

One Cord, Many Strands:

Understanding Your Own Denomination

Goal:

To gain a knowledge of one's own denominational structure, processes, current issues and ethos.

Learning Outcomes:

After completing this module, participants will be able to:

- a
 - i describe their denominational structure and identify the decision making bodies within that structure including the way in which they express their relationships with the tangata whenua
 - ii name key people within that structure with whom a relationship needs to be established
 - iii identify the current issues
 - iv list the basic beliefs that undergird the denominations ethos
- b compare their own denominational structure, process and current issues and ethos with at least one other, showing the similarities and differences.
- c demonstrate their ability to create networks that enable them to work effectively
 - i within their own denominational structure
 - ii with another denomination

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What To Do

Step One	Why have denominations?	2 hours
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1

- a. From earliest times members of the Christian Church have had different ways of looking at things. One result has been the proliferation of denominations - groups of people who choose to worship, fellowship and minister with different emphases, for example Baptist, Anglican. Why is this? Make a list of reasons why people might choose one Baptist, Anglican. Why is this? Make a list of reasons why people might choose one denomination over another.
- b. Imagine you are responsible for marketing the Church, explaining the idea of denominations. Design a catchphrase, 15 words or less. You are trying to capture in a nutshell why we have denominations. e.g. God is diverse, so is the Church.

2. Read the Resource Material pg 13 entitled “The Body”

3. People argue back and forth about the value of remaining as separate denominations or reforming as one “holy, catholic and apostolic” church (“catholic” in this sense means universal or worldwide). Using the proposal ***“That denominations should forget their differences and join together”*** make a case for and against union/structure. Write your arguments on the Concept Sheet pgs 7-8

NB Co-operating Ventures are not a denomination, they are unions of existing denominations for example Union of Methodist/Presbyterian/ Anglican, but their structures, process, beliefs, ethos and issues may differ from their parent bodies. Members from a Co- operating Venture are encouraged to be creative in their approach to this module.
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Step Two	My denomination	8 hours
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4 Each denomination has its own way of doing things. The quickest way to find out about the process in any denomination is to try and get something changed, so this task is designed to get you finding out about your denominational structure from the inside.

NB To answer this question you will need to talk to someone with experience in this area.

Choose **3** of these options to write up as **case studies** on the Where Do I Go? sheet pg 9: **1** option from List A (National), **1** option from list B (Regional) and **1** from List C (Local).

You want to promote youth issues in your area and context. One way you see of doing that is to....

List A

- a get a youth rep on a national body
- b get youth ministry recognised as a vocation alongside ordained ministry
- c obtain ongoing funding for a national youth magazine within your denomination

List B

- a build a campsite or venue useful to youth ministry in your region
- b employ a regional youth worker
- c get regional backing for a justice issue that young people feel strongly about (i.e. Presbytery, Synod, Diocese level).

List C

- a have youth ministry included in the budget your faith community
- b redevelop/renovate a room in a local church for the use of young people

c change the time of the main worship service to suit the needs of young people in your faith community

5 Each denomination also has basic beliefs which underlie their cultural practises. A way to help foster understanding is to explore the thinking behind what is taken for granted. Choose 1 of the following as the subject for a **project**.

- a the arrangement of the sanctuary
- b the significance of vestments
- c practises of communion

Your project must be at least 2 A4 sides and may include diagrams, photographs, timelines, historical and/or contemporary quotes. Behind these practises are theological understandings. Your aim is to explore not only what exists but why it is like that, how it has changed in recent years and how people in your chosen denomination explain the significance of their way of doing things.

Talk with your mentor about how you might do this project.

6 Understanding the relationships with tangata whenua and Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Each denomination has its own way of living out a relationship with both the Te Tiriti and the tangata whenua. These relationships tend to be dynamic rather than static so you may get different answers from different people. To try and get a good insight into the varying levels of understanding you are required to talk to three types of people to answer the following questions:

- a. a person who is only involved in your local faith community and your local setting
- b. a person who is involved locally but also with wider Synod, Presbytery or diocesan connections
- c. a person who is involved at the national level of your denomination

Ask each one these questions and record your answers carefully

- i. what is our church's teaching about the relationships of the church to the tangata whenua?
- ii. in what way does our church express its commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi?
- iii. How does the teaching and the commitment happen in practise?

