

ACSA: Gender Coordinators meet

August 2017

Issue 20



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In June, HOPE Africa—the social development programme of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa (ACSA)—hosted a conference for the Province's Gender Coordinators which was held at the eMseni Conference Centre in Johannesburg.

Over three days the participants from 24 dioceses and three ACSA provincial organisations grappled with the many faces of gender injustice and sexual and gender based violence, and how the Church is called to respond.

They took part in contextual Bible studies, theological reflection, discussions on human sexuality and human trafficking, and listened to the needs of survivors and to words of encouragement from ACSA Gender Liaison Bishop, Margaret Vertue.

Congratulations to the Anglican Church of South Africa as it celebrates the 25th anniversary of ordaining women as priests and marks this milestone with a conference in September. The IAWN steering group has written to Bishop Margaret Vertue with greetings and an assurance of our prayers.

CSI working towards a Gender Justice Policy

The Church of South India (CSI) has formed a Consultative Group for Church of South India (CSI)—pictured below—to deliberate on the formulation of a Gender Justice Policy for the Church. Eleven members of the group met at the CSI Centre on 26 July 2017 to begin the work. The GenderJustice Policy will be rooted in a biblical foundation and a spirituality of justice. It will serve to promote gender equality both in society and, in practical terms, in the ethos and life of CSI—its 24 Dioceses and all its units.



Moumita Biswas, IAWN Steering Group member and Executive Secretary of the Women's Concerns Ministry of the National Council of Churches in India, said "This Gender Justice Policy will be a milestone in CSI's prophetic ministry to end the culture of gender based violence and build a culture of peace."

Promoting positive masculinity will be a strategic component of the policy.

News from Around the Communion

Mauritius: Responding to the Silent Epidemic of GBV

The Mothers' Union in Mauritius in the Church of the Province of the Indian Ocean has launched an initiative to tackle the silent epidemic of gender-based violence (GBV).

The launch was marked with a seminar with input from Archbishop Ian Ernest (photo below), a senior police officer, a woman business leader and an experienced psychologist. A group of young people presented a sketch highlighting how abuse can begin and how it can be tackled.



Participants watched a TED video (on-line at <http://bit.ly/2uLSAZt>) that encouraged more men to acknowledge GBV as everyone's problem instead of it being a 'woman's problem'. They also looked at the historical context of GBV and the role of patriarchy; biblical guidance for addressing the issue; assistance available from the relevant government ministries in Mauritius; psychological insights into why women stay in abusive relationships and how they can work towards freeing themselves.

MAECymru: Seeking space for equality in Wales

From Revd Mary Stallard, IAWN Provincial Link for Wales

In 2015 a group of women and men established an organisation in Wales called Ministry And Equality – in Welsh, Merched a'r Eglwys with the acronym MAECymru (Cymru is Welsh for Wales). This organisation campaigns, educates and organises those within the Church in Wales who are passionate about equality issues and want to help our church to become more just, compassionate and committed to learning about diversity.



This past year has been the 20 year anniversary of women priests in Wales and in January every cathedral of the Church in Wales held a special service to celebrate this.

We have now seen the election of two women bishops in our Province: Jo Penberthy (photo left) as Bishop of St David's and June Osborne (right) as Bishop of Llandaff. So



one third of our six bishops are now female. In September an Archbishop will be chosen from among the six, and some are hoping and praying that a female Archbishop in Wales might be a reality in the not too distant future.

Our Governing Body has re-affirmed its commitment to gender monitoring and has re-established a group to report on the representation of women in the Church in Wales. We are working hard to enable every diocese to be aware of issues of gender equality and to work towards becoming more equal and transparent in all their activities.

In all of this, the determination of many women and men to be joyful and to keep the faith (which is part of the commitment made by St David, patron saint of Wales), even in situations of difficulty, has been so important.

It feels as if we have been able to move forwards in our faith as a church, and to begin to inhabit a new space where possibilities to address challenges with grace and imagination are more accessible. Thanks be to God for all of this!

Melanesia: Training Anglican men as gender champions

Faced with the reality that 64 per cent of women in the Solomon Islands between the ages of 15 and 49 have experienced physical or sexual violence or both from those who are close or known to them, the Diocese of Central Melanesia organised five days of training for over 30 participants from the diocese's six parishes and their satellite churches.



One of the key components of the Anglican Church of Melanesia's strategic plan is to 'promote gender equality and peaceful communities'.

The objectives of the training was to create safe space for conversations on masculinity and eliminating violence against women and girls, through the reinterpretation of biblical texts commonly used to justify violence, and to understanding issues, challenges and a way forward for male advocacy in Melanesia and Solomon Islands.

One of the facilitators, the Revd Raki Tigarea from the Institute for Mission and Research at the Pacific Theological College in Suva, Fiji, said, "Our being, our identity as man and woman, male and female, is equally, profoundly and wonderfully rooted and founded in God. This is a biblical and theological truth that must not and cannot be denied, ignored or explained away.

Have you joined our Facebook group at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/IntAngWomen?>

GFS: Growing Together with Prayer and Action



The Girls' Friendly Society (GFS) was established in 1875 and is now active in over 20 countries. GFS aims to provide opportunities for girls and young women to develop their self esteem, confidence, and resilience in a Christian setting.

The IAWN Steering Group recently sent a message of prayer and good wishes to the GFS World Council Meeting which was held in Australia, hosted by out-going GFS World President Canon Val Gribble and her team.

Photo: The new GFS World Council 2017 to 2020 with new GFS World President, Thembeke Pama (centre).

GFS has sent us the following news:

The 22nd World Council the Girls' Friendly Society met at the Swan Valley Adventure Centre in Perth, Western Australia, 11 to 21 July. Twenty-one countries from around the world were represented.

The GFS motto is 'Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ' (Galatians 6:2). This remains the inspiration in the mission to serve Christ with a focus on promoting and educating youth on gender-based violence, social entrepreneurship and the environment. During the meeting a Rwandan delegate shared her pain during the genocide and hopes in building the country. Ms Katoba Chisala shared the work of Rainbow House, a school and orphanage in Zambia.

Assistant Bishop in the Diocese of Perth, the Rt Revd Jeremy James, officiated at the commissioning of the new GFS World President and her World Executive 2017 to 2020 during the Council's closing service. During the closing gala dinner the new World President, Ms Thembeke Pama from the Diocese of Johannesburg in South Africa delivered a keynote address on the new theme 'Growing GFS together with prayer and action'.

GFS representatives from seven African countries (Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Zambia, South Africa) reassured that they will plan and work together to support GFS South Africa when it hosts the next World Council in 2020.

Education for Gender Justice

The IAWN Steering Group has been exploring how much theological education is being delivered around the Communion around the issues of gender justice and pastoral responses to gender-based violence. Let us know if you have come across good models of such education and teaching resources. Here is one great example:

India: Certificate Course on Gender Justice

The Women's Concerns Ministry of the National Council of Churches in India organized a certificate course on gender Justice in June this year in Aizwal which was attended by 20 young women and men—pastors, ordinands, theological students, church and community workers, and teachers from different churches in east and north-east India. All were from Indigenous or Dalit backgrounds.

The aim of the course was to lay foundations for nurture praxis and justice-oriented spiritualities and practical skills to end gender-based violence and create just inclusive communities.

Young Pastor Revd Benhur Soren from the North East Diocese of the Church of North India said, "I was recommended by my Bishop, Rt Revd Michael Herenz,

to attend this course. I learnt about positive masculinity. Not only did it help me to deconstruct and re-look at my own understanding of masculinity during this course, I also realized how important it is for me to help my congregational members deconstruct patriarchal theology, culture and norms."

Miss Annie Jane Nag, a theological student from Bishop's College and future ordinand from Eastern Himalaya Diocese said, "I come from Assam where human trafficking of women workers from the Tea Gardens is a common phenomenon. This course has helped me to understand how I, my community and church can participate to intercept human trafficking."



Human Trafficking and Modern Day Slavery



Seventy-one per cent of victims of trafficking are women and girls (source: UNODC). In the October edition of our IAWN newsletter, we will be marking Freedom Sunday (<https://freedomundayglobal.org>) and focussing on the issue of human trafficking and how Anglicans are responding. Let us know what is happening where you are and how the churches are getting involved. Email Lizzi at lizzigreen48@gmail.com.

Here, an IAWN member from Ireland shares her story...

A Survivor's Story

I was a naïve student, he was the attractive older guy. Plunged into issues managing student debt, he promised me a way out. He was charming, kind, romantic - why wouldn't I trust him?

He offered me a job at his club, dancing for customers. It seemed sleazy, but I didn't have much of a choice. I figured I could make the money I owed and then quit. It didn't turn out that way.

One of the customers demanded I perform a sex act on him. I refused, and tried to tell my "friend". He took me outside, and choked me. I was terrified. He told me I had to keep this up - otherwise he would hurt my family. If I tried to escape, he would call me and threaten me. I knew I had to obey.

I took to drugs to try and block out what was happening. Eventually, because I was so 'good', my trafficker trusted me to do other jobs, like driving girls across the country to be abused at different clubs. Eventually, on the way back from one of these jobs, drugged out of my mind, I crashed the car into a pedestrian. I was charged with dangerous driving, as well as drug and prostitution charges.

In prison, I met the chaplain. He shared with me the incredible news of Christ - that no matter how much I hated myself, I was loved beyond my imagining. With her support, I was able to find a great church after my release, and they supported me in breaking free from my past. I am so grateful to them.

Now I spend a lot of my time talking to girls who are vulnerable, just like I was. I tell them there are other options, and that they are worth so much more than they think. I tell them of the God who loves them and who delights in them. I was given a second chance, and I want to offer that chance to others.

UK: Mothers' Union offers holidays for families affected by London tower block blaze

As part of a co-ordinated response from members in dioceses across the United Kingdom, the Mothers' Union is planning to support families who were affected by the London tower block fire tragedy in June by offering holidays under the charity's Away From It All scheme.

The Mothers' Union's CEO, Bev Jullien, said, "It is hard to imagine what these families are currently experiencing and what they have gone through ... These holidays reflect the heart of who we are by showing practical support where it is needed most".



At least 80 people died when fire engulfed Grenfell Tower, in west London in the early hours of 14 June.

Welcome Dilsia!



Dilsia Mariela Miller Alleyne has been co-opted onto IAWN's Steering Group as representative for Latin America & the Caribbean. Dilsia lives in Panama and belongs to the Iglesia Anglicana de la Region Central de America.

Dilsia joins IAWN's Steering Group chair, Pumla Titus, Anglican Church of Southern Africa and members Carole Hughes, Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand & Polynesia, Lizzi Green, Church of England, Moumita Biswas, Church of North India, Margaret Dempster, Anglican Church of Canada, Immaculée Nyiransengimana, Anglican Church of Rwanda, Paula Nesbitt, The Episcopal Church, and ex officio member Terrie Robinson of the Anglican Communion Office.

Send your news and photos to our Newsletter editor
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