

# MOWatching

newsletter of *MOWatch Australia*

May 2010

Reg No A0008603A

*Alison in characteristic pose at a demonstration in Brisbane in 2001.*



## Vale, Alison Gent

*On 13 November 2009, Alison Gent, one of the great figures of the Movement for the Ordination of Women, died. Alison was a foundation member of MOW Adelaide and served for many years on the *MOWatch* Committee as a Vice-President.*

*Sue Henry-Edwards participated in her funeral, held in St Peter's Cathedral, Adelaide on 17 November. Her account, and a delightful eulogy from her son Chris, can be found on pages 5-7.*

## *MOWatch* retreat

21-25 September 2009

The word 'retreat' means to withdraw or go away from a situation or incident. History provides many examples of military forces retreating from a battle in order for rest, patching up of wounds (healing) and in some instances re-thinking their battle plan. A Christian retreat is similar! It is a time for withdrawing from the day-to-day business of our life and going somewhere for rest and healing in God's love.

The Benedictine Abbey at Jamberoo was chosen for the *MOWatch* retreat, as its Sisters have an excellent reputation for providing inclusive hospitality, and caring spiritual direction. The Abbey was built in 1988, and all the buildings are nestled into the valley hillside, offering expansive views of God's creation.

So on Monday 21 September a group of us travelled from Sydney to Jamberoo. The car drive gave us the time and space to withdraw and separate from our normal busy day to day activities. For if we fail to find the time to stand back, to give ourselves a break, a breathing space, we are in danger of failing to be fully alive, or to enjoy that fullness of life for which we are created.

The scenery of Jamberoo valley is stunning, and as we drove up the drive of the Abbey and passed through the line of trees that were coming into bud, we realised that we had come to an ideal place to once again listen with the ear of the heart to God. We did this through times of

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# President's Column

I was going for a walk the other evening, and I noticed that some of the front gardens of the homes that I passed had lawn that glistened and others didn't. I looked more closely to see if the glistening ones had just been watered, but I saw no evidence of moisture on the grass. Further down the street I saw a man standing outside his home, and so I asked him, "Could you please tell me why your lawn glistens?" He replied, "Ma'am, my lawn is not real, it is artificial ... in the evening with the late sun on the blades of grass it looks as though it has just been watered, but I can tell you it ain't real."

In a world that is constantly changing we sometimes have new ways of adapting to problems. For example, given the water shortages we all experience, instead of a natural lawn we can have artificial turf. However, there is one problem that is occurring for which I haven't seen a solution. The problem I am referring to was printed in the March 2010 edition of *Southern Cross: Sydney Anglicans Connecting*. On page 21, the heading 'More new ministers than ever!' told of a record number of 56 people ordained as deacons on 6 February 2010.

This number of people being ordained in Sydney is a problem for me in several ways. However, the most troublesome is the effect this will have on General Synod: Sydney will now be able to have increased representation at General Synod. This is because the amount of clerical representatives from each diocese is dependent upon the number of licensed clergy that each diocese has. This means that Sydney's proportion of delegates at General Synod will be such that they will be able to influence the voting of legislation (a two / thirds majority is needed for significant legislation to be passed) to the extent that I do not believe it would be representative of the wider Anglican Church in Australia.

For those of you who may not be aware of the number of clergy in each diocese, the 2009 *Anglican Directory* listed Sydney greater (891 clergy) than all the smaller Dioceses added together (885 clergy). That is, Sydney's numbers are greater than Armidale 61, Ballarat 58, Bathurst 86, Bendigo 66, Bunbury 65, Gippsland 78, Grafton 85, North Queensland 120, North West Australia 29, Northern Territory 37, Riverina 27, Rockhampton 33, The Murray 53, Wangaratta 56, and Willochra 31. This means that the Diocese of Sydney could out vote all the smaller dioceses!



Melbourne was the second largest, with 654 clergy (but still 237 less than Sydney), Brisbane 473 clergy (418 less than Sydney), fourth Perth 313 clergy (578 less than Sydney), Canberra and Goulburn 212 clergy, Newcastle 170 clergy and Tasmania 156 clergy.

I realise that the other dioceses have ordained more people since the printing of the 2009 *Directory*, however, no other diocese has ordained as many people as Sydney, which will mean that their amount of delegates in General Synod will be increasing and this is a problem and worry to me, that one diocese will be able to wield so much power and influence.

It is legal, but is it ethical?

