

MOWatching

newsletter of MOWatch Australia

March 2006

20 years of ordained women

- let's celebrate it!

February 9th 1986 saw the first ordination of women as deacons in the Anglican Church of Australia, by Archbishop David Penman, in St Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne - a service delayed by a bomb threat! A further ordination took place on May 8th, Ascension Day. (See page 3 for seminar details)

David Penman also gave permission for the first Australian Anglican celebration of the Eucharist presided over by a woman, less than a month later.

The Revd **Susan Adams**, a visiting priest of the Anglican Church of Aotearoa-New Zealand, on June 1st 1986 presided at a service of Holy Communion at All Souls', Sandringham, where the Revd **Noel Delbridge** was the vicar. Noel had formerly been the Director of the *General Board of Religious Education*, whose 1986 conference Susan had been invited as guest speaker. (A decade later, Noel was fittingly succeeded at Sandringham by the Revd (now Canon) **Barbara Darling**.)



The Age (Melbourne) printed this photo of Susan presiding on June 2nd: media interest was very high.

The photo was used for the front cover of MOW's magazine, reproduced here. □

Introducing Bronislava Lee - new MOWatch VP!

Kathy Toal wrote to congratulate Bronislava Lee on her new role as MOWatch Vice-President, and received this lively response:



Hi Kathy!

So thanks for the congratulations. I'm really looking forward to MOWatch stuff - it feels like I've just stumbled into all this and it's kind of huge but in a good way!

Our new minister was inducted last week and one of the first things he said was that he wanted to acknowledge the 50% of the population who were ineligible for the job only on the basis of their gender. Some brave soul started clapping and I think I even surprised myself how exciting I found it! This stuff is taking over my life already :)

The activity that takes up most of my time is uni, where I'm doing an arts degree in Australian history and politics. Over the next two years I'll be finishing it off with a few subjects, an internship with a politician and an honours year.

I see myself as an activist who's finding her feet, exploring how I can be part of changing the world and what are good ways to do it. I like to be busy, so I fill my life with lots of interesting things - for example, this semester I'll be doing a 10-week workshop on non-violence (as a way of life, not just a tactic), lifeline phone counselling (which I've only just started so it's pretty scary), and hopefully I'll run and swim and see live music, finally get around to learning to play the drums, and may well find myself at a few rallies.

I live in a sharehouse in Sydney and participate in both the Anglican and Uniting churches, and I can't wait to get more involved in MOWatch! □

President's Column

Report to the MOWatch Annual General Meeting held on 17th February 2006

It is with great sadness that, for personal reasons, Jack and I are unable to attend this AGM. I am deeply appreciative of the time and effort given by the Executive to take over the important but sometimes tedious matters of preparation to ensure that all will go well.

The availability of telephone hook-ups enabled the Executive to remain in touch in 2005, and since the last AGM the priority has continued to be the *MOWatch Conference* being held later this year in Melbourne. We are extremely fortunate to have The Revd Canon Dr **Jane Shaw**, Dean of Divinity, Chaplain and Fellow of New College, Oxford as our guest speaker. The event will also provide an opportunity to:

- profile leading Australian women both lay and ordained;
- offer insights into the progressive changes that are happening in the Anglican Church in Australia, and celebrate them;
- provide 'space' for people to be informed about present issues facing women in the Church;
- understand what contribution MOWatch can make to the ongoing inclusion of women in leadership; and
- seek to understand the Church's backlash to feminism.

I extend my sincere thanks to Executive members for their hard work for the Conference, particularly Kathy and Judy. Both have a great deal of experience to draw on, as well as a sense of humour to see it through. *Please promote the Conference as widely as possible.*

At a time when we are celebrating the 20th anniversary of the first women in the Diaconate, and reliving the memories of those events, our hearts and minds are conscious of the issues surrounding the ordination of women as bishops in Australia. It is troubling to acknowledge that the appointment of women in leadership has to endure legal argument rather than discussion and agreement.

Vice-President Alison Gent gave everyone cause for concern in late 2005 when hospitalised with a serious illness. She is recovering OK and looks forward to continuing her role.

I look forward to seeing you in August!

Val Graydon, *MOWatch President*

WOMEN UP FRONT

ordination in Melbourne 1986-2006



It's 20 years since the first women were ordained in the Diocese of Melbourne.

On February 9th 1986, in St Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne, seven deaconesses were ordained as deacons, and one woman who had just completed theological training was ordained alongside the men with whom she had studied.

On May 8th 1986 (Ascension Day), ten women who had been authorised lay workers were ordained as deacons, with two male colleagues.

What have we learnt in the 20 years since those ordinations? In a seminar day offered by St John's Bentleigh, women and men from Melbourne and beyond are invited to celebrate, review and evaluate what God has done with the gifts of ordained women.

Join Morna Sturrock, Leigh Mackay, Colleen O'Reilly, Alan Nichols, Sally and Con Apokis, Muriel Porter, Cheryl and Scott Holmes, Betty Bracken, Peta and Charles Sherlock, Jessica and Rick Cheung, Heather Marten, Susanne and Jonathan Chambers, Willy Maddock, and many other contributors.

Celebrate Eucharist with Kate Prowd presiding, Peta Sherlock preaching, and deacon Cinti Joule Robison.

Seminar Day 29th April 2006

9.00-10.00	arrive, registration, coffee		2.00		into the future: plenary session
10.00	welcome, prayer				Laity, Episcopacy,
10.15	keynote address				Priesthood, Diaconate
	response		3.15		Eucharist
	discussion		4.15		Networking, connections
11.30	morning tea		4.30		Close
12.00	Panels (choose one):				
	diaconate				
	clergy couples				
	new ministry territory				
	lay women's ministries				
1.00	lunch (included in registration cost)				

Bookings are essential!

Fill in registration form below, and return to
St John's Bentleigh,
624 Centre Rd
Bentleigh East 3165

Reservation for the "Women Up Front" Seminar Day is essential!

Please fill in and forward with your payment to St John's, 624 Centre Road Bentleigh East 3165

Name(s) _____ phone _____

Address _____ postcode _____

E-mail _____

Name for nametag: _____ special dietary requirements? _____

Panel preference (circle one): * Diaconate * Clergy Couples * New Ministry Territory * Lay Women's Ministries

Cost per person: \$50 (concession student / senior \$40)

Please make cheque payable to St John's Anglican Church Bentleigh or fill in credit card details below

Circle type of card: Visa / Mastercard Expiry Date: ____ / 200__

Name on card: _____ Card number ____ / ____ / ____ / ____

Australia's first female Dean: 'Very Revved' Peta Sherlock

ON APRIL 24TH, 2006, in St Paul's Cathedral, Bendigo, Bishop Andrew Curnow will 'install' the Revd Dr Peta Sherlock as Dean. Peta will become the first woman to be styled 'The Very Reverend' in Australia (not that she is keen being so addressed!).

Peta started her working life as an English / History teacher. After study at Ridley College she brought teaching and theology together as a full-time RE teacher at Firbank Anglican Girls' School, Melbourne. She was in one of the early groups of women ordained deacon in 1986, and became a School Chaplain.

Peta moved to parish ministry at St Andrew's Clifton Hill with St Luke's North Fitzroy, and was ordained priest in 1992. Appointed Archdeacon of Latrobe in 2000 ('The Venerable'!) she moved to St John's Heidelberg in 2001, and became 'Dr Peta' in 2004 for a thesis on the ways we actually *use* Scripture.



What excites Peta about the new post?

"Using the opportunities a cathedral offers to engage Christian faith with the life of Bendigo, and to work with Bishop Andrew and the leadership team of the diocese," she replied. With three other ordained women in greater Bendigo city (Willy Maddock, Christine Kimpton and Glenda Templer) Peta is also looking forward to working with a clergy team of women and men.

Peta is married to Charles, with two adult sons and two young granddaughters. Their non-vicarage home looks out on the pond, ducks and gumtrees of Trentham, where they have enjoyed a little of Bendigo diocesan life for a decade. □

Sydney MOW Convenor Reports - February 2006.

LONG BEFORE I ATTENDED my first MOW meeting last August, it had become obvious to me that the problems Sydney MOW has are considerable. We are convinced, however, that **there are still very large numbers of Sydney Anglicans who would support women as priests and bishops here**, and who feel that this would be healthy for the church.

A narrow interpretation of Scripture does the church no favours - especially amongst educated women of any age - and amongst many men. Although the ordination of women issue is at present pretty dead in the press, we feel it is important that as many people as possible here know that we haven't gone away and given up.

Debate on this issue is still relevant and important. To this end the committee has had some fruitful discussions as to how we should proceed. We have recently had a letter published in *Market Place*, and are planning a course of action which should see the issue raised again at the time of the next Synod meeting in Sydney.

