

IAWN news

CAPA Women Leaders

Consultation in Nairobi, Kenya, 22 to 26 June

Claudette Kigeme, IAWN Provincial Link for the Anglican Church of Burundi reports.

In June, African Anglican women leaders met under the auspices of the Council of Anglican Provinces in Africa (CAPA) to reflect on women's ministry across the continent. Provinces represented were: Burundi, Central Africa, Congo, Kenya, Indian Ocean, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and West Africa.

Experience and best practices were shared. Review of progress of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) revealed that they are not being met. So we reflected on the post 2015 development agenda and considered strategies for advocacy.

Standing for peace and justice, we resolved to send a delegation to Sudan and released a message to women in Nigeria, including:

"As mothers we understand the pain, and strongly condemn this inhuman act. We are standing in solidarity with you. We are praying for protection and release of these girls.

We call upon the abductors to come to a realization that they as well as the girls are created in the image of God and have the right to a life of freedom.

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We urge the international, continental and regional security organs to consolidate their rescue efforts.

May God undertake the big burden on behalf of the girls' families remembering His promise when He says 'Never will I leave you, Never will I forsake you' (Hebrew 13:5)."

Canon Grace Kaiso, General Secretary of CAPA, assured us that despite multiple challenges the continent's women give reason to hope:

"Like Nehemiah, mothers can mobilize churches and communities to build Africa. They have power to impact their families to carry forward the agenda and transform the continent."

New Director for Women in Church and Society

Congratulations, Terrie! It was with much joy that the IAWN Steering Group learned of Terrie's appointment as Director for Women in Church & Society at the Anglican Communion Office in London. We know she brings a superb constellation of the experience and skills needed to take forward this critical work for the Communion. The Standing Committee, comprising members elected by the Anglican Consultative Council and of the Primates' Standing Committee, rightly displays great faith and confidence in her.

The creation of this post also means that the Standing Committee recognises that more needs to be done to enable women, both in the Anglican Communion and in wider society, to enjoy equal, safe participation in daily life and decision-making. We warmly congratulate the Standing Committee for creating this post.



While her own work will now be more focussed on those Anglican Communion Networks with strong gender components, Terrie says, "I know how important several of the Networks will be to my own ministry as it unfolds. All the Networks will continue to receive the support they need from the Anglican Communion Office to make sure their many activities continue to inform decision-making and action at the international level."

Terrie is excited about her new role and looks forward to "being able to spend more time working with women and men in the Anglican Communion to promote the full inclusion of women's gifts, voices and concerns in the life, mission and structures of the Anglican Communion and beyond. There are already so many Anglicans committed to this, who bring every gift imaginable to the task. It will be a blessing to support them."

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IAWN Steering Group news

Ann Skamp, IAWN Steering Group Convenor, reflects...

Greetings! First, thank you so much for your prayers over the last year as I worked through difficult health issues. Your prayerful support highlighted our oneness in Christ no matter where we are or whatever is happening in our lives.

IAWN's Steering Group meets regularly via Skype to work on agenda items such as these:

- **IAWN Newsletters** - gratefully acknowledging our Editor's commitment and work!
- **IAWN website** - updating the current website; a more extensive upgrade is planned later in the year.
- **Regional meetings** - for the UK & Middle East later this year, South Asia in 2015, and Africa prior to the Anglican Consultative Council meeting in 2016 (ACC-16).
- **Finances** - with our Treasurer, Margaret Dempster, planning to distribute a 'Request for funding assistance' letter to the Primates.
- **New Steering Group member** - co-opting a Spanish speaker!
- **Monitoring ACC resolutions** - especially concerning gender based violence and equal participation.
- **Gender budgeting** - developing strategies for encouraging implementation across the Communion
- **Trafficking** - working with other Networks and groups to highlight and address this issue.
- **Other Networks** - working with other Networks on shared concerns.

The Steering Group has greatly welcomed the appointment of Terrie Robinson as Director for Women in Church & Society. As we approach the **16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence (25 November - 10 December)** for 2014, Terrie's role will greatly enhance our work in recognising the achievements and challenges across the Anglican Communion for the full and equal participation of women.

Blessings to everyone, *Ann*

Of the Same Flesh: exploring a theology of gender



A new report by Christian Aid's theology advisor, the Revd Dr Susan Durber, says that our being made male or female is a gift of God, and should be experienced as joy for humankind.

Susan writes, "It is a scandal then that our gender is so often experienced not as joy, but as a place of oppression."

Recognising that 'poverty has a woman's face', the report explores how a practical Christian theology of gender can inspire and empower action in the world. [See http://bit.ly/1nVN510](http://bit.ly/1nVN510).

Women in the Church of England

Following the Church of England's historic decision to ordain women as bishops, Christina Rees, writer and long campaigner for women's ordination, describes the journey towards the General Synod's 'Yes' vote.