Write at least an A4 page on what your denomination believes and teaches in this area and the impact of those beliefs and teachings on the local, regional and national organisation of the church.

Step Three	What we have in common and what we don't	6 hours
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7 Read the Resource Material pgs 14 - 18. This gives a statement about what we hold in common (The Nicene Creed) and statements from contemporary leaders of each denomination about their denomination's ethos.

- a Which three things stand out for you and why? 300 word

8

- a Choose **ONE** of the case studies from Step Two Question 4 which you have already done for your denomination. Talk with someone who is able to show you how another denomination would deal with this issue.
- b Using your project from Step Two Question Five talk with someone who is able to provide a comparison from another denomination.
- c With what you have discovered in question 6 about your denomination's teaching and practise in relation to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the tangata whenua, talk with someone who is able to provide a comparison from another denomination.

This question asks you to compare, not re-do your case study and project. You can

summarise your findings for each part of this question on the Comparison sheet pg 10-11

Step Four Denominational Issues	2 hours
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- 9 Read the Resource Material pages 19-38 on Women in Ministry. This gives you an overview of how four different denominations have approached this issue; where they started from, where they have got to and the processes they've used in decision making along the way.
- Identify 3 contemporary issues being debated in your denomination Check these out with your mentor to see if they agree. Write a couple of sentences briefly describing the key points of each issue.
 - Choose one issue from (i) above. In one page describe how the structure, process and ethos of your denomination influence the way it is being dealt with.

WARNING Do not debate the issue. Focus on how your denomination is dealing with it.

Step Five Inter-denominational links	2 hours
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- 10 The church is a community incorporating all denominations. It is considered vital today that people in ministry establish and maintain contact with those in related ministry in other churches.
- Diagram the relationships you have
 - within your denomination
 - with people from other denominations
 - with people working with youth outside the church context
 - Identify at least 3 benefits emerging from these links.
 - Where could you improve your networking?
 - are there links with decision makers?
 - are there links beyond the church?
 - are there links across denominations?
 - are there links across cultures?

Examples of benefits are:

- < Young people I work with get to meet lots of other Anglicans and experience worship in different churches
- < I get ideas from other youth leaders within my region and nationally
- < Working with other local parishes on events gives us a much bigger pool of resources.
- < Involvement with the community youth workers network puts me in touch with lots of training opportunities and alerts me to issues for young people. I also meet people to whom I can refer young people when they have specific problems.

Resource Material

Concept Sheet

PROPOSAL: That denominations should forget about their differences and join together.

BRAINSTORM: FOR

Jot down in note or map form as many ideas as you can think of which **support** the statement above.

ORGANISE YOUR ARGUMENT:

Write a paragraph (up to half a page) setting out your thoughts. Start with a phrase such as “I think...” or “In my opinion...”. Order your arguments, for example by numbering - Firstly...secondly.... and so on.

PROPOSAL: That denominations should forget about their differences and join together.

BRAINSTORM: AGAINST

Jot down in note or map form as many ideas as you can think of which **oppose** the statement above.

ORGANISE YOUR ARGUMENT:

Write a paragraph (up to half a page) setting out your thoughts. Start with a phrase such as “I think...” or “In my opinion...”. Order your arguments, for example by numbering - Firstly...secondly.... and so on.

Where do I go?

Proposal #1: I would like to

- * What preparation is required?

- * Who are the key people/groups?

- * How are decisions made?

- * What structures/groups/people can help me?

- * Which groups/people must be approached?

- * Other things to consider (e.g. funding)

Proposal #2: I would like to

- * What preparation is required?

- * Who are the key people/groups?

- * How are decisions made?

- * What structures/groups/people can help me?

- * Which groups/people must be approached?

- * Other things to consider (e.g. funding)

Comparison Sheet - Case Study

Structures and Processes

Choose one case study which you have worked through for your denomination. Talk with someone who would know about the structures of another denomination.

eg. I am Presbyterian and have found out the procedure for building another campsite in our area, and now I will find out how the Catholics would do it.

Name who you talked with, the church they belong to and their position in the church.

Compare the two:

Key Structural Difference -

Key Process Difference -

Key Personnel Difference -

Comparison Sheet - Project

Beliefs and Ethos

Use the project which you have worked through for your denomination. Talk with someone who would know about the beliefs and ethos of another denomination.

eg. I am an Anglican and have looked at the significance and the position of the sanctuary in our tradition. I wonder what the Methodists think?