We are organising a few speakers at meetings this year and are setting up an internet google group. **The idea is that any member can contribute - any ideas will be most welcome!**

Christine Middleton

Muriel Porter challenges Sydney's gender agenda

THE NEW PURITANS IS Dr Muriel Porter's description of the current leadership of the Anglican Diocese of Sydney ('Sydney'). It is also the title of her latest book, published by Melbourne University Press.

For three decades Muriel has worked from 'inside' the Anglican Church to help open all its ministries to women and men alike, wielding her pen to great effect. Now she sets this issue in a wider context, exploring the unique role of 'Sydney' in not only restricting the ministry of women, but pressing a broader agenda locally and internationally. *The New Puritans* contends that this agenda deconstructs key elements of the Christian (let alone Anglican) tradition, is bad for society, and that gender lies at its heart.

Having set the scene with a telling account of what 'Sydney' is like today, this very readable book goes back to 'Beginnings' to trace the origins of the 'Sydney' outlook from 1788 to the 1970s. Chapter three takes a briefer look at its place in the current 'conservative' resurgence. Two longer chapters survey the roles of diocesan leaders (especially Broughton Knox) in the women's ordination struggle, then the 'lay presidency' and gay debates (an illuminating linkage), before a tight Conclusion.

Muriel Porter succeeds in distilling complex issues in this digestible, well-documented volume. Buy it, read it, weep for 'Sydney' - and put away fear. □

MOWatching is produced by MOWatch Inc. Editorial responsibility is taken by Charles Sherlock, 3 Lelant St Trentham 3458. Written contributions should be emailed to c.sherlock@mcd.edu.au.

English WATCH does not like TEA

By **MARK BENNET & JEAN M MAYLAND**, members of the National Committee of National WATCH.

WOMEN IN THE CHURCH (WATCH) England is working hard for women bishops in the Church of England and we are at a very crucial stage in our struggle.

Background

In 2002, two years after the measure to allow women priests was passed, Archdeacon Judith Rose of Rochester, moved in General Synod a motion asking for a theological study on issues connected with women bishops. A group chaired by her own bishop (Michael Nazir Ali of Rochester) produced a report, which was published in 2004. This went once more over all the theological ground covered in the debates, which led up to the ordination of women to the priesthood. It made no decision about women but set out a number of options as to the way forward if a decision were made to have women bishops. These included things like - women could only be suffragans; women could only be bishops as members of team etc. It also set out various ways of meeting those who were opposed.

At the meeting of General Synod in July 2005, it was decided to ask the House of Bishops to suggest a way forward and also agreed that provision should be made to meet the needs of those opposed

The Guildford Report

A small group was set up to examine the options and to come forward with a suggestion. The Bishop of Guildford, Christopher Hill, a former Chaplain of Robert Runcie, chaired the group. The only woman member of the group was Joy Tetley, Archdeacon of Worcester.

They agreed that women should be made bishops – full bishops, not suffragans and not just as a team member. They did not set a bar on a woman becoming Archbishop of Canterbury but counselled the necessity to warn those responsible for such an appointment not to do it until they were sure a woman would be widely accepted.

They looked at three ways of meeting the demands of those opposed:

- A single clause measure with a code of practice
- A third Province
- The provision of ‘Transferred Episcopal Arrangements’ (TEA)

A single clause measure with a code of practice was the way strongly favoured by WATCH. Such provision would depend on grace and mutual respect. A diocese would recognise their woman bishop but she would graciously invite a male bishop to conduct sacraments in the parishes, which could not accept her.

Such a system works in America but the Guildford Group decided that those opposed needed the protection of law and measure. For their part those opposed wanted a third province but this was rejected as too complicated and too divisive.

The group unanimously went for TEA. Under the provisions of TEA, in the mainstream of the Church of England women priests and bishops would be fully accepted without any barriers or exceptions. Also under the terms of TEA all existing provisions for the non-acceptance of women priests would be cancelled. All parishes which did not want a woman priest or bishop, nor a male bishop who was prepared to ordain women priest and join in their consecration as bishop, could ask that ‘Transferred Episcopal Arrangements’ be made.

The Diocesan Bishop should forward this request to the Archbishop who would be required to delegate his functions as the Ordinary in relation to the parish by authorising a Provincial Regional Bishop (PRB) to exercise pastoral care, sacramental and disciplinary functions in relation to it, and by delegating all other functions back to the diocese. The Parish would remain part of the diocesan administration in respect of finance, church schools etc.

Clergy in such a parish would make oaths of canonical obedience to the Archbishop of the Province through the PRB who would administer the oath and personally exercise this special jurisdiction. PRBs would be sponsoring bishops for the selection of ordinands and would ordain deacons and priests opposed to the ordination of women. These parishes would then be ‘protected from’ women priests and bishops and male bishops who ordain them and form a kind of enclave within the CofE.

WATCH is bitterly opposed to this plan, which would institutionalise sexism within the Church of England. It also leans towards heresy, favours Donatism and continues a theology of taint. The whole concept of the oaths is ridiculous.

The General Synod

When the General Synod debated the Guildford Report on February 9, the composite motion was moved by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Part of the motion referred to the need to ‘maintain the highest possible degree of communion in the Church of England’ and several speakers in the debates suggested that the TEA proposals were barely enough to achieve this, and needed to be modified further to accommodate those opposed to the ordination and consecration of women.

Attempts to replace TEA with a single clause measure were defeated and the Synod voted by 346 to 1 to pur-

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Introducing Jane Shaw

- *conference speaker*

THE REVD CANON DR JANE SHAW is Dean of Divinity, Chaplain and Fellow of New College, Oxford, and an honorary canon of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford. She teaches in both the history and theology faculties of the University, and much of her research and writing has been in the area of gender and religion.

She spent several years in the Episcopal Church in the USA. Jane was a graduate student at Harvard Divinity School, and completed her PhD in History at the University of California, Berkeley.



She has recently co-edited *The Call for Women Bishops* (SPCK 2004), a book of essays written by contributors from all over the Anglican Communion and from a range of denominations. The essays are in support of the consecration of women to the episcopate in the Anglican Church.

Jane was involved in the campaign for the ordination of women from the age of 16, the year the *Movement for the Ordination of Women* was founded in England. She has been a theological consultant to the House of Bishops, and often writes and comments on religious matters in the English press and on television and radio.

In 2005 Jane enjoyed a sabbatical as a Visiting Scholar at Trinity College in the University of Melbourne, and in 2006 she will be a Visiting Fellow at the Humanities Research Centre at ANU. □

MOWatch Objects

The Association is committed to challenging and transforming the Anglican Church of Australia and its role in the community. For this purpose its objects are:

- a) To move all dioceses in the Anglican Church of Australia to admit women to the ordained ministries of the Church.
- b) To encourage women to hear and respond to the call of God.
- c) To recognise, encourage and extend the ministries of women, and to see that the Church makes full use of them.
- d) To express women's perspectives in theology, to celebrate their diversity of spirituality and to promote the use of inclusive language in worship.
- e) To bring laity and clergy into closer partnership.
- f) To liaise with appropriate national and international women's groups.
- g) To foster ecumenical links and support moves to ordain women in other churches.
- h) To support those women already ordained.
- i) To foster, gather, and share information between members across all dioceses.

In furthering these objects, the Association may co-operate with any other body provided however that such co-operation maintains the integrity of the Association with respect to its objects and with regard to the manner in which that co-operation is conducted. □

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Continued from previous page

sue an approach to women bishops 'along the lines of TEA expressed in measure with a code of practice'.

The most heavily contested amendment was to commission further study of the simple measure and code of practice route alongside TEA, but although a majority of the clergy were in favour of this, the houses of Bishops and Laity voted against. Another group is to be set up to do further work on the TEA proposals and to examine the 'theological, ecumenical and canonical implications' of such an approach.

What now?

WATCH will lobby hard to have TEA modified so it becomes more like a single clause measure. The opposition will probably work hard to ensure that it becomes more like a third province! Much more work and prayer lie ahead.

The Diocesan Synod in Hereford has already given a strong indication that it is unhappy with the extent to which the TEA proposals accommodate a minority in the Church and that it would like further consideration of the single clause approach. WATCH also continues its campaign to make people aware of the real 'theological, ecumenical and canonical implications' of TEA as they appear to the majority who are in favour of the ordination and consecration of women.

It is vital that we get this right because of our mission in the world. The man who moved the amendment to have a single clause measure is a Member of Parliament. He said that the 'danger was of sidelining the church from God's people'. Many others feel that in going this way the church is just making itself utterly irrelevant in a country which outlaws sexism but allows the church to be exempt. *What a witness!* □