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Anglican Women's Studies Centre

Our new Convenor shares the Council's Vision for the Anglican Women's Studies Centre

The Reverend Carole Hughes

What is the General Synod Women's Studies Centre about?

'We' are passionate about our church - The Anglican Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia - and our intentions include mentoring and nurturing women in our church, particularly in theological education in the broadest sense. Our agenda is to inspire, excite, equip and support women. Contrary to what may have been said about us, we have absolutely no intention of being a threat, or taking over the church or indeed women's groups, or being elitist!

So who are 'we'?

Some may say that we are not easily identifiable. And that is because we do not have one spokesperson or commissioner or face to Women's Studies; it is about women in all aspects of ministry, education and representation right across our Province. It is not a concrete centre but a virtual centre; where women's conversations are centred rather than located in one place. It is not just about 'me' or 'us' as General Synod elected councillors (Dr Jenny Te Paa, The Revd Canon Mere Wallace, The Venerable Taimalelagi Matalavea, The Revd Amy

Chambers, The Revd Erice Fairbrother, The Revd Carole Hughes), but rather about raising the profile of women who are engaging at all levels of theological education in our church. Assisting in this

representation and so this requires women to be given opportunities, particularly in theological education and in leadership and decision making roles in order that equitable gender balance becomes

more likely. So, it is not about exclusion, but rather about recognising that we need to be intentional about equipping women so that we can all contribute generously and responsibly to our beloved Church.

So how are we achieving our intentions?

Through gathering, mentoring, communicating, sharing resources, educating, publishing, story-telling and inspiring.

Through our mentoring programme we have identified, and will continue to identify, more specifically young women who are contributing,

and will contribute, to our church. This includes providing personal support, theological education and training opportunities, and encouraging their representation on local and worldwide church meetings/bodies. It is about creating environments where women can grow and develop their gifts and be delighted about



task are the Diocesan and Hui Amorangi link women appointed by the Bishops.

Is this a centre that is about excluding men?

Our vision is that Anglican women and men work together in mutually supportive and enriching ways. Currently there is an imbalance of rep-

Our new Convenor shares the Council's Vision for the Anglican Women's Studies Centre (continued)

what is possible.

Our gathering and story telling together as three tikanga is life-changing and vital. As women meet face to face, we identify common threads and visions across our Province, and we have fun together. It is also a place where resources are shared; websites, study programmes, liturgies etc. My personal experience of such gatherings has been one of gaining confidence and a wider vision and energy in my role as Vicar of St Johns Church in Campbells Bay. Such gatherings positively feed us in all aspects of our ministries as lay and ordained women in the church; as Chaplains, Youth workers, Deacons, Vicars, Priests, Ministry Educators, Teachers, Kahui Wahine, AAW and Mother's Union (all whom were represented at our last hui in October).

Communication is vital to our profile and growth. We have recently established a Women's Studies Centre page on the new General Synod website <http://anglican.org.nz/Women-s-Studies>, and our link people in each Diocese are given the tasks of being the listening voice as well as the informing voice; identifying, gathering, facilitating, resourcing and encouraging women in theological education is their main focus – so it is vital that each Diocese and hui Amorangi has a link person, as this is what our networking and communications heavily rely on. Our communication task is big; as well as our own women's networks and representation on the International Anglican Women's Network, we are deeply passionate about encouraging representation at all levels of being church.

So what can 'we' (all of us) do better?

My initial response makes two points; firstly reaching local context and secondly representation.

As a Provincial Body it is not easy to communicate well with all those who are involved at the local context/flaxroots levels of being church, especially in terms of educative support that may be required, and we need every ones assistance. We are hoping to appoint a person to offer administrative support, and also for the Council to travel to local contexts and engage with women and share in their individual circumstances. We also wish to encourage women to publish their resources in order that we all may share in the treasures of scholarship and ministry. Ultimately, I believe it is up to each one of us in our church to understand and embrace the vision of offering theological education in all its forms, so that we can have opportunities that enrich our ministry and indeed our local and worldwide church.