Name who you talked with, the church they belong to and their position in the church.

Compare the two

Our Practise	Our Beliefs	Their Practise	Their Beliefs

Comparison Sheet - Project

Relationship with Tangata Whenua and Teaching about Te Tiriti

Our Practise	Our Beliefs	Their Practise	Their Beliefs

Introduction

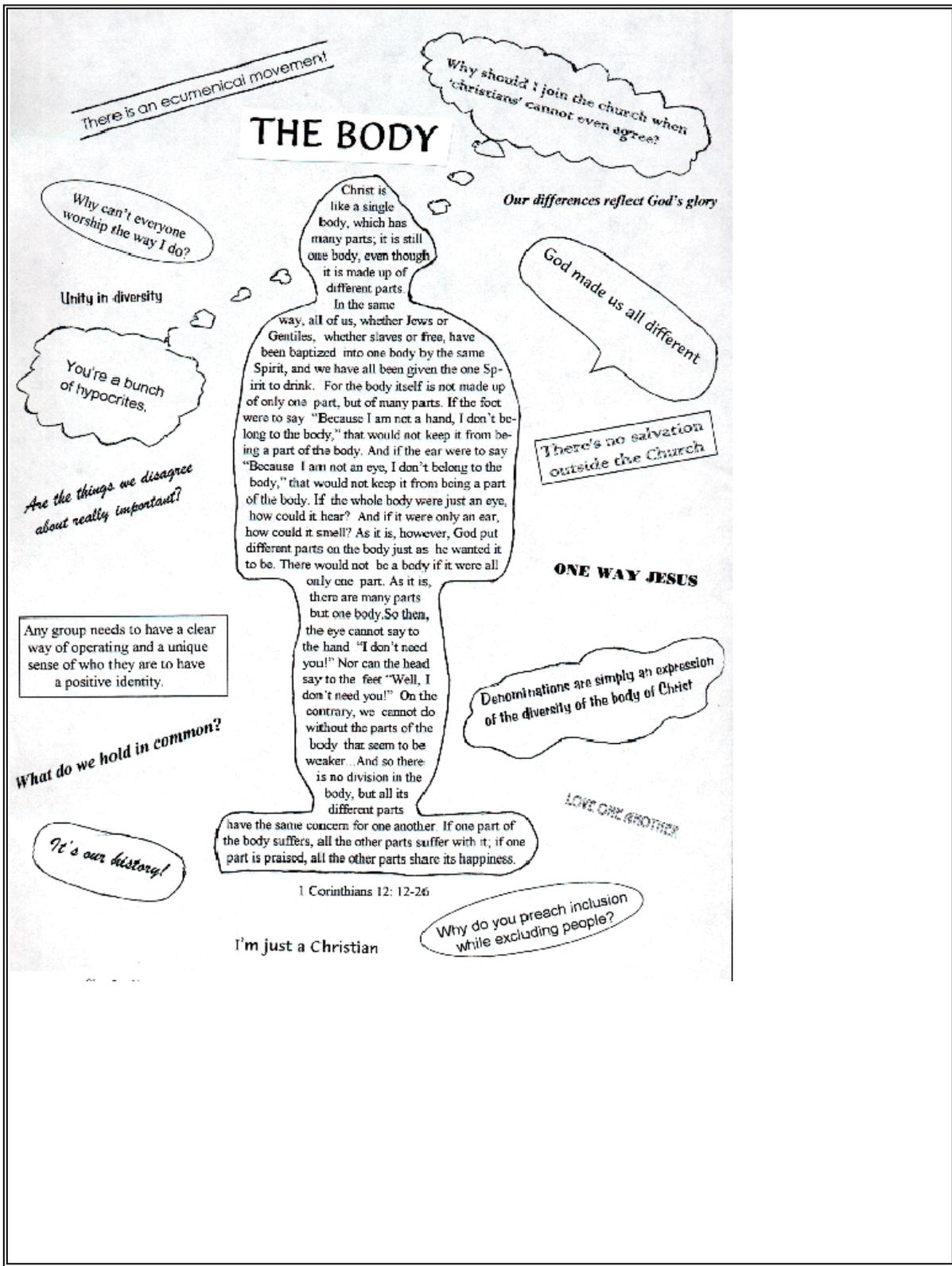
It's very common for young people to dismiss denominations as irrelevant. This ignores the centuries of history that have shaped the church and the fact that each denomination has good reasons for doing things the way it does.