Perhaps you feel as strongly as I do about this, and can join me in prayer?

Peace and blessings

Georgina

## MOWatch retreat

attentive silence, meditative walking, lectio divina, singing prayers, chats together, and walking in the dark up the hill at 4 am to Vigil service in the Chapel and watching the sun rise through the panoramic east-facing windows; walking back down the hill afterwards and laughing when we realised that Georgie still had her pyjamas on underneath her cassock!

We all enjoyed the ambiance of Abbey - the love and care from the sisters - of having time to listen to God through the ear of the heart - of the rest, peace and healing which we all experienced.

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Psalm 16 relates to our days at Jamberoo:

*We have been fortunate in our days,  
And in the places where we have lived.  
But to you, the great Giver of gifts ...*

*You will show us the path of life,  
In your countenance is the fullness of joy.  
From the spring of your heart flow  
rivers of delight,*

*A fountain of water that shall never run dry. □*

Georgina Hawley

# *Where has all the passion gone?*

## *Women in Church and State.*

### **Pat Brennan addresses Sydney MOW AGM**

*The advertised Guest Speaker for the 2009 Sydney AGM was Dr Marion Maddox. Sadly, a family bereavement prevented her speaking. The 2009 Convenor, Dr Patricia Brennan AM, took her place with a combined Report/Address under the original title: 'Where has all the passion gone? Women in Church and State.' The concluding section of her challenging address is printed below, courtesy of Sydney MOW.*

If I can be of any use to those who sit by the waters of Babylon longing for Zion, it will be to spend the last opportunity to speak from an official role on what I think the reasons are for the absence of a strong MOW in Sydney.

First, at a very practical level, women who wanted to be priests in the Anglican Church in Sydney have steadily and often discreetly been leaving congregations in Sydney diocese for two decades. Some were keen MOW members, but more often than not previously opponents of MOW and the way it put the Church on notice. Indeed, when it came to candidate selection, it was an advantage in the eyes of most bishops - even those who supported the ordination of women - not to be involved actively in MOW.

This fact, namely the absence of women in Sydney seeking ordination to the priesthood, poses a challenge to the very existence of MOW. If indeed there are no women who wish to be priests in the Anglican Church in Sydney, why would there be much interest or passion about women being actively excluded from ministry? Women can go to other dioceses and be offered ordination - one of them, Barbara Darling, is now a bishop.

Then there is the matter of the remnant culture. There is a veritable clutch of dissident congregations in this diocese that have the feeling about them that is reminiscent of the Church in the Soviet Union during the height of Communism. Where numbers were overwhelmingly with the Marxist government, churches learned to conduct their business for the purposes of co-existence and privatised their survival, many of them convivial in their relationship with their atheist masters. Could the need to survive and be left alone the reason prophetic voices are hardly ever heard in Sydney diocese?

The only public forum for debate, Sydney Synod, has itself settled over the last fifteen years or so to business as usual as though there aren't 400 plus women priests and 20 women preparing for the priesthood in the An-

glican Church in Australia, and more women bishops in the wings. They take the trouble to create a welcome place for the isolated voice in favour of women priests, such as that of Chris Albany in synod, precisely because a totalitarian regime does not like the reputation of entirely suppressing its opposition. But, should Chris Albany find himself leading a growing number of protesters with views in opposition to the party line, views actively promoted in other congregations ... be assured that his voice would not be so warmly supported by management.

Finally, a major change that has taken place progressively over the fifty years is that the influence of the Church in Australian society is more and more marginalised from contemporary life. Society has changed around the Church in the last fifty years at an escalating rate. While criticism of the institutional church has been the bread and butter of most theologians, contemporary critiques are cutting deeper and raising new questions.

People like Don Cupitt have argued effectively that the Church is a power structure based on hierarchical dualisms: of law over against gospel, of church order over against freedom of thought, of obedience over against expression, of hierarchy over against equality, of emotional detachment over against passion. In a search for communal identity and legitimation, the Church is largely engaged in looking backwards, exploring tradition, ancient authoritative texts and past reformations rather than studying matters of contemporary social concern.

MOW was perceived in Sydney as the 'enemy from the outside' whenever it used the discourse of feminism in church circles. Given the women's liberation movement, feminism was seen as secular rather than Christian. But orthodox theology has always managed to cover up the fact that many of its better ideas and methods are delivered from disciplines other than theology itself. As though the institutional church would ever have initiated the freeing of slaves, the vote for women, access to contraception, the rights of sex workers to the protection of the law, without the persistent efforts of those deemed to be 'enemies'.

