesus recognizes her great faith, 'You have great faith! Your request is granted.'

It's odd to read this text as a woman without a bitter feeling towards this master—too much a son of his time—. Meanwhile, there are many lessons to learn from this protagonist, anonymous woman. She does not mind the differences that separate her from Jesus and his people. She oversteps those barriers and tries. She breaks with the manners of the time and cries out her anguish as a mother. She proclaims her faith aloud even though she knows she is not welcome because she is a foreigner and a woman. She recognizes Jesus as the Messiah, even though he responds with silence and aggression. Instead of replying with an insult, she resignifies his answer for her convenience. Eventually, she got a miracle because she was able to overcome any known ethnic, social, religious, and gender-based barriers.

The Canaanite woman fought for her daughter, who was more vulnerable than her because she was a girl. May this woman, anonymous like her daughter, teach us to fight for our rights and those of our sisters, daughters, and friends.



Women's Gifts and Contributions are Highlighted at Global Mission Conference on Women in Mission

Global Episcopal Mission Network



"Do women bring distinctive gifts and experiences to mission service?" asked Ms. Elizabeth Boe, moderator for a plenary panel of women missionaries at the churchwide Global Mission Conference held online, May 12-14, by the Global Episcopal Mission Network (GEMN). Boe was asking the question as mission personnel officer in the Episcopal Church's Office of Global Partnerships.

"Women bring a sensitivity to human needs and emotions and concerns that is very important in the work of mission, and it makes a difference," responded the Rev. Glenda McQueen, partnership officer for Latin America and the Caribbean. She noted that the work that missionaries do, for instance digging wells, functions as an occasion for entering into relationships of love and care with the local community.

"All over the world, women have a unique experience in that they live under the patriarchy, and that is something I can share with women all over," said Ms. Sophie Swallow, currently a Young Adult Service Corps (YASC) missionary with the Guatemala Youth Initiative. "We already know there is something to change. From when I was a child in Sunday School I knew there was something that needed to be done. That's something that I bring like a fire in my belly to every interaction that I have as a young woman missionary in the 21st century."

"Yes, there are things about identifying as female that make a difference for me as a missionary and for our church and for global mission – and there's a lot that doesn't," said the Rev. Melanie Slane, who served for two years with YASC in the Philippines. "No matter how you identify your gender or your sexual orientation, the world needs more sensitive and compassionate people." Slane noted that women as well as men participated in earlier patterns of colonial violence in mission, but she concluded, "The women who came before me helped make a space for me to serve as a missionary in my context."

"Mission is about relationship," said Boe, reflecting a view widely shared in mission circles. "That can be vulnerable, scary, aggravating. Still, we're called to love people the way God loves all of us. God's

mission in the 21st century is about being, about becoming the best person we can be." Recalling her experience of learning Swahili at language school in Tanzania, Boe stressed that knowing the local language is important for communication in mission. One hundred fifty-nine people registered for the conference from throughout the Episcopal Church and 19 countries. In addition to plenaries, the conference included 11 workshops and a number of Mission Spotlights and Mission Testimonies.

Mission at the United Nations

"Working at the United Nations is global mission with a secular face," said Ms. Lynnaia Main, the Episcopal Church's representative at the United Nations. Her plenary address, "In a Mirror Dimly: Women and Mission through the Lens of the United Nations," alluded to the apostle Paul's image in 1 Corinthians 13. "Our desire expressed in global mission to know God and to see Christ expressed in the face of the other can only be dimly reflected in this life," she said.

As she reviewed the history of the UN and the work of women at the UN, including Episcopalians and Anglicans, Main said the international organization's emphasis on human rights and on the dignity of the human person reflects gospel values. She stressed an "understanding of global mission as transformational partnership."

Main's address was the first time UN work was highlighted at a conference sponsored by GEMN, and attendees responded enthusiastically to her talk. Main summarized the church's work at the UN under the headings of a ministry of presence, a ministry of advocacy and a ministry of hospitality, and she noted that she is part of the team at the Office for Global Partnerships.

Women's history

The conference opened with a plenary address, "*Talitha Cumi*": Historical Issues for Women in World Mission, by Dr. Dana Robert, distinguished professor at Boston University and director of its Center for Global Christianity and Mission.

"Laywomen have always been the backbone of the mission of the church," Robert said as she reviewed the work of women in the early church, the roles of widows and deaconesses, and the prominence of women in the mission work of Protestants and Anglicans. She noted that women missionaries' earlier emphasis on working with women in their homes abroad was not a domestication trap but rather activated a crucial lever for social transformation.

Women's global mission work has been holistic and focused on healing, Robert said. Women have engaged in ministry from the margins, and their work has been the starting point for gender justice work. Speaking as a United Methodist laywoman, Robert brought a broad ecumenical perspective to her historical survey.

Mothers Union Work

The work of the Mothers' Union (MU) in Africa was the focus of the plenary address by the Rev. Carolyne Adhola from the Anglican Church of Kenya. "The Mothers' Union is a form of contextualized mission," Adhola said as she explained the MU's work to care for people affected by HIV/AIDS and to advocate for the just distribution of land.

Adhola cited her personal experience, as a young widow, of being dispossessed of property by her deceased husband's family because she did not renounce her faith and participate in a form of African traditional religion. She noted that it would have been difficult to survive that experience without the MU's support.

"The Great Commission is our theme," Adhola declared, "to go out not only to Christians or women but to the ends of the world." Noting that in east Africa Christians are often challenged by Muslims "who claim they know the Bible better than we do," Adhola advocated for dialogue across religious divides.

Adhola spoke at short notice in place of Dr. Hilda Kabia, dean of Msalato Theological College in Dodoma, Tanzania, whose presence at the conference was interrupted by internet difficulties.

Workshops and spotlights

Conference worship was led by Mothers' Union women in Mozambique; the Tsedaqah Community/Triangle of Hope companionship of the dioceses of Liverpool in England, Kumasi in Ghana, and Virginia in the USA; and the Society of St. Margaret in Haiti, Massachusetts and New York.

Workshops featured the Rev. Dr. Helen Van Koevering on women in Mozambique; Dr. Chiseche Mibenge on Episcopal Relief and Development's work with women; the Rev. Rebecca Yarborough and a panel of women in Costa Rica; the Rev. Heather Melton on the United Thank Offering; Ms. Prita Samantaroy on the Diocese of Amritsar's work with women in north India; the Community of the Transfiguration on their work in the Dominican Republic; Dr. Laura Sarraff on women's mission work in Cuba; Bp. Francisco Duque and a panel of Colombian indigenous women; Ms. Alice Garrick on the work of the women's program in the Diocese of Raiwind, Pakistan; Ms. Liz Ha on the work of Five Talents; and the Rev. Kyrie Kim on Korean women in mission.

Mission Spotlights featured the Rev. Dr. Katherine Grieb on Virginia Seminary's Center for Anglican Communion Studies; Dr. Gina Zurlo on the recently published 3rd edition of the *World Christian Encyclopedia*; Dr. Catherine Meeks on the work of the Absalom Jones Center for Racial Healing in Atlanta; the Society of St. Margaret on their work in Haiti; Mr. Vincent Dixon on the work of Stand with Iraqi

Christians; the Rev. Holly Hartman on GEMN's Mission Formation Program; Mr. Greg Lowden and Ms. Sophie Swallow on the Guatemala Youth Initiative; the Rev. Dr. Chuck Robertson on the upcoming Lambeth Conference this summer; and Ms. Jenny Grant on the Global Mission Digital Toolkit and the Standing Commission on World Mission's recently published *"Becoming a World where Love is the Way: Guiding Principles for World Mission."*

Christianity has always been majority female, world Christianity can be described as a women's movement, and the worldwide missionary movement is at least two-thirds female, said GEMN president the Rev. Dr. Titus Presler in welcoming remarks as he cited assessments from the *World Christian Encyclopedia*. "So it is high time that this 27th annual conference of Episcopal global mission activists focus on the theme of Women in Mission," he said.

Videos from the conference will soon be available on the GEMN website. Founded in 1994, GEMN is a network of dioceses, agencies, congregations, seminaries, and individuals whose purpose is to gather, inspire and equip people to participate in God's mission. The network identifies humility, inclusion and companionship as its core values in global mission.