In addition to theological education, what has most informed my own ministry and faith journey has been those opportunities where I have served on church committees/bodies at Diocese, National and International levels of the church. Largely this has been due to leaders in the church mentoring me and believing in me. It has been the same for all other members of the Women's Studies Council and this is why we now want to do the same for others. We are particularly concerned that there are still some provincial church bodies, Councils, and even Dioceses who do not have women represented. This is not our ideal as gathered church, which traditionally offers both challenge and opportunity for all men and women – as together we seek to model and discern the will and love of God.

The Convenor:

Dr Jenny Te Paa has been our Convenor from the formation of the

Women's Studies Centre at General Synod 2006. I wish to offer my thanks and praise and delight in her leadership and compassionate deep conviction to theological education being accessible to many, and particularly women across our land and also the world, who desire support and resources. She is not resigning but simply standing aside to allow others to lead, and this is an example of mentoring leadership at its best.

Jenny together with her PA, Karena de Pont and others of the original Women's Studies Council have birthed and lead the Women's Studies Centre and it continues to grow and develop in new and dynamic ways.

Tēnā korua ngā kaiwhakamene o te kaupapa nei
Nā ōu korua mahi, i puawai te putiputi nei, ara, te Wāhi Akoranga mō nga Wāhine
Nga mihi Aroha kia a korua.

(Thank you Jenny and Karena for the support and your work in mentoring the blossoming (*puawai*) of the Womens Studies and allowing it to flower (*putiputi*). Our love to you both.

So as the newly elected Convenor for the Women's Studies Centre I am excited about what is possible for our church in this place as we gather as three tikanga; outstanding scholarship, open communication, skilled leadership, enriched ministries and worship, so that we can continue to inspire faith and bring the Gospel alive in these islands.

Kia tau te rangimarie o te Atua ki a koutou.

The peace of God be always with you.

Lasting Impressions from Archbishop Winston's Installation Service in Suva, Fiji

Over the weekend of 1 August 2010 many of us from Polynesia and Aotearoa/New Zealand gathered at Holy Trinity Cathedral, Suva, Fiji to celebrate the installation of Bishop Winston Halapua as Bishop and Archbishop of Polynesia.

Tai Tuatagaloa writes:

Whilst the Installation of the Primate and Archbishop of Polynesia was an event of much celebration of the highest theological contextual ceremonies as well as the cultural hospitality, what stood out for me was the demonstration of Ms Sepi'uta Halaapiapi's leadership as a young woman in the Diocese of Polynesia.

Sepi'uta is the Youth Coordinator of the Diocese and was the preacher at the service on 1st August 2010. Many would say that Sepi was a born leader being the daughter of the Late Bishop Viliami Halaapiapi and the woman of many talents and skills, Mrs Ema Halaapiapi. I believe she was properly nurtured by her parents. However, I firmly believe that much of Sepi's skills also came from being challenged to lead by the Bishops giving her tasks where she had to figure out the best way appropriate for whatever task with which she was assigned.

Late Archbishop Bryce appointed her Youth Coordinator as well as being (almost a standing nomination) a General Synod member to represent the youth in the Diocesan delegation. She learnt quite fast to be a leader and with her present leader (Archbishop Winston Halapua) as one who is committed to empowering youth in his ministry, Sepi will be seen in the forefront in the future leading not only the youth but the whole



Sepi Hala'api'api delivers the Sermon at Archbishop Winston Halapua's ordination in Suva

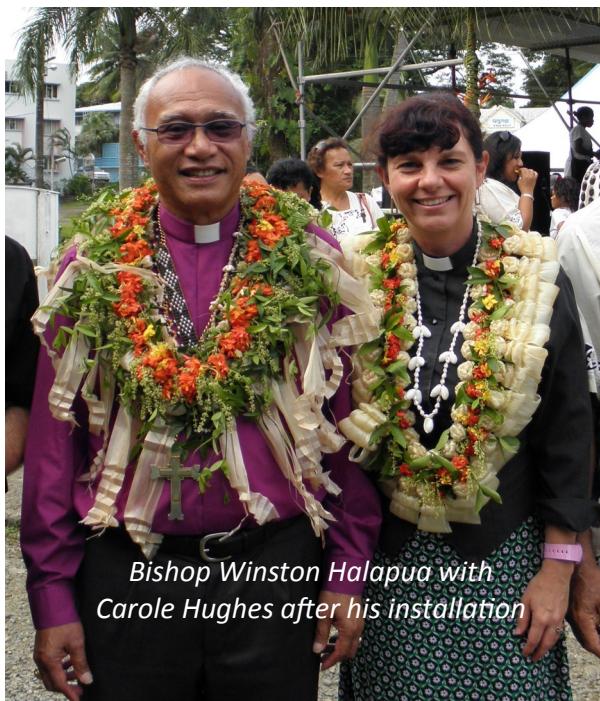
Diocese in fulfilling God's mission in the world – a feat that she surely would capably do and thus doing us proud all the way.

As a mother and woman I salute Sepi for her role in the installation of the Archbishop of Polynesia. I can confidently say that here is a young woman that ought to be supported by the Anglican Women Studies Centre.

Carole Hughes writes:

It was an amazing, inspirational experience; the worship, the singing, the hospitality, the entertainment, fabulous food and company created an atmosphere of immense celebration and blessings.

The 3 hour long service was attended by approx. 2000 people. The sermon was preached by an amazing young woman, Sepi Hala'api'api, who is the Youth Co-ordinator for the diocese. The young people took an active role in the service with dancing and leading of music. It was a magnificent example of how we as church can gather and truly worship in an inter-cultural and inter-generational way. It was an honour for me to be there, and to see so many women participating in leading roles during the service and ceremonies over the two days. Thank you to all the people of Polynesia for your outstanding hospitality and welcome.



Bishop Winston Halapua with Carole Hughes after his installation

Since the last issue....

By Karena de Pont

In October 2010, the Link Representatives from each Diocese and Hui Amorangi gathered at St John's College for two days. This was an opportunity for us to discuss how best we can serve and advance the interests and needs of the women of this Church, particularly those undertaking theological training. This discussion was also strengthened with contributions from representatives of Kahui Wahine, Mother's Union and AAW.

Revd Helen-Ann Hartley (a visiting lecturer from Rippon-Cuddesdon, Oxford) led us in Bible Studies each morning.

We also heard from both Irene Ayallo and Amy Houben who have been sponsored through our Mentoring Project. Their touching stories about the benefits from receiving guidance and support from a mentor strengthened our resolve that this is a worthwhile project to continue as prepare women for leadership roles in the future.



In June of last year, The Right Revd Katherine Jefferts-Schori, the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church visited New Zealand for the first time. The Council were able to host a small dinner for her where we were able to share common concerns as women in ministry.

Update: In the last issue, Carole Hughes wrote about the proposed Hui with The Revd Canon Dr Jane Shaw. Unfortunately, Jane had to decline the invitation as she was appointed the new Dean of Grace Cathedral in San Francisco. We congratulate her on this well deserved appointment. Our invitation to Jane remains open and it is hoped that she will be able to come to our Province sometime in the near future.

Since the last issue continues...

By Karena de Pont

In December the Council were invited to go to Samoa, to see first hand the challenges and triumphs in the face of adversity faced by Anglican women and women in ministry in this part of the Province. It was a very hectic three days but a lot of ground was covered that has potential to bear fruit.

With four ordained women on the Council, it was the first time for many that we called upon, to have so many priests let alone female priests as guests. Unfortunately, our sister Amy Chambers from Fiji was unable to join us due to other commitments at this time. However, our heartfelt thanks to Taimalelagi Matalavea Tuatagaloa and her family for hosting us so well, as well as Brenda Sio who we will always keep in our prayers. Their generosity and hospitality was overwhelming. We wish to thank the parishioners of St Faith's Anglican Church who we met with on our

final morning and who presented us each with fine shell necklaces as keepsakes of our time in Samoa. We also would like to pass on our very sincere condolences to the congregation of St Faith's with the sudden passing of their vicar Revd Richard "Ricky" Schwalger who we had the pleasure of meeting.

The Council was able to visit with the Principals and some of the faculty and their wives from both Malua Theological College and Piula Theological College who took time from their holiday break to be with us. Friendships were renewed and while a delegation of ordained and theological trained women was a novelty for some, we perceived a growing acceptance that Polynesian women should be encouraged and supported to follow their ministry aspirations. Many of these women found the Anglican Church's lead in this area inspirational even though we acknowledge that we still have a long way to go yet.

We also were privileged to call upon the Head of State, His Highness Afioga Tupua Tamasese Efi and Her Highness Masiofo Filifilia who graciously received us. His Highness is currently writing a book that Jenny Te Paa is contributing to.

The Council travelled to the south-eastern coast tsunami affected villages, calling in on Poutasi (*Tai's home village*) and Lalomanu, where we met and prayed with some of the most affected families including Fa'asega Tapelu (wife of Ben Tapelu who studied at St John's College) who had 13 members of their family swept away. We were greatly encouraged to see the determination to rebuild in the memory of those who had lost their lives and the huge progress made towards achieving these aspirations.

On our final morning we met with a group of Anglican women from All Faith's parish and discussed various options of parish ministry formation and pastoral care delivery systems that can reflect the needs of individual parishes.

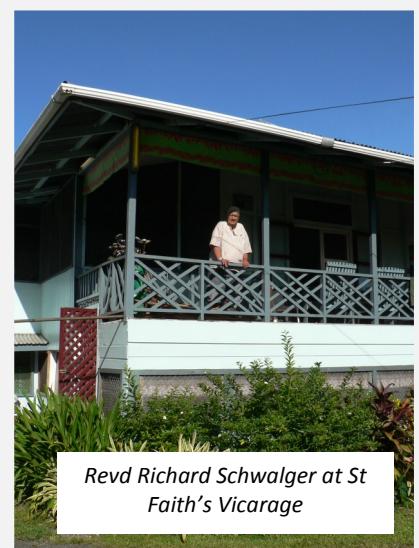
We left Samoa, very grateful for the many blessings we received from those we spent time with however briefly, vowing to return one day.



Clockwise: Tai Tuatagaloa, Mere Wallace, Carole Hughes, Sinafea Ale-Taufua, Jenny Te Paa



Revd Brenda Sio



Revd Richard Schwalger at St Faith's Vicarage



Carole Hughes & Erice Fairbrother prepare the service at Lalomanu

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The Women's Studies Centre was set up to serve and to advance the interests and needs of the women of this Church particularly those undertaking Theological training.

New Email Address

The Link Representatives from each Diocese and Hui Amorangi have been chosen for their leadership ability to identify, gather, facilitate, resource and encourage women in their educational preparation for ministry whether lay or ordained. It is hoped that the Women's Studies Centre can continue to enjoy the support of each Diocese and Hui Amorangi in this endeavour.

The issue of increasing numbers of women in representative positions across the councils and committees of the Church is seen as a high priority and the practice of intentional mentoring by those already in national and international representative roles is seen as a good way to expose women of this church to fulfill their potential as leaders.

Ensuring that women's voices and stories are heard now and in the future is also one of our continued aims whether it be by traditional methods of publication or using more contemporary technologies like website publication. We remain optimistic that through continued support the needs of women throughout this Province will be valued and recognized.



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Please respect the privacy of the above Councillors and representatives—the publication of their emails is not an invitation for unsolicited mail.