Monday 14 July 2014, 4.27pm: 500 members of General Synod, staff members and some press are gathered in the University of York. After speeches spanning five hours, Synod pauses to vote. The air is electric. The Archbishop of York reads out the results. The Women Bishops Measure passes with overwhelming majorities in all three houses.



Christina Rees

After almost 40 years of campaigning, the Church of England will at last include women in all three orders. Why did it take so long - and why did it happen now?

First - why now? After the failure of the former women bishops' measure 18 months earlier, there was an unprecedented outcry that the vote in General Synod did not express the wishes of the Church at large. The Archbishop of Canterbury responded by initiating a series of facilitated discussions at General Synod, where small groups of members with differing views on women's ordination were encouraged to listen to one another.

Another key reason was that the bishops took collective responsibility for making arrangements for those who remain opposed, with the terms shifting from the legalistic to the relational, requiring trust and commitment on all sides. With the leadership pushing strongly, senior church staff were empowered to act swiftly and confidently, instead of inching forward timidly. The atmosphere at General Synod changed from one of fear and hostility to positive determination, with a sense of everyone pulling together.

Why did it take so long? The answer lies in a complex mixture of deeply entrenched attitudes towards women, bred by centuries of patriarchal culture, covered with a gloss of approval and collusion from the Church. We may have said yes to women bishops, but living out true equality in the Church of England will take many more years.

The campaign is over! Long live the campaign!

Editor's notes

- Thanks to **Helen Hall**, IAWN Provincial Link for the Church in Wales, we were able to distribute an abridged May IAWN Newsletter in Spanish, and hope to continue this!
- Our next Newsletter will be compiled jointly with the International Anglican Family Network, focusing on Church responses to **Human Trafficking**. If you can contribute to this, please email elaine.ging@gmail.com.
- Have you seen the Church of England's theological resources and other material on **human trafficking and Freedom Sunday**? See <http://bit.ly/1m1FDeB>.

Anglican voices from Sri Lanka

A **Global Summit to end Sexual Violence in Conflict** was held in London in June 2014. *Vijula Arulanantham* describes a survivor's story, and the Church of Ceylon's significant role in Sri Lanka. *Jeanne Samuel*, IAWN Provincial Link for the Church of Ceylon, describes a positive approach to inter faith work, particularly welcome in view of current religious persecutions.

Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict



Over 1000 experts, high-level politicians, faith leaders, youth leaders and representatives of non-governmental organisations from over 120 countries participated in the *Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict* hosted by the UK government in London, in June this year.

Vijula Arulanantham of the Church of Ceylon (left) was among them, and writes:

Kiru's story stays vividly with me. She lived with the hopes and aspirations common to most young people. Unfortunately, she was born into a conflict where abductions, disappearances, torture, extra judicial killings and rape were the norm. Despite her parents' best protection, the dark demons of war knocked on her door one night. Kiru, in her late teens, was removed and kept in illegal detention by the military, repeatedly raped and brutally tortured. Six months later her parents managed to purchase her freedom.

Kiru's only hope was to flee her country, secured by her parents at great cost. Today she lives in constant fear of deportation back to Sri Lanka. If she is returned home, she faces certain brutal death. Although a broken young woman, Kiru has begun to speak out about the atrocities in her country.

The horror of Kiru's story still haunts me, but it seems incredible - she has managed to escape, at least for the time being, unlike numerous others still trapped in the daily nightmare. Although post-war Sri Lanka was missing from the agenda during the Global Summit, some stories were shared. Many women and girls there are subjected to sexual violence daily. The huge military presence ensures this unmitigated horror continues.

In this gruesome picture the Church has stood as a beacon of hope and light. Where sexually violated persons were anathema to community and religious institutions, the Church opened her doors as a place of refuge. When survivors were condemned and discarded, the Church welcomed them.

The Church is courageously speaking out against the atrocities, and remains with the suffering people. The time has come to engage other faith leaders, to change the language of shame and to affirm that each person is made in the image of God and is loved.

As the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, said at the Summit, any attack on the human person is an attack on the image of God. Please pray that the Church in Sri Lanka will continue to remain true to the Call of her King.

Encountering the 'Other'

"Encountering the 'Other' to Construct Communities of Hope and Peace" was the theme of an inter-religious workshop held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, in July this year. Over 30 people from Taiwan, Indonesia, India and Sri Lanka representing the Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim and Christian faiths attended, including Bishop Kumara Illangasinghe and Bishop Kenneth Fernando of the Church of Ceylon.



The workshop specifically aimed to:

- strengthen existing Inter-faith relations at national and regional levels, and address inter-religious tensions
- address common local issues and how people may respond positively with mutual understanding, respect and trust
- engage in research and reflection with sister faiths
- be in a faith pilgrimage by embracing all systems of truth with respect and humility.

Each day began sharing inter faith worship, increasing appreciation of each other's forms of worship. Fundamentalism is one of the major threats to peace and stability around the world, alienating peoples and religions. Religious fundamentalism however is primarily a political construct.