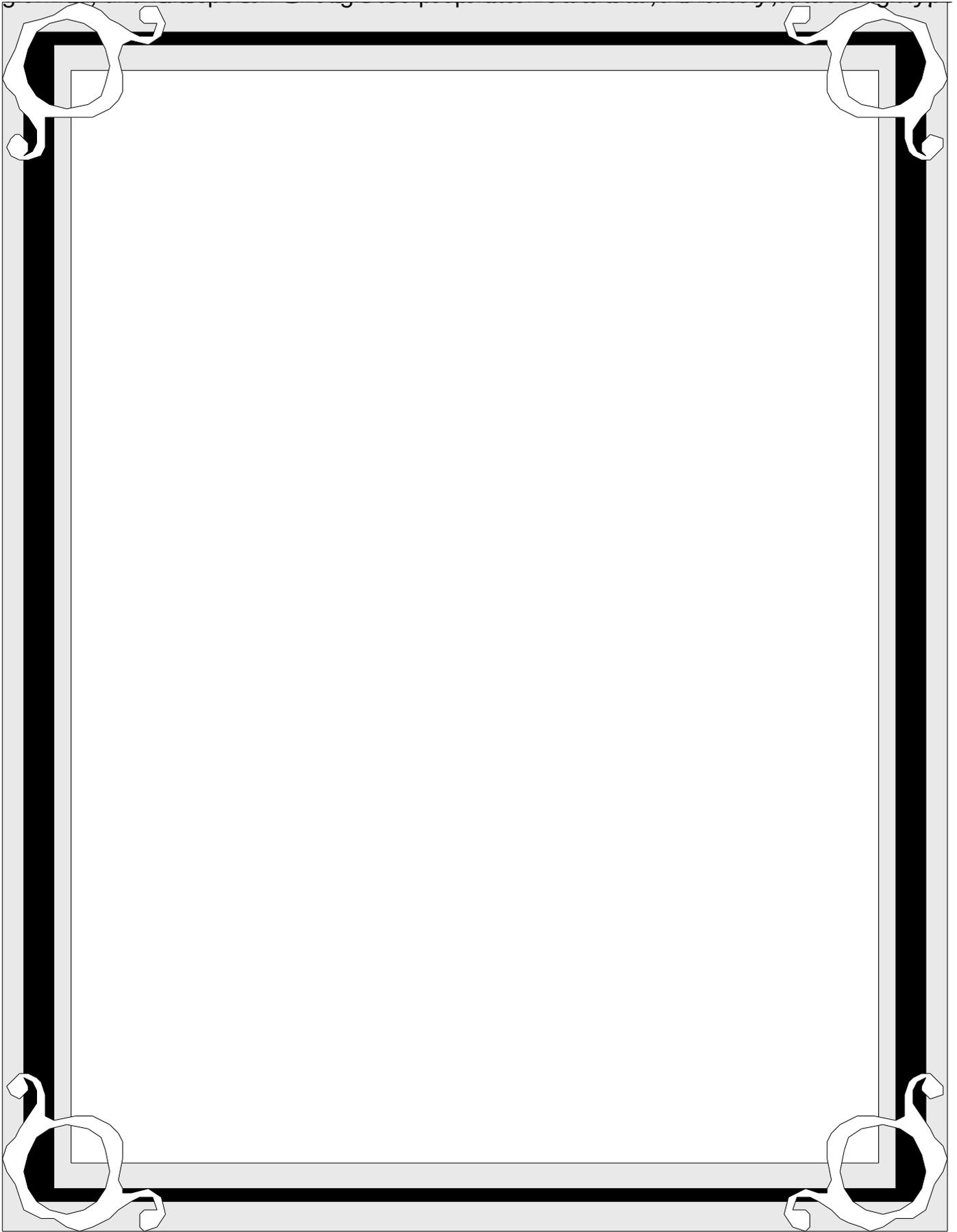
Some of these reasons are theological. Beliefs about the founding of the church, the way the church is constituted and how it should be administered can be given support from the Bible, tradition or any other source people wish to cite.