The two issues that loom large when it comes to quantitative shifts in social values and that have generated passion in society and the Church are each associated with sexuality and gender; namely the full acceptance of women and gays as fully human. The experience of the abuses directed

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# New team to lead WATCH

The Revd Rachel Weir was elected the new Chair of WATCH (*Women and the Church in the Church of England*) at a General Meeting of members on 20 March. Two new Vice-Chairs were also elected at the meeting: Hilary Cotton and the Revd Mark Bennett. (Profiles of the new team are given below.)

Archdeacon Christine Allsopp paid tribute to the outgoing Chair, Christina Rees, and thanked her on behalf of all members for her long years of service to the organisation. Thanks were also given to the Revd Charles Read who has served as Vice-Chair for many years and also stepped down at the meeting.

The new team is looking forward to the challenges of the next few months, as WATCH prepares for the crucial debates in General Synod this July about women as bishops. But beyond July, WATCH will be broadening its focus.

“We want to celebrate the gifts and perspectives that women bring to the church and affirm the renewal that their ministry brings to our corporate life,” said incoming Chair, Rachel Weir

## Revd Rachel Weir (Chair)

Rachel is a non-stipendiary assistant curate serving in Oxford diocese. She read Economics and Law at Newnham College, Cambridge and then practised as a barrister before switching direction to study Theology.

Rachel trained at Cuddesdon for three years full time before being ordained in 1997. In the first part of her curacy, Rachel’s time was shared between parish and national inter faith work. The second part of her curacy has been split between parish life and the life of WATCH.

Rachel joined the national committee in 2008, and was



elected Vice-Chair in 2009. She looks forward to leading WATCH through the next crucial period.

## Hilary Cotton (Vice Chair)

Hilary Cotton is a laywoman from Guildford Diocese and a member of Diocesan Synod. In 2002 she co-founded WATCH Guildford, and served on the national WATCH Committee previously from 2003-2007.



Hilary is passionate about getting more women into leadership, and has for 20 years coached women and run training programmes across the public, private and third sectors to this end. In the past few years these programmes have also been greatly appreciated by clergywomen as they move into positions of greater responsibility and breadth.

## The Revd Mark Bennett (Vice Chair)

Revd Mark Bennett is Team Rector in the Great Parndon Team in Harlow – a local ecumenical partnership. He studied mathematics at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, qualified as a Chartered Accountant with KPMG, and worked as a forensic accountant with KPMG and lawyers *Leigh, Day & Co* before training for ordination at Westcott House.



During his curacy in Leeds, Mark joined WATCH and helped set up the WATCH branch in the diocese of Ripon and Leeds. He joined the National Committee in 2005, shortly after moving to Harlow. □

## *Where has all the passion gone?* Pat Brennan addresses Sydney MOW AGM

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towards them resulted in reform movements marked by celebration, affirmation, intellectual creativity, reconciliation and true community. Stephen Patterson says,

*They summoned the institutional church to come forth from its sepulchre and to discover the form of resurrection in relation to life and death. And what happens when it doesn't come forth. Some of those who stay in the hope of changing it from within*

*may run the risk of tasting the death of passion ...*

If you occupy the place of prophesy, but do not prophesy, you are stifling passion. While ever MOW is there, but not presenting any danger to the dominant regime, women who may otherwise wake up to the misogyny embedded in headship will see MOW out there as an enemy they must oppose from loyalty to the institution, and be distracted by the wrong target.

*Patricia Brennan*

# Alison Grace Gent, née Hogben

20 September 1920 - 13 November 2009

*A eulogy given by her son Chris at St Peter's Cathedral, Adelaide*

A couple of years back, Alison said very firmly to our sister: "Lavinia, I will not have you speak my funeral eulogy ... you'd make me sound funny." I rise to this challenge, obedient at least to my mother's explicit wishes to exclude her daughter. As for keeping the fun out, we'll see how that goes.

This will of course be the merest outline and sampler of an extraordinary and complex woman. What she was and what she did and how she did it we have all seen and heard or heard of: sometimes wondered at, sometimes admired, been strengthened and inspired by, been assaulted and confronted by, sometimes avoided or even run away from.

In the small hours and the improbable quiet by her bedside over the last few days, I've been seeking the origins and influences, the catalysts and causes for who Alison was. I think I'm on the trail - but I will not draw any conclusions even though the thought that I can at last do so without immediate contradiction makes it very tempting.