[Women's gifts and contributions are highlighted at Global Mission Conference on Women in Mission - Episcopal News Service](#)

Pictures from Rev. Dr. Helen Van Koevering on women in Mozambique



Committees finalize resolutions on Safe Church, data gathering and efforts to call attention to violence against women and girls

Melodie Woerman

Episcopal News Service

The legislative committees on Sexual Harassment, Sexual Exploitation, & Safeguarding June 22 recommended that seven resolutions be adopted by General Convention when it meets July 8-11, ranging from the types of translations to be required for online Safe Church training to observances to mark the fight against gender-based violence.

The committees previously had heard testimony on five of the resolutions, so it first offered the chance for people to speak on two resolutions that recently had been assigned to these committees.

One of them, [C064](#) calls on the church to observe “Break the Silence Sunday” on the Sunday closest to Nov. 25, which is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. Speaking in support of the resolution was the Rev. Sereima Lomaloma of Fiji, in the Diocese of Polynesia and part of the [Anglican Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia](#). Lomaloma is an advocate for gender equity and a member of the [Anglican Communion Safe Church Commission](#). She noted that Fiji has marked this observance since 2013 and urged adoption as a way for the church to stand publicly with those who have been victimized by gender-based violence. She said, “For too long the church had been accused of being a gatekeeper, of condoning violence because of their silence,” but a public witness tells survivors “that they are believed, they are loved, they have value, that the church is creating a space where they can feel safe about sharing their story, and that the church is honoring their courage and their resiliency.”

After hearing a discussion about how Episcopal churches could observe this day when it also falls on observances like the first Sunday in Advent, the committees voted to recommend adoption, and deputies voted to place it on the House of Deputies’ consent calendar.

The other new resolution, [C063](#), encourages Episcopalians to wear black on Thursdays, as part of the World Council of Churches campaign for a [world without rape and violence](#). The Rev. Gavin Shumate, deputy from Oregon, said that as a priest he wears black clerical clothing every day but noted that a “Thursdays in Black” pin is available for those in his situation to note their participation. Deputies and bishops voted to recommend adoption by General Convention, with this also going on the deputies’ consent calendar.

The other five resolutions were finalized by the committees, with all of them receiving a vote to

recommend adoption. Three required no further emendation by the committees:

[A062](#), which requires additional data from dioceses to help create a plan to narrow gender-equity gaps in both pay and leadership representation.

[A064](#), which calls for adopting revised Safe Church training modules and promoting them across the church.

[A067](#), which authorizes parishes to use and adapt a model policy on anti-harassment, along with a best-practices guide.

Resolution [A061](#) originally called for a change to the annual parochial report filed by every congregation in The Episcopal Church to include demographic information on the gender, age and race of those in local leadership. The resolution was proposed by the Task Force to Study Sexism in The Episcopal Church and Develop Anti-Sexism Training, which found lack of information an impediment to researching sexism, according to task force and committee member Katie Sherrod of North Texas.

The committees wanted additional information to be gathered, including gender identity and expression, ethnicity, sexual orientation and disability status. Because as committee members reflected on the fact that many of these categories aren’t necessarily known to those who complete the parochial report, they voted to amend the resolution to require Executive Council to come up with a mechanism for gathering this data. The committees then voted to recommend this be adopted, also placing it on the House of Deputies’ consent calendar.

Resolution [A065](#) deals with translating new Safe Church training modules into languages other than English. Seeking to make the materials as widely available as possible, the committee amended the resolution to expand the required translations beyond Spanish, French and Haitian Creole to include sign language interpretation in each of the three designated languages, as well as closed-captioning for video components. Members noted that translating the materials into languages other than English that are spoken across The Episcopal Church requires more than transliteration, and translations need to reflect the local cultural context. The resolution calls on Executive Council to create a new task force to have oversight of these translations. The committee recommended this resolution be adopted with committee amendments, but members felt it would need to be discussed by the House of Deputies and the House of Bishops so did not place it on the consent calendar.

[Committees finalize resolutions on Safe Church, data gathering and efforts to call attention to violence against women and girls – Episcopal News Service](#)

Women's Leadership Survey

The Venerable Linda Hill

Executive Archdeacon of the Diocese of Ottawa



An exciting research project has been launched this summer in Canada, collecting data about women's lay and ordained leadership in the church. A short survey has been sent to each of the thirty dioceses in the Anglican Church of Canada (ACC). In addition, the makeup of the national church's committee chairs and other statistics will be examined. Together this data will create a snapshot of women's ministry in the Canadian church. We hope to be able to analyze the results this fall.