Some of these reasons are historical; because of what happened in a particular place in a particular time, a way of expressing faith and managing the business of church life became the norm, and a denomination grew.

When exploring your denomination's structures, processes, current issues and beliefs you will look at the bits separately, in an effort to make sense of the whole. Behind the tasks are some questions:

- What makes this unique?
- Is it important that this be maintained into the next century?
- How do these things work for youth ministry?
- Why is God worshipped in *this* way?





Church Leaders' Statements

The Anglican Church

What are the essentials that define the Anglican Church in Aotearoa New Zealand?

Practise:

Eucharistic - the service of Holy Communion, or Eucharist, is central and regular.

Baptismal - is accepted as full entry into the church and all baptised Christians are welcomed at the Eucharist.

Varied - there are a variety of styles of worship, understandings of ministry and mission, and expressions of being Christian and Anglican.

Restrained - tradition and structure provide some boundaries to how church life is expressed.

Prayer Book - as a worship resource for private and public worship it is used by most Anglican churches for most services - but not rigidly or exclusively.

Doctrine:

Incarnational - human beings give expression to beliefs by living them out, just as Jesus was and is the human expression of who God is.

Redemptive - faith is based on saving love and action by God and by people.

Charismatic - the Holy Spirit lives and moves through faithful people, inspiring commitment, belief and action.

Trinitarian - God is revealed as relational, one God yet three, which is a mystery. We name God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, or Creator, Redeemer and Giver of Life, as expressions of this relationship and mystery.

Justice Seeking - God's commonwealth of love seeks to overcome all injustice.

Structure:

Diocesan - seven Pakeha Dioceses within New Zealand, five Maori Hui Amorangi constituting Te Pihopatanga o Aotearoa, which acts as a Diocese, and the Diocese of Polynesia, with Archdeacons of Tonga, Samoa, Fiji and Auckland.

Synodic - bishops, priests and laity meet together to make all binding decisions at both diocesan and national levels. No decision can be made without the participation of all three groups.

Catholic - a fine tension is held between the local church and the universal church.

Differentiate the ethos of the Anglican Church from other members of the Christian Church in New Zealand.

Sacramental - led by priests in partnership with lay people.

Liturgical - ordered worship is important.

Priesthood is not equated with payment

The three tikanga structure of our church means that at General Synod (the national decision making body) each grouping: Pakeha, Maori and Pasifika, must assent for a decision to be made.

Light on centralised structure.

Authority is exercised in a dispersed and consensual manner.

What is the particular contribution of the Anglican Church in New Zealand society?

At our best we are profoundly spiritual and prayerful. We are concerned with the underdog in society. We offer a wide spectrum of 'church tradition' - from charismatic to high church,

and have a willingness to develop new forms of ministry, especially in country areas.

Bishop Penny Jamieson, 1998

The Catholic Church

What are the essentials that define the Catholic Church in Aotearoa New Zealand?

Practise:

Weekly attendance at Mass required/expected

Children expected to attend Catholic schools

Divorce and remarriage frowned upon (sacramental nature of marriage)

Doctrine:

The real presence of Jesus in the bread and wine.

Nicene Creed

Mary's pre-eminence

The communion of saints

The church as the body of Christ

Sexual relationships are only acceptable within marriage and when the couple are open to conception.

Structure:

Hierarchical - Diocesan bishop >parish priest.

Universal - 6 Dioceses, each autonomous but linked with each other and the universal Church (ie the Pope)

Differentiate the ethos of the Catholic Church from other members of the Christian Church in New Zealand.

1. importance of sacraments
2. stress on unity (in parish, diocese, universal church)
3. awareness of ongoing call to holiness: high expectations
4. practise of faith rather than doctrine or scripture important
5. awareness of being part of a worldwide church which has existed throughout the centuries. (Most Catholics believe that Jesus founded the (Roman) Catholic Church.)

What is the particular contribution of the Catholic Church to New Zealand society?

1. advocacy and teaching on social justice
2. its insistence on the sanctity of life
3. great optimism about the goodness of human beings
4. some remarkable role models of devotion and service to the poor - eg Mother Aubert.

Bishop John Dew, 1998

The Methodist Church

What are the essentials that define the Methodist Church in Aotearoa New Zealand?

Practise:

Integration of worship with daily living

Hymn singing

Participation in group life (fellowship)

Evangelism and social involvement together

Involvement of women, lay people and youