

# IAWN news

## Mandela: A Journey Well Travelled

Nelson Mandela is well known for his commitment to the struggle against racial apartheid. Pumla Titus, IAWN Provincial Link for the Anglican Church of Southern Africa, reminds us of his commitment to gender justice:



Pumla with Nelson Mandela on his first visit to Mthatha after his release from prison in 1990

Nelson Mandela, statesman, world icon, left us December 5, 2013 – aged 95, his long walk to freedom finally ended. Born in a village outside Mthatha, Madiba (his clan name) dedicated his whole life to fighting for the

rights of all people in his country. He spent 27 years in prison and went on to lead a free democratic South Africa, showing that dreams of peace and reconciliation can be real; that men and women can have equal opportunities and respect.

At the 46664 Concert at Fancourt, George, South Africa, 19 March 2005, Madiba said:

'For every woman and girl violently attacked, we reduce our humanity. For every woman forced into unprotected sex because men demand this, we destroy dignity and pride. Every woman who has to sell her life for sex we condemn to a lifetime in prison. For every moment we remain silent, we conspire against our women. For every woman infected by HIV, we destroy a generation.'

I was fortunate to have met this wonderful man, who filled the whole space with his presence wherever he went. On his first visit back to Mthatha after his release in 1990, he was invited to dinner at General Bantu Holomisa's home. The General's wife asked me to help her prepare dinner. In Madiba's usual manner, he asked to see the people who had prepared the meal, and I was lucky to have had a picture taken with him.

At his next visit to Mthatha, he came to my home for dinner and met my family. We were invited to his home several times. So for us it was not just mourning a great political leader, but a father and friend. I was honoured to represent my family at his funeral in Qunu, 15 December 2013.

Rest in Peace Tata. As a tribute to you and all the women who navigated the path of fighting for justice before us, we must each carry the torch forward to ensure that everyone lives in a better, more equal world. *Pumla*

### IAWN Steering Group News

The Steering Group's meeting in London last November was a creative, challenging time. We greatly missed our Coordinator, Ann Skamp, who was unwell and unable to travel from Australia. However, we are heartened that she has now completed her treatment. We hold her in prayer.

Having consulted with our Provincial Links, the Steering Group has some ambitious plans. We are looking at the possibility of regional meetings for Provincial Links to focus on shared priorities - the first for Europe and the Middle East, the second for South Asia and a third for Africa.

We reviewed resolutions from meetings of the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) and will take several actions to

support them. For example, our report to the next Standing Committee, comprising members of the ACC and Primates, will call for gender audits to support ACC resolution 13.31; we will ask Provincial Links to share information about church initiatives on trafficking (14.33), and to be in contact with their theological seminaries to ask if there is training on gender based and domestic violence (15.07).

A full report of our meeting is at <http://bit.ly/1bzOmTa>. Your comments to [elaine@ging@gmail.com](mailto:elaine@ging@gmail.com) are very welcome.

No introductions to Provincial Links in this issue, but there will be more next time, when we anticipate that some new Provincial Links will have been named. *Elaine Cameron*

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# Women in the Episcopate

*Towards the end of 2013, new women bishops were announced. Bishop Pat Storey in the Church of Ireland and Bishop PushpaLalitha Eggoni of the Church of South India were among them.*

*Doris Clements, IAWN Provincial Link for the Church of Ireland, writes about Bishop Pat Storey:*

The Revd Patricia (Pat) Storey was consecrated Bishop of Meath and Kildare, Church of Ireland, on 30 November 2013; an historic day as she is the first female Anglican Bishop in Europe. It was also a much welcomed occasion since the Church of Ireland General Synod legislated to have women priests and bishops in 1990.



Bishop Pat is married to the Revd Earl Storey and has two adult children. Priested in 1998 and serving as rector since 2004, she is described as an excellent administrator, wonderful pastor and dedicated Scriptural teacher. Her bubbly personality, delightful sense of humour and the love with which she embraces everyone will enhance her new role. She sees one of the most important roles of a bishop as pastor to the clergy.

Bishop Pat will bring some fun to the House of Bishops. She certainly will bring a breath of fresh air to that august body; let's hope that she finds the space to contribute good female common sense!