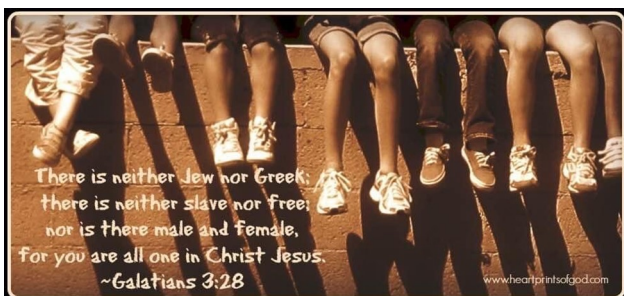
The project seeks to hold a mirror up to the Canadian Anglican church, forty-five years after women were first ordained to the priesthood. Since then, Canada has been seen by the global church as a place where women's leadership is valued. By undertaking this research, we seek to discover the extent to which women's authority has taken root within the church and where it needs to be strengthened.

The survey results will be shared within the Canadian church and with IAWN. The project is organized by Dr. Andrea Mann (Director of Global Relations for the General Synod of the ACC), the Rev Dr. Neil Elliott (statistical officer of the ACC), and myself (Canada's Provincial Link for IAWN). Watch for news about the results in future IAWN newsletters.

Faith, Community, Equality and Reconciliation in a Time of Discord

Rev. Dr. Helen Van Koevering

IAWN Steering Group Member



We live in a world where we, as women, live with a foot in two worlds: our own daily paths joy and challenges, and the world of faith and promise in the in-

coming Kingdom of God. The impact of recent global events does not encourage hope, but there are always those on the edges with imagination to see new possibilities and change.

Here in the USA, we are assimilating the news and impact of the overturning of Roe v Wade by the US Supreme Court. We recognize the wide variety of responses in the USA, we sense the coming reverberations that such a decision might have on inequalities for women elsewhere on this globe, and we feel lost for words. We know we need the inspiration of other women of faith through all time and the encouragement of shared experience of God's presence and love. We know that at the very least we need to sit down and begin better conversations between women and men. Constructive conversations that carry the potential for reconciliation. As people of faith, we know that reconciliation is the heartbeat of God's mission, and that in seeking reconciliation we are acting in God's will for all creation.

'Mary Manifesto' has been initiating such conversations since 2021 within small groups meeting online. Our purpose is gather 318 women in 2025 to review the Christian notion of God and the Nicene Creed, 1700 years after 318 men did the same. We are creating small groups of women across the globe to study the Gospels together, and our monthly online meetings encourage contemplation and conversation around a 'Psalm of Change'. Our focus is on making real the Magnificat of Luke 1: 46-55 in each meeting, particularly focused on the experience of marginalized women and children around the globe. The Magnificat points towards a reconciliation process that the Spirit opens when we are willing to hear the voices and look into the eyes of others, unheard and unseen. We encourage women to lead, give space for stories, invite men to a transformed role, and share our emerging learning of global women at the grassroots as together we live into the Magnificat. The current emerging team includes Suka Joshua in India, Jamie Coats in USA, and Helen Van Koevering (Steering Group member of IAWN).

We invite you to join us as we hold space for contemplation of Mary's words of the Magnificat. We welcome you to the creation of a new community together guided by God's Spirit, where change begins with us.

For more information, please email marymanifesto@gmail.com or find us on Facebook as Mary Manifesto.

God's Justice: Theology and Gender-Based Violence

A resource for respectful gender-based relationships and ending violence and abuse

Rev. Dr. Paula Nesbitt,

Consultant to IAWN Steering Group

What if we could live together in mutually loving relationships free of violence and abuse, as Jesus Christ had taught? The Anglican Communion's new resource—*God's Justice: Just Relationships between women and men, girls and boys*—can help churches and members everywhere do just that.

Written by scholars, clergy, and laity from different parts of the Anglican Communion, the purpose of *God's Justice* is to show how the Bible and Christian teachings can support just, loving, and mutually respectful relationships. It also offers ways churches can and should respond to gender-based injustice, abuse, and violence.