## Vale, Alison Gent

SUE HENRY-EDWARDS

I went to Alison Gent's funeral yesterday - it was wonderful. Her family and the church did her proud. In accordance with Alison's wishes, Bishop Garry Weatherill presided at a *Book of Common Prayer* requiem Mass, Dean Sarah O'Neill was deacon and Fr Ron Dowling subdeacon. Dianne Bradley administered the chalice along with Jenny Wilson, the associate priest at the cathedral.

Chris, Alison's son, gave a fantastic eulogy which had us all in stitches but also did great justice to her profound intelligence, argumentative nature, love, faith and passion (*printed here*). Bishop Garry preached a wonderful sermon on the theme, "What do you plan to do with your one wild and precious life? Live and Live and Live." He talked about how Alison Lived in love, Lived in hope and Lived for justice.

There was a good turnout of MOW - Kathleen Toal, Susan Sandford and Paul Brothie came from Melbourne, Judy Little from Sydney, and lots of Adelaide people. Former archbishops Keith Rayner and Ian George were there, along with lots of Adelaide clergy of all ages, including many of the women clergy.

Lesley Mclean introduced to us Sonya, currently an ordination candidate, by saying "you have to come and sit with these women - they are the ones who made it possible for you". □

## Early years

Alison was born the third child of Alfred and Lavinia Hogben on 20 September 1920 in a house, still standing, on Alexandra Avenue, Rose Park.



*Alison at the MOWatch change of name meeting in Adelaide, 2001.*

She never really knew her father - when he died before she was one, her mother sold what she owned of their house and moved across the plantation to 49 Alexandra Ave where lived her four unmarried Jones sisters and two unmarried brothers.

There was further tragedy when one of the brothers committed suicide in 1927, but it was still a loving if snug and thrifty household, living off the income of the brothers, later supplemented by the youngest

sister, Grace. Stanley, the quiet Western Front veteran, did the gardening and pedalled off daily to work at a hardware store in Rundle Street. The sisters, Alice, Annie, Ida and Grace, cooked and cleaned and sewed and visited and received friends. Essentially it was a matriarchal commune.

There is little doubt that Alison was the centre of attention as the fatherless baby, the apple of many eyes - and she proved to be very bright and precocious. There was also a definite red shade in her hair which Rudyard Kipling and quite a few others say goes with a certain temper.

She and her sisters went to school locally until, on the money their mother had saved from the house sale, they were able to go to Walford, where quickly Alison's scholastic ability shone bright, and bursaries and scholarships followed.

In retrospect, she resented having been pigeon-holed as a swot, and felt she had been unfairly kept from the hockey pitches and tennis courts. The long plaits, severe fringe and horn-rimmed glasses of her early and mid teens, only reinforced the serious role. She was 'Allie Hog' and she was very brainy. Only she knew that underneath there was a Party Girl waiting to break out.

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# Alison Grace Gent, née Hogben

20 September 1920 - 13 November 2009

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But there were winds of change. The Hogbens, her father's family, had been bastions of the Baptist Church in South Australia. But her mother and youngest aunt gravitated towards St Theodore's Church of England, Toorak Gardens, and when Alison and her sisters were confirmed, and her mother's employer, Guy Makin, a staunch Anglican (and sidesman of this Cathedral) became Alison's godfather. A few years later, after he was widowed, he became her step-father.

## A second life

So a second life developed for Alison. Makin was President of the *Royal Australian Institute of Architects*, a highly cultured man and a *bon vivant*. He was also a man of very decided and forcibly expressed opinions who revelled in arguments. He was clearly proud of his accomplished and spirited god-daughter. So came stays at the Strangways Terrace mansion with her own bedroom, fashionable clothes, trips to the theatre, days at the races, singing lessons, horse-riding, golf, dinner with professional and business figures, discussion of art and literature and politics.

She began to attend this Cathedral, coming under the musical and spiritual guidance of Canon Finnis, and at the same time she was thriving in the University environment, achieving double First Class Honours in French and English under Professors Cornell, Jury and J.I.M. Stewart. She joined in amateur dramatics, she was a member of the Student Union, she was active in the University Anglican Society.

With the war, there came a shortage of male academics and male choristers. At J.I.M. Stewart's suggestion she gave a series of well-regarded lectures on the metaphysical poets in place of a Master's thesis. and did part-time tutoring in English; and she became the first woman to sing in the Cathedral choir, even though as a woman she was not permitted to process with the rest of the choir - she 'nipped in' to the stalls from the back. Life at Rose Park was more stable and less crowded, her sisters leaving to work and travel and marry. Her mother was now married to Guy Makin and so the door at Strangways Terrace was always open and welcome.

Here, as you see from the photograph on the service order, was a young woman of glamour and intellectual brilliance, poised on the brink of ... who knows. Better managed, conventionally directed, she might have been more productive and distinguished and comfortable in a worldly sense - but it would have been a more cloistered life, hard to imagine her in.

## From Hogben to Gent

And anyway, in the Anglican Society was a young Aman, a handsome and charming and witty and learned if not particularly providential or practical young man, destined for the Anglican priesthood, with whom she fell irretrievably in love and who introduced her to the heady mix which is Anglo-Catholicism. And whom she married, I suspect in the teeth of certain influential opposition, spoken and unspoken, after a five-year engagement. Our brother Timothy was born 41 weeks later.

For a while they lived in a cottage, now demolished, just across the road from here. And then our father was appointed priest in charge of St Clement's, Enfield. At that time St Clement's had no rectory. A place was rented down the hill nearly a mile away. They had no car - well not one that worked.

And this is where the story really starts. This is the blue-stocking in the tailored dress pushing the luxury perambulator up the steep dusty unsealed road to early morning Mass. This is the beautiful cultured lecturer's voice pleading meat-scraps from the butcher to feed a burgeoning pet cat population. This is the Walford girl coming to grips with stray dogs, disapproving parishioners, unpaid bills, violent neighbours, piles of ironing, hungry children, 6 o'clock closing, geographical, social and institutional isolation - life in a red-brick semi-detached housing-trust house, 7 Moorang St, Kilburn. She was still in touch with but oh so far from life at either Alexandra Avenue or Strangways Terrace.

There must have been times when things looked heart-breakingly bleak, but her friends and her family and her faith and her own romantic determination kept her on her feet: and here began the process, the habit of an intense and almost daily revival through self reinvention and re-interpretation, which went right through to the end of her life, often signaled by the early morning phone call to one or other of her children, which would start usually without any introduction: "Dear, I've been THINKING ..." and then would follow that day's fresh revelation of self and the world.

In conversation, she always cut to the chase of some personal mental association which struck her if not anyone else, often resulting in rather startling introductions to complete strangers like: "Do you have a particular devotion to Saint so-and-so?" There was usually a logical connection which could be traced; but to the Alison-uninitiated or the unwary, her thoughts and utterances often seemed to come startlingly from deep left field.

She was a manic communicator, always seeking others' company by telephone and visiting widely and unexpect-

# Alison Grace Gent, née Hogben

20 September 1920 - 13 November 2009

edly in the succession of small cars which from the late 50s gave her the freedom and independence and access to people that she needed. Life was a series of dichotomies and conflicts to be discovered, wrestled with and resolved, and there was no satisfaction doing that on your own.

She loved companionship, even (sometimes it seemed especially) when it involved conflict and argument, and she naturally gravitated to conferences, synods, religious retreats, membership of religious societies, the Parsonettes, the *Mothers' Union*, Alumni, committees, book clubs, the beloved Charles Jury poetry circle, coffee mornings, prayer meetings, and importantly feminist groups both religious and secular.

And there was her near daily attendance at Mass - that at least was her intention, although her legendary unpunctuality often defeated her good intentions.

Perhaps her only enjoyed solitary occasion was her nighttime retreat, her comforting womb, the bath-tub, where she spent an extraordinary proportion of her night hours, as many a water-damaged book can attest. The sound of the tub water being revived in the middle of the night remains as mother-evocative a sound to her children as does the distant thunder of an approaching Volkswagen.

## 'B positive'

Life for Alison was stitched together not by rules, structures, processes and the confines of hours and minutes or day and night: it was the recognition of the significance of events and their patterns or alignment or coincidence, and her sharing of that realization with others, which shaped her day.

She believed there was destiny and significance in her blood-group, 'B positive'. She became fearless. She marched, she protested, demonstrated, she wrote letters to those on high, she confronted, she dared. How she was never arrested is remarkable, but I remember when in the 1960s she remonstrated with a policeman outside the Carrington Hotel. He was trying to force an angry young Aboriginal woman into a paddy wagon in a way and on grounds Alison found unjustified, and she told him so. "Look, lady" said the policeman, "If you don't get out of the way I'll arrest you and shove you in the wagon too."

The Hogben jaw firmed, the blue eyes blazed.

"JUST YOU TRY!!!"

He didn't.

She was impetuous and impulsive. After an altercation with a 4-year old Charles, she discovered the ensuing silence was because he was now a tiny distant figure, running defiantly down Grand Junction Road towards

Gepps Cross. Alison successfully pursued and hunted him down simply by thumbing a lift from a passing petrol tanker.

She once came back from an Anzac Day parade with a benign and aged war-veteran, complete with medals. "This is Percy. I met him at the Anzac parade. He is on the pension and I said I would pay him to do some weeding after a cup of tea. You boys will be very interested in him because he plays the cornet."

Teenage sons trying to sneak to bed after a late night out would often as not be ambushed by Alison, refreshed from her midnight bath, and challenged to a game of scrabble or, if she thought there might be clouds on the hills, to "a quick drive to Mt Lofty" to see how misty it was. There was always an underlying childlike enthusiasm.

But there was often a deeper impulse. Once there was an accident near our house with a little boy being knocked down by a truck. Alison heard he was from the nearby migrant hostel and went to investigate. She returned carrying a tragically stunned-looking toddler in a grubby nightie. "Her mother's about to have a baby, there isn't a father around at the moment and there are three other children so I told the district nurse we'd look after this one for a fortnight. One of you boys can change her nappy."

## Alison time

And that is importantly Alison. In the midst of all her sorrows, troubles and distress she always found time and energy and compassion for others. Despite all her own struggles and disappointments she still inspired and encouraged others, and especially other women. Her contribution to and via both the secular and religious women's movements was unique and considerable.

She was a loyal and faithful and constant friend - she might fight you, she might bite your head off, but she never rejected or ostracised you, at least not for long: she knew that pain too well to inflict it on others. She was a warrior who was not herself afraid of flesh wounds and perhaps underestimated the effect of her "collateral damage" and "friendly fire" on others; but much of her apparent anger was perhaps more a lifetime habit of contradiction and instinct for contrariness rather than any genuine malice or wrath - it will not surprise many of you that possibly her last coherent sentence, shouted at her children from her bed in the RAH emergency area was:

"WHATEVER YOU'RE SAYING, I'M OPPOSED TO IT!!!"

She loved greatly and widely in her own inimitable way and the world is a less exciting and less colourful place without her. □

# *MOWatch* President's Report 2008-2009

(for Annual General Meeting, 19<sup>th</sup> September 2009)

Today completes my first year in office as President. Little did I know how and what the year would hold for *MOWatch* and the Executive Committee. We have been carried by the high of the consecration of Australia's first women bishops earlier in the year (May 2008).

When Val Graydon handed the role of President over to me at the 2008 Perth *MOWatch* Conference, she said that it was time to explore new things for *MOWatch*. I spent some time thinking and praying about how this should be done. Finally I realised to do this I needed to ask members what they wanted, that is, where they wanted the Executive to concentrate their time and efforts. Subsequently, a questionnaire was distributed to all members asking their opinions in relation to the *MOWatch* Constitutional Objectives. When the questionnaires were returned, Rose Tan and I analysed the results. These were published in the following edition of *MOWatching*.

Planning is well underway for two activities that members requested on the Questionnaire. These are the retreats and conferences. The retreat (was) held at Jamberoo Abbey (21-25th Sept). The **2010 Conference** is being planned by the conference committee (Judy Little, Sue Henry Edwards, Elaine Peterson, Jan Deaves, Bronislava Lee, Kathleen Toal and convenor Georgina Hawley). The committee have chosen the theme *Women of Faith: Imaging God to the World* which allows many possibilities for women to present papers, and conduct workshops.

For the first time this year we are asking women to exhibit various art creations they have produced. Judy Little, Kathleen Toal, Rose Tan and I went to see the chosen conference venue – St Joseph's Education and Spirituality Centre at Kincumber. We were impressed by the ambiance of the centre, the beautiful gardens and views of the water from the rooms. The accommodation is in single and double rooms with *ensuite* bathrooms. I have attached a draft of the conference timetable, and we have commenced calling for abstracts. The conference centre has ample rooms for small presentations and workshops, as well as displaying the various pieces of art (painting, sculpture, embroidery and mixed media).