However, it will not be easy, as all eyes will be upon Bishop Pat. The House of Bishops obviously saw that her talents, capabilities and above all her spirituality made her the right choice, but it is an enormous challenge. As with all roles in society, when a woman has penetrated a male dominated arena, it is not a bed of roses. Hopefully, Bishop Pat will not

have to fight to be heard or accepted, or to be recognised for who she is.

There are still many men in our country who disapprove of women clergy and no doubt, women bishops! But as one Bishop said, 'difficult as it may be, learning to live with difference is one of the most important lessons God can teach us'. The majority of Anglicans in Ireland welcome this new era in our church and are praying for Bishop Pat, her family, the Diocese of Meath and Kildare and the House of Bishops.

*Bishop PushpaLalitha Eggoni, Diocese of Nandyal in Andhra Pradesh, is the Church of South India's first woman bishop.*

Bishop PushpaLalitha was priested in 1984. 'My parents had decided to dedicate me to the Lord even before I was born, as they had already lost two sons. My life has been God's mercy, and I wish to be his servant for life', she said.

She has worked in several villages in south India, and wishes to strive towards improving the state of women in the church. 'Be it any institution, women are always given second-rung treatment.

We need to change that by promoting values that teach us to not to discriminate and treat all humans the same.

'I hail from a village and my parents sold their land to educate me. I want every girl from such a background to get the best education possible. Only education can change lives



## Church of England: Gender based violence on the agenda

*By Maranda St John Nicolle, Provincial Link for the Church of England*

On 10 February, the Church of England's General Synod debated and passed a motion on gender-based violence.

The motion sought 'to affirm work that is already being done and to raise awareness of the issues surrounding gender-based violence' and started from the central theological premise that all people are made in the image of God and that all forms of violence based on gender represent an abuse and violation of that image. So it asked Synod to:

- affirm work already undertaken in dioceses, deaneries, parishes and Church of England schools in raising awareness and caring for survivors of gender-based violence in all our diverse communities
- support measures to bring perpetrators to account and provide support for changed lifestyles
- encourage boys and men to stand against gender-based violence
- commend Anglican Consultative Council Resolution 15:7 on preventing and eliminating gender-based violence to dioceses, deaneries and parishes and urge them to seek practical approaches to its implementation.

The report accompanying the motion recognised the inspiration provided by initiatives around the Anglican Communion - including resolutions from IAWN - and expressed the hope that the Church of England would stand in solidarity with those leading the way through these initiatives. It also drew attention to many resources which address issues of gender-based violence, including resources for men such as *White Ribbon Day* and *First Man Standing*.

Mandy Marshall, Co-Director of *Restored*, who made a presentation to Synod before the motion was debated, said, 'It is great to see the Church of England taking action following on from Agreed Conclusions of the 57<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women which identified that religious institutions having a key role to play in ending violence against women. I hope that dioceses and parishes take action following on from this motion.'

# Breaking the silence on violence against women in Syria

Content warning: contains description of gender based violence.

IAWN Newsletter editor Elaine Cameron writes: 'Sometimes the news overwhelms me. I despair. What can I do? I hear a human story, and feel the pain acutely. Syria is not the only country that needs our prayers but here we give space to one place, beginning with Lamia's story...

"There was only one bathroom for a group of about 100 detainees, men and women, dark and dank without soap or towels. Sanitation was non-existent causing fungal infections ... I used my own clothing as sanitary pads when I menstruated, as the prison's medical supervisor mocked me when I asked for them."

Lamia's story is in *Violence against Women: Bleeding Wound in the Syrian Conflict*,<sup>1</sup> composed of first hand testimonies gathered between January and June 2013. It aims to make clear the range of violence and violations, including crimes under international law. They are extensive: women used as human shields; a commander shielding himself by pushing two women into the line of fire; rapes during raids, most savage that of a nine-year-old girl raped in front of her family; harassment and humiliation in prison.

"...they ordered all the girls to take off their clothes ... the inspector would grab their breasts or other body parts and order them to do various movements. Security agents watched and laughed ... most irritating was the rolling camera."

Other reports are similar. *Violence against Women in Syria: Breaking the Silence*<sup>2</sup> focuses on the impact of the ongoing conflict through the eyes of women who had sought refuge in Jordan. Fear of rape had motivated many to flee. Several gave indirect accounts of rape and other forms of sexual violence committed by pro-government forces during house searches and in detention, and also committed by anti-government groups. Many also spoke of the risk of women being abducted, by all parties, either to obtain information or as bargaining tools.