The development of *God's Justice* is rooted in Resolution 16.02, passed by the Anglican Consultative Council in 2016, which encourages all provinces to help girls and boys, women and men, to participate in relationships "that reflect Christian values of love, dignity, and justice." It led to a set of study materials completed in 2019 for use in theological colleges, seminaries, and training programs for future clergy and other religious leaders. Scholars from every continent participated in writing and editing the materials, guided by The Rev. Canon Terrie Robinson, then Director for Women in Church & Society, and The Rev. Canon Dr. Stephen Spencer, Director for Theological Education in the Anglican Communion.

Last year, Mandy Marshall, Director of Gender Justice for the Anglican Communion, brought together a group who revised the original materials in the resource. These can be used by anyone interested in building healthy relationships and is accessible to as many people as possible to understand what the Bible does and doesn't say around the relationships between women and men, girls and boys," she said.

God's Justice includes theological guidelines that highlight the biblical and Christian teachings on the dignity of all humanity and the church's role in upholding them. It also discusses ways to understand gender in the Bible and talks about gender in the church. Gender-based violence and the harmful effects of gender inequalities and injustices in different contexts are explored, as well as biblical support for ending violence and improving relationships to reflect the mutual respect God intends and how churches can respond. Each topic has questions for reflection and discussion.

"Gender-based violence is a global pandemic. One in

three women in her lifetime will experience abuse," she noted. "This means there is a huge challenge for our churches to break the silence, shame, and stigma around abuse and provide appropriate support. We know that domestic abuse happens in churches too." "There is a huge challenge for our churches in breaking the silence, shame, and stigma around abuse and providing appropriate support," she emphasized. The goal of *God's Justice* is to offer fresh insights and hope for both women and men, including the freedom to become who God created them to be, by mutually affirming and respecting one another in all aspects of life.

According to Mandy Marshall, this resource can be used in many ways. Small groups might read and discuss the different chapters, using the questions as starting points for conversation about their own local context. It also can be a tool for personal study and reflection. "We very much hope that people using the resource will provide feedback on its use and how we can improve it for future editions," she added.

"As Anglicans, we have no choice but to work to transform anything that obstructs the achievement of God's justice and mars the relationship between men and women, girls and boys," wrote Archbishop of Cape Town, Thabo Makgoba in the Foreword to *God's Justice*. He pointed to the Anglican Communion's Five Marks of Mission that urge us to repair injustices in society, confront violence, and seek reconciliation and peace.

God's Justice will be available in English by the end of July for the Lambeth Conference of Bishops. It also will be the topic of a Conference seminar for bishops and spouses to consider their leadership in recognizing harmful norms or attitudes that lead to unjust and abusive practices in church and society and to be agents of change for their dioceses.

The resource can be downloaded from the Gender Justice section of the Anglican Communion website. It will also be available later in Spanish, Portuguese, and possibly other languages.

https://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/483307/Gender-Justice_Gods-Justice-Theology-and-Gender_Resource_A4_WEB_2207.pdf



God's Justice:
Theology and Gender Based Violence



Lambeth Conference

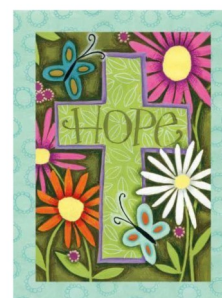
As we write this newsletter, the Lambeth Conference is being held. These are photographs of the women Bishops in Lambeth in 1998 (11 Bishops), 2008 (18 Bishops) and today, 2022 (97 Bishops). We are very proud of all our women!



Call for Contributions for next IAWN Newsletter

We hope you have enjoyed this newsletter and have been inspired and encouraged by its stories. The Steering Group of the International Anglican Women's Network is currently compiling articles for the next IAWN newsletter due out in **November 2022**. We would love readers to offer their own stories and/or stories from your church.

Please send your stories to iawn@anglicancommunion.org by October 15, 2022. It would be great if they could be around 700 words accompanied by pictures and/or photos with captions. Also, please ensure we have your full name, diocese, and contact email. Thank you so much!



International Anglican Women's Network
"Thinking Globally and Acting Locally"
Bringing the Perspectives of Women and Raising Issues Affecting Them