When religion has been reduced to a political construct how can one recapture the liberative motifs of faiths? Inter-faith encounters are pilgrimages; pilgrimages to know the depth of Divine grace. They are also an effective means to counter the identities and consciousness communally constructed by fundamentalist forces.

"I am liberated when I feel your grief. My freedom depends on the freedom of others". *Ajit Rupasinghe*

Encountering the 'other' was a successful workshop leading to greater understanding of each other's beliefs. More importantly it allowed us to get to know each other and look at ways of working together to mitigate conflict and work towards reconciliation. Religious leaders have a role to play in religious conflicts giving pride of place to humanity and build communities of justice and peace. *Jeanne Samuel*

Next steps for faith communities after the Global Summit to end Sexual Violence in Conflict: see <http://bit.ly/1pSjx1Y>. See <http://bit.ly/1nOXwu7> for a report by Chrisanthie Nayagam on the 2014 World Day of Prayer in Sri Lanka.

After the UN Commission on the Status of Women

The Anglican delegation at the annual session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is always passionate and visionary - the Communion can be proud! But the work really starts when the delegates return home and it can take a long time to make an impact.

After CSW57 in 2013

Following her participation in CSW57 with the theme 'ending and preventing violence against women', Mandy Marshall, Co-Director of *Restored* (www.restoredrelationships.org) and Church of England delegate, wrote reports, made recommendations and gave presentations. These resulted in 2014 in her speaking to General Synod in favour of a motion on gender based violence which was passed with overwhelming support; see <http://bit.ly/1nWnT3V>.

In August 2014, the work of *Restored* received this endorsement from the Archbishop of Canterbury:

Gender-based violence is one of the greatest injustices in our world today. Every time an act of violence is committed, the inherent dignity of the women or girl affected is degraded ... The Church is already supporting and caring for those affected; it must continue in that work and must condemn the notion that such violence is ever acceptable. The Church must be an advocate for restored relationships of mutual respect and love, modelling the reconciling love shown by Christ to all people.

After CSW 58 in March 2014

Ayra Inderyas, Lahore diocese, Church of Pakistan: My two weeks' experience taught me how the Millennium Development Goals have helped, and not helped, women's empowerment. I integrated this into my work with Women Fellowship Groups and with students.

Firstly, I had the Anglican delegation's statement *Women Empowerment - A Gospel Issue* translated into the national language, Urdu. I anticipate its wider dissemination across the churches of Pakistan through the Lahore Diocese's Synodical Office.

Secondly, the CSW *Agreed Conclusions* say that men and boys need to be engaged in the ending of violence and discrimination against women both in the family and society. Incorporating this focus, the Women Desk of the Church of Pakistan where I work is opening Adult Literacy Centres for boys and men in rural areas, and is using this opportunity to sensitize men and boys on violence against women.

Thirdly, I spoke about the Millennium Development Goals and Pakistan's Performance to 53 students in the Women's Studies class at Kinnaird College.

All delegates report back as appropriate in their context. For example, Sandra Andrade of the Igreja Episcopal Anglicana do Brasil (IEAB) presented her report to her Primate and to the General Secretary, for forwarding to the House of Bishops and National Board of Women. News was posted on the Province's website. Sandra also reported to the National Commission for Diakonia, which coordinates the IEAB program for Preventing and Tackling Violence against Women.

Please pray with us



Photo credit: Lefteris Pitarakis

The **tragic events in Gaza** shock and dispirit us. Please pray that God may enable all leaders in the Middle East to choose love over hate, peace over war.

Pray for the Palestinians becoming internally displaced people again; for all working to ease the suffering of the wounded, especially the children; pray that we can find places of safety and food for all. Blessed are the peacemakers. *Leila Diab, Jerusalem & the Middle East*

Mothers of the missing in Northern Sri Lanka Since the end of our war, May 2009, hundreds of young people have gone missing; their mothers, mostly widows, relentlessly search for them. They travel the country to speak to the authorities, carry their children's photos, demonstrate at any opportunity.

Tragically, after five years, they have no answers. They have not given up; pray for them. *Jeanne Samuel, Church of Ceylon*

Pray for the **Christian community in Pakistan**, facing day by day challenges and persecution. *Alice Garrick, Church of Pakistan*

And give thanks for

Meriam Ibrahim, whose death sentence for 'apostasy' inspired a campaign for her release, and who is now safely out of Sudan.

In Iraq, Muslims who express solidarity with Christian neighbours, including those who attended the gathering at St George's Church Baghdad, and those who give refuge to people displaced from Mosul. *Christian Concern for One World*

"No prayer is too small; when we pray with each other we are sustained to continue praying."

Phoebe Griswold, Anglican Women at Prayer: <http://anglicanwomenatprayer.org/prayers-for-current-events>

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COMMUNION
IN OVER 165 COUNTRIES

