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The Anglican Church in Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia

Anglican Women's Studies Centre

Bishopdale? You might be surprised...

By Revd Dr Sue Patterson



'Class of 2011' – all but one of the woman graduates (who missed the photo). To date (class of 2010 and class of 2011), BTC has had 15 graduates, 9 of them women.

visit in 2009). I knew the college was young and small and that my position was a newly created one – exciting that, because it meant that the structures

would grow with the

Two Easters ago I returned to New Zealand after ten years in pastoral ministry in Ireland to take up the position of Registrar and Senior Lecturer at Bishopdale Theological College [BTC]. Before my decade in Ireland as a rector (vicar) and later as dean of a little cathedral founded by St Patrick, I had been teaching ethics and applied theology for four years in Bristol. Eight years before then (1996) I was ordained in Dunedin following ministry training at Knox and after my curacy and doctoral study I was a priest in Waiapu and a postdoctoral scholar in Princeton before moving to the UK in 1996.

I am a New Zealander. It was the right time to return, not only because I heard God's call both to return to teaching and to bring back to the Church in Aotearoa New Zealand the fruits of my time away, but also for family reasons – a failing mother, a brother soon to have a terminal illness, a daughter's wedding, and now a first grandchild.

I returned with John to Nelson, a city we didn't know although we were Mainlanders from Christchurch, not being entirely sure what to expect of the place or the job. What I had seen on my earlier visit was encouraging. The city and its surroundings were beautiful. I was told the weather was the best in New Zealand (although it poured with rain all day on that

college rather be straitjackets that would squeeze it into their mould.

But I discovered that BTC was really quite old, not new at all, merely newly reincarnated. Its first incarnation was in 1869 with the second Bishop of Nelson. The reason why it happened then forms part of the reason it exists now. The Diocese of Nelson then was a geographically isolated part of the church that had to look to its own resources. The geographical isolation is less of a factor now, but the tradition of providing its own resources remains. Yet there is far more than just a tradition behind the existence of the college today. Training and equipping its own leaders is a key part of the pastoral and missional vision of the Diocese.

I anticipated that 'small and young' meant flexibility. I was not wrong. I knew it would mean hard work – this place runs very leanly and efficiently on a tight budget – but the advantage of being in the growing phase has been the forming of structures not only tailored to what the college needs but also focused on the students. Smallness and flexibility means you get to know everyone personally and that is so important in ministry formation. Mentoring and pastoral support just happen naturally along the way and in my almost four and a half semesters here I have seen the community of students and staff and friends grow and blossom.

Bishopdale? You might be surprised... *continued from page 1*



Sue talking to Rachel (Bishopdale's library assistant)

Graduate Diploma in Theology (Ministry) with its special stream in Anglican Studies – our own four 'Anglican Distinctives' courses. It is now possible for people outside Nelson to complete an entire Graduate Diploma (8 courses) over two years by 'flying in' for intensive (five-day block) courses. We are the only theological college in New Zealand offering this mode of study and it is already being used increasingly by students outside the Diocese for ongoing ministerial development. The Graduate Diploma is a great way of topping up an L.Th. and can be a bridge from there to a Masters.

I have heard people say about this place, 'oh, it's very conservative.' I am not sure what they mean. It certainly

And it is a very varied community, with slightly more women than men – eighteen of the thirty-two students who are studying on our Nelson campus are women – and an age-range of twenty to forty years. The intimacy of the college environment is very helpful for those returning to study after a big gap, or beginning tertiary level study for the first time in mid-life. Not all of these mature students are women but a majority are. Having returned to university myself once our two girls were at school, I have always been able to identify strongly with the lack of confidence and need for support felt by women in this position. I wish I'd had the advantage of BTC's friendly, informal classes. One of the things I have prioritised is the setting up of one-to-one study skills help for our students. Typically, it has been the women (so far) who have sought this out.

Another part of the varied picture at BTC is our growing relationship with the local Maori Church - two of its women are presently studying with us. It is a part of our vision and commitment to be a college open to and equipping of all people and we are fostering this relationship carefully.

Two years on, what things particularly excite me about BTC? I sense the Holy Spirit at work in the expanding and enriching of our community relationships and also in the burgeoning growing of study options. The College began by offering Bachelor of Ministries and Theology degrees, a Diploma of Biblical Studies, and a Graduate Diploma in Theology, all through Laidlaw College (formerly Bible College of NZ). By 2011 people were able to study for the Diploma in Biblical Studies part time through our 'host church' classes in Tauranga and Hamilton. This year these classes are also running in Blenheim and Greymouth, and half of our students are now studying this way. In 2011 we also launched the

isn't a hotbed of biblical fundamentalism! I first heard the term, 'open evangelical' when I was teaching at Trinity College, Bristol, being used to describe what went on there. I would say the term applies equally well to BTC. It is about faith-to-faith teaching grounded in the mutual discipleship of teacher and students, which also encourages a questioning approach to theological issues and teaches the best critical method in scholarship. Orthodox, yes, in terms of being orthodoxly Anglican, but more the sort of new orthodoxy, sometimes called 'Deep Church,' which is rediscovering the ancient creedal roots of Christianity. Then there is breadth as well. The college community is open to people from all denominations, orientations, and perspectives. It presently includes Quakers as well as Baptists and Pentecostals. I would like to say to those who assume they know what we are like and what we stand for, 'taste and see.' Come and pay us a visit. You might be surprised!

(These level 7 courses, while complete in themselves, provide the opportunity for higher-level study complementing those offered at level 5 in the St John's College Anglican Studies programme)



Sue is WSC Link Representative for Nelson Diocese. You can contact her at registrar@bishopdale.ac.nz or 03 5488785.

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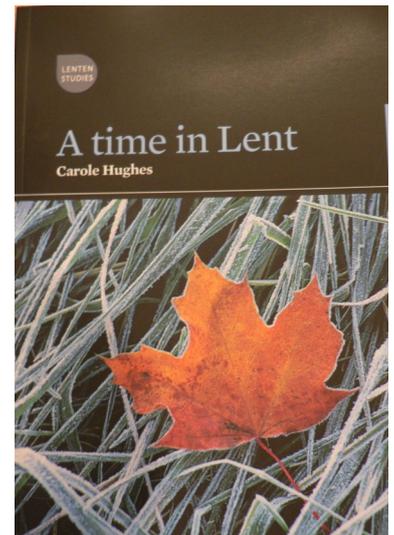
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A handy collation of some
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God, during Lent.

More from Kahui Wahine: We Live in Hope ...

By Revd Jenny Quince



Te Manawa o te Wheke women doing a skit roleplaying a Maori Women Bishop

The Executive drafted a motion for general business at Te Runanganui held last year in November at Ohinemutu, Rotorua: "Te Kahui Wahine Executive Committee move that in accordance with the New Zealand Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand Polynesia constitution believe that Maori Women Clergy be given both equal opportunity and consideration to be duly elected to the position of Pihopa within Te Pihopatanga o Aotearoa".

At Kahui Wahine the Notice of Motion number Six reads: That Te Kahui Wahine o Aotearoa strongly encourages the election of a woman to the Episcopate when the next vacancy occurs in Te Pihopatanga o Aotearoa. This was moved by Revd Helen Gray and seconded by Mrs Mihi Turei.

Kahui Wahine was set up as the Korowai for all the Anglican Maori Women's Groups. The wives of the current five Maori Bishops act as the President from each Amorangi, therefore Revd Helen Gray leads Te Waipounamu Kahui Wahine, Mrs Lorraine

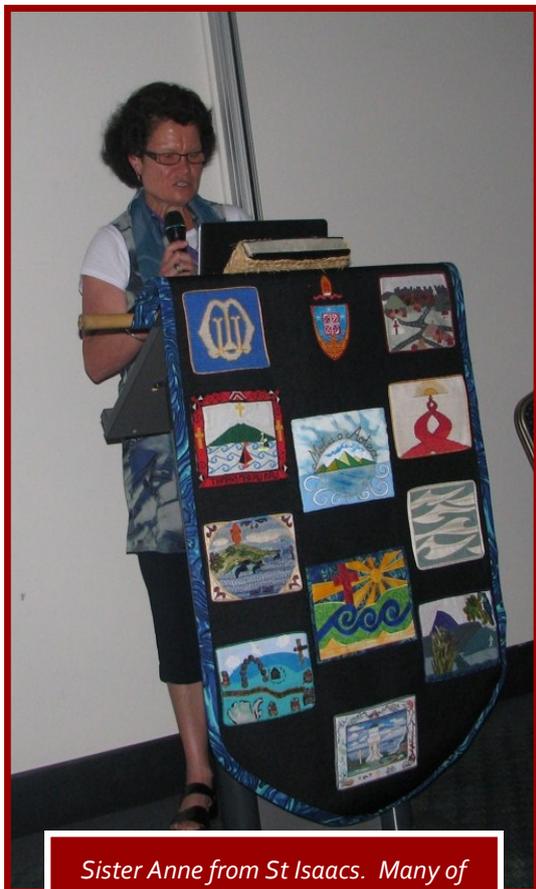
Walters for Te Upoko O Te Ika, Mrs Mihi Turei for Te Tairawhiti, Mrs Kaimana Katene for Te Manawa o Te Wheke and Mrs Lynnore Pikaahu for Tai Tokerau. These five Presidents form the Kahui Wahine Executive including each Treasurer and Secretary from each Amorangi.

Kahui Wahine groups meet regionally twice yearly and nationally every two years.

There were yells and screams from the floor as this was read out and passed - it would have been a foolish man to opposed it!

This motion has excited the women and we are keen to 'keep it on the front burner.

But it wasn't all hard work, the women from Te Manawa o Te Wheke did a skit that role-played a Maori Woman Bishop. Huge applause and tautoko resonated throughout the Hui. So with determination and persistence the members left Kahui Wahine with hope in their hearts for the future that there dreams will be realised.



Sister Anne from St Isaacs. Many of the women didn't know that there are Anglican nuns.



Hard at Work

Pictures by Melody Tapene

Revd Jenny Quince is the WSC Link Representative for Tai Tokerau Hui Amorangi

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The Centre for Anglican Women's Studies, commonly known as 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.

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.

**WOMEN IN MINISTRY
PROVINCIAL HUI
26th–29th JUNE 2012**



Women's Studies Centre Council Members — 2010/2012

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Hui Amorangi o te Waipounamu

- *No current appointment—Contact Mere Wallace (see above)*

EDITORIAL DISCLAIMER: *The Women's Studies Centre is committed to encouraging and enabling women's voices and perspectives from across the diversity of the Church to be shared more widely. We acknowledge that women's experiences of church differ considerably and that resultant theological perspectives also differ considerably. In general the WSC does not exercise editorial control, rather we welcome as many voices as are willing to contribute.*