Several issues remain outstanding from the Questionnaire. These are requests and ideas from members as to how they feel *MOWatch* can move forward while remaining true to the Constitution's objectives. I concur with the members requests and I am placing these before you as recommendations for us to carry forward. These issues include:

1. To date, our members are not inclusive of the wider community. This seems to be a characteristic displayed by similar overseas groups. Worldwide, there is a move away from membership that is sub-

consciously restricted (white / Caucasian middle class). I am aware that there is no such restriction in *MOWatch*. However, on examining our membership list, I concur with members' comments stated on the returned questionnaires that we need to be more inclusive. This is something that we need to commence as soon as possible.

2. Name change was another issue identified in the questionnaire – that is, changing our name from *MOWatch* to something else. I examined the *Australian Anglican Directory* (2009) that lists the large numbers of women ordained - 2 bishops, 485 ordained priests, and 180 ordained deacons. To me, this validates the request to consider changing our name to something that will reflect the objectives of our Constitution.

At the same time, we still need to be mindful of the position of those dioceses who do not (yet) ordain women as priests. Recently, I was talking to an archbishop; he was surprised that *MOWatch* was still in existence. Some members, in answering their questionnaires, suggested names such as 'Women's Ministry' 'Ministry of Women', and 'Women of Faith: lay and ordained'.

3. I need to particularly thank Kathleen Toal, and Judy Little for their work and support (and telling me what I need to do as President!). Without the work of Kathleen and Judy who hold the threads of the national body together we would be much poorer and / or weaker. Thank you Kathleen and Judy.

4. Thanks to Bron for the work in producing and maintaining the *MOWatch* website. This has enabled the association to have a prominent presence on the internet. Bron, please accept our sincere thanks for the tremendous work you have done as a woman of faith, imaging God to the world through the website.

In the questionnaire some members thought that the website needed to be separated into a section for national *MOWatch* and one for Sydney MOW. This would work very well if a national site were developed and the Sydney site linked to this. When seeking someone to take responsibility for the national web site, I approached the national secretary, Rose Tan, who is extremely computer literate and has experience in web site management. I am pleased to say that Rose has agreed to take responsibility for the national web site.

I thank everyone for your support this past year, and ask that you accept this report.

Georgina Hawley, September 2009

# ***Hostility to women clergy on the increase***

MURIEL PORTER

Opposition to women clergy in the Melbourne Diocese is growing amongst young male clergy, says the Revd Dr Kevin Giles. Numbers of young men now being ordained are hostile to women in ministry, according to Dr Giles.

In earlier years, Evangelicals in Melbourne had been leaders in support for women's ordination through the advocacy of Ridley College principal, Bible scholar Leon Morris. But since 1995, the atmosphere had changed significantly, Dr Giles told a meeting at St Mark's, Templestowe last month.

The meeting was a forerunner to the international conference of *Christians for Biblical Equality*, which is being held in Melbourne from 11-14 June ('Better Together' - see [www.cbe.org.au](http://www.cbe.org.au)). Dr Giles will be one of the key speakers at the conference, alongside a former Principal of Ridley College, the Revd Dr Graham Cole, who is now Professor of Biblical and Systematic Theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Illinois.

The view that God had put men in charge of the church and the home had increased in recent years, he said. The strategy of not mentioning it in the hope that the opposition to women would go away had meant that the situation has just got worse, he added. But the church was healthier when men and women shared leadership, said Dr Giles, a retired Melbourne vicar and scholar who has written extensively in support of women's full equality.

Dr Giles said that ordination was just the tip of the iceberg, as he outlined his concern for the damage that could be done through the view that men should be "head" of the home. "In the home this teaching can encourage men to be selfish, or even to abuse their wives," he explained. "Percentage-wise, there is more abuse in the home in churches that teach male headship."

Some women failed to see the implications of the teaching, he said, laughing it off with the view that husbands might be the head of the family, but women were the neck and so could turn their husbands anyway they liked! But this overlooked, among other things, the "monumental ramifications for women in the third world", where the devaluing of women led to such atrocities as aborted female fetuses in China and India, and two and a half million women and girls sold into prostitution every year.

Refuting accusations that the Bible mandated male headship, Dr Giles said that the 'great principles' of the Bible affirmed women. This affirmation began with the opening passage of the Bible, the Genesis account of creation, where the Bible says that God created human beings male and female, in God's image. Jesus consistently supported women; he had the very highest view of women and treated men and women equally.

The texts from St Paul's epistles used to justify male headship - such as women covering their heads in church or being silent in the congregation - dealt with specific practical problems in particular congregations. They did not contradict the Bible's overall affirmation of women or create a new ideal, he said. "Are we going to go with the creation ideal, or are we going to idealise a fallen world?"

The second speaker, the Revd Dr Cheryl Catford, a Churches of Christ minister who is national director of the *Australian Evangelical Alliance* and another speaker at the forthcoming CBE conference, said there was an increasing level of disquiet among women in ministry because of the growth in opposition from Evangelical men. Ordained women were now constantly being challenged as to whether they should be in ministry. The opposition was the outworking of a growing neo-Calvinism among Evangelicals in the United States, which was spilling over into Australia.

"The subordination of women is a key point in this development," she explained. The emerging church movement, better known in Australia as church planting, was heavily male dominated, she said.

"We stand on the cusp," she explained. "We can let this [opposition to women] find its place or we can redress it and insist that God creates us all men and women, with equal dignity and equal gifts to use in God's service."

There are currently in the Diocese of Melbourne:

- 69 Assistant Curates, 31 of whom are women;
- 49 candidates for ordination, 23 of whom are women; and
- 26 Aspirants, 7 of whom are women, participating in the 2010 Year of Discernment. ◻

*(This article appeared in the April 2010 edition of TMA, and is included by kind permission of Anglican Media, Melbourne.)*

# Another Canadian woman appointed bishop – and a second for Cuba!

In a service described as “full of life and energy,” the Revd Griselda Delgado del Carpio, 55, was consecrated on 7 February 2010 as the new co-adjutor Bishop of the Episcopal Church of Cuba.

## ‘Hers is a theology of hope’

The pews at Holy Trinity Cathedral, Havana were packed as about 400 people – busloads from parishes where Bishop Delgado had served as priest – gathered for the four-hour service.

Archbishop Fred Hiltz, primate of the Anglican Church of Canada (*pictured above with the new bishop*), Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori, Primate of The Episcopal Church, and Archbishop John Holder, the new Primate of the Church of the Province of the West Indies, presided over the eucharist as members of the Metropolitan Council of Cuba. The Episcopal Church of Cuba already has Bishop Nerva Cot Aguilera serving as a suffragan bishop.

*(The Council has overseen the Cuban church since it separated from The Episcopal Church in 1967 because of difficult relations between the governments of Cuba and the United States.)*

## New Canadian Bishop

The Revd **Barbara Andrews** has been appointed as the Suffragan Bishop for the *Anglican Parishes of the Central Interior in Canada* (APCI). Ever since she was ordained priest in 1998, Barbara Andrews said she had always

served the Anglican Church of Canada “kind of on the fringe of the church.” That all changed in June, when she

became the new suffragan (assistant) bishop for the Kamloops-based APCI.

Until her election as bishop, Barbara had worked as Executive Director of the Sorrento Retreat and Conference Centre in British Columbia. Prior to that she served as a Director of Christian education, and had been in street ministry for four years in an inner city parish in Winnipeg.

In an interview, Bp Andrews said her experience puts her “in a unique position because I come from a totally different experience and point of view.”

This brings to 26 the total number of bishops in the Anglican Communion who are women: 2 in New Zealand, 2 in Australia, 5 in Canada, 1 in Cuba and 15 in the USA; 19 are currently serving while 6 have retired; two of whom are continuing as Assistant Bishops in their diocese. □

*(from the Anglican Communion News Service*



Bishop Barbara Darling at St. Pauls  
Canterbury, Sunday 13th December 2009.

## Dates for your diary ...

*MO*Watch International Conference

Tuesday 24 August to Friday 27 August 2010

**Keynote Speaker:** Dr Paula Gooder

*For full details please refer to enclosed  
Conference brochure and registration form.*

*MO*Watch Annual General Meeting

Thursday afternoon 26 August 2010  
at the *MO*Watch International Conference

**MOW Sydney Annual General Meeting**

Saturday 11 September 2010, 2pm

St Luke's Anglican Church  
11 Stanmore Rd, Enmore NSW 2042

**Speaker:** the Revd Beth Spence

*MOWatch* membership subscriptions for the Financial Year 2010 / 11 are now due on 1 July, 2010.

Please note new rates (as agreed at the AGM September 2009.)

*We would very much appreciate your continued support.*

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*Thank you for your on-going support, which is vital to our survival. Please address inquiries about subscriptions and change of address notification to Kathleen Toal.*

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*Opinions expressed in this Newsletter are those of the authors, and do not necessarily represent the view of *MOWatch* or its members.*