The complex difficulties in exposing violence against women are explained: survivors are reluctant to report, because of cultural stigma - the shame, fear and dishonour to their families; and there is little confidence in any action. Violations against women increase: arbitrary arrests of young and old; enforced disappearances; torture to extract confessions; long detentions, whereabouts unknown to their families.

Carrying scars, physical and psychological, into refugee camps, many women face more violation - trafficking, forced labour or early marriage. *Syrian women and girls fleeing death, facing ongoing threats and humiliation - a GBV Rapid Assessment*<sup>3</sup> records that they are at risk of multiple forms of violence. Refugee settlements are often unplanned and overcrowded, with little privacy and compromised safety. A desperate need for income means that 'survival sex' is frequently resorted to.

The media ignore such suffering, and crimes against women do not appear on the political agenda. Yet Syria signed CEDAW<sup>4</sup> in 2003. International law - UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) - specifically defines sexual violence within a military framework as a weapon of war. The Report from the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, August 2013, states:

"Sexual violence has played a prominent role in the conflict ... The threat of rape is used as a tool to terrorize and punish women, men and children perceived as being associated with the opposition. Under-reporting and delayed reporting of sexual violence is endemic..."

## So what can we do?

Our faith as Christians believes no situation is irredeemable. Most Syrians want peace - many refugees think they will return 'home' one day. But what can any of us do in face of such suffering?

- ◆ Those who suffer most in times of crisis are children and women. We can hold the children and women of Syria in our prayers and pray for a Syria where women like Lamia and girls like the 9-year-old in our first paragraph, live without fear, confident and assured that they are loved and valued as human beings made in God's image.
- ◆ We can remember we are not alone. The Anglican Communion is a founder member of the We Will Speak Out coalition of churches and other agencies working together to end sexual violence. The coalition's vision is 'transformed, just and reconciled communities where the lives of men and women, girls and boys are no longer shattered by gender based violence'. It is therefore working towards church leaders speaking out; communities and churches providing safe spaces, survivors being given a central role and women being empowered; and men and boys proactively engaging in ending sexual violence. See [www.wewillspeakout.org](http://www.wewillspeakout.org).
- ◆ We can ask our own political leaders to do everything they can at the international level to end all violence in Syria; to call to account those in Syria who are flagrantly disregarding UN Security Council Resolution 1325, which calls on all parties in any conflict situation to *take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence*; and to ensure Syrian refugees are safe and have access to quality health services, basic material goods and economic support.
- ◆ We can keep an eye on the Syria page of Crisis Action at <http://crisisaction.org/our-work/syria/>. Crisis Action is working towards a #WithSyria campaign with the aim of mobilising individuals, organisations and governments around the world to change the narrative on Syria in order to demonstrate the urgency in ending the horror and highlight the real possibility for change, as demonstrated by the everyday courage of Syrian women, men, and children themselves.

1. Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN) with the Syrian Human Rights Network, November 2013
2. International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), Dec 2012
3. International Rescue Committee, August 2012
4. Convention to End Discrimination Against Women



Women of faith have been important to the UN since its birth, grasping the importance of working together in order to strengthen their presence and work in the world. Eleanor Roosevelt called on governments to encourage women's involvement in national and international affairs, and on women to share the work of post-war peace and reconstruction.

### *Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls*

This year's session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW58) is especially important as the Priority Theme will review the *Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls*. These goals **cannot** be achieved without women and men working in equal partnership – the third Millennium Development Goal (MDG 3). Time is running out; 2015 is only months away. The MDGs will be replaced by the Strategic Development Goals (SDGs). How do we ensure they are conceived so that the world may truly become a safer, more just and peaceful place for us all? See more at: [www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw58-2014](http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw58-2014).

### Millennium Development Goals

The MDGs are eight goals to be achieved by 2015 that respond to the world's main development challenges.

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.
2. Achieve universal primary education.
3. Promote gender equality and empower women.
4. Reduce child mortality.
5. Improve maternal health.
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.
7. Ensure environmental sustainability.
8. Develop a Global Partnership for Development.

→ During CSW58, follow Caitlin from Canada's blog:

<http://iawncanada.blogspot.ca/>

→ Don't forget IAWN's Facebook group. All its members can read and post to it. To join, go to:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/IntAngWomen>

and click on 'join request'. Or email Kim Robey, [krobey1@gmail.com](mailto:krobey1@gmail.com)

### Please pray for the Anglican delegation attending CSW58 in March

The Anglican delegates to CSW58 are:

**Australia:** Revd Dr Sarah Jane Bachelard, [sarah.bachelard@gmail.com](mailto:sarah.bachelard@gmail.com)

**Brazil:** Mrs Sandra Andrade, [sandrade@ieab.org.br](mailto:sandrade@ieab.org.br)

**Bangladesh:** Ms Florence Sarkar, [Florence.sarkar@yahoo.com](mailto:Florence.sarkar@yahoo.com)

**Canada:** Ms Caitlin Reilley Beck, [beck.stphilips@gmail.com](mailto:beck.stphilips@gmail.com)

**Central Africa:** Mrs Faith Gandiya, [fgandiya@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:fgandiya@yahoo.co.uk)

**Congo:** Mme Mugisa Isingoma, [mugisa\\_umkat@yahoo.ca](mailto:mugisa_umkat@yahoo.ca)

**England:** Rachel Aston

**Hong Kong:** Ms Terese Wong, [wongterese@gmail.com](mailto:wongterese@gmail.com)

**Indian Ocean:** Ms Bezara Pierrette, [indian.ocean.psec@gmail.com](mailto:indian.ocean.psec@gmail.com)

**Japan:** Ms Keiko Murai, [rolf\\_k\\_murai@ybb.ne.jp](mailto:rolf_k_murai@ybb.ne.jp), and

Ms Akane Shinoda, [claras0204@gmail.com](mailto:claras0204@gmail.com)

**Korea:** Revd Esther Lee, [aster\\_22@naver.com](mailto:aster_22@naver.com)

**Aotearoa, New Zealand & Polynesia:** Ms Kaufo'ou Leveni, [sio.leota@gmail.com](mailto:sio.leota@gmail.com), and Ms Ana Maria Lamositele, [alamositele@mwcsd.gov.ws](mailto:alamositele@mwcsd.gov.ws)

**Pakistan:** Ms Ayra Indiryas, [ayra\\_indiryas@hotmail.com](mailto:ayra_indiryas@hotmail.com)

**Rwanda:** Revd Immaculée Nyiransengimana, [nyirimaculee@yahoo.fr](mailto:nyirimaculee@yahoo.fr)

**Scotland:** Dr Elaine Cameron, [elaine.ging@gmail.com](mailto:elaine.ging@gmail.com)

**Southern Africa:** Ms Granny Seape, [grannyseape@gmail.com](mailto:grannyseape@gmail.com), and

Ms Louisa Mojela, [Imojela@wiphold.com](mailto:Imojela@wiphold.com)

**The Episcopal Church:** Dr Lucille Pilling, [lucille@lucillepilling.com](mailto:lucille@lucillepilling.com)

**West Africa:** Ven Priscilla M G Johnson, [eberstic@yahoo.com](mailto:eberstic@yahoo.com), and

Ms Hannah Marie YaJola Davies, [anglican@gambiadiocese.org](mailto:anglican@gambiadiocese.org)

As Florence Sarkar, delegate for the Church of Bangladesh writes, "We will be there to share lessons and gain knowledge for delivering more responsive services to women and girls to achieving the MDGs."

Keep in touch during CSW58! Use the email addresses above...

### 'Weaving Our Bonds of Affection' Anglican Women at Prayer Conference

Virginia Theological Seminary, USA, 14-16 March 2014

*Imagine* – women gathered from around the Communion, listening to one another and to God; held together through and by mutually supportive prayer.

Phoebe Griswold, Chair of the Anglican Women at Prayer Conference Committee, would like the Conference to take time to look at how we pray in different cultures, so that we understand better how God reaches us as women. She hopes that through it, sustainable bridges will be built among Anglican women throughout the world, and that we will have a deeper

understanding of why and how we pray. She trusts that the bonds of affection among Anglican women will be strengthened to become a sustained community connected through prayer, personal stories, concerns and thanksgivings. See <http://anglicanwomenatprayer.org>.

IAWN's Steering Group will be represented at the Conference by Pumla Titus and Kim Robey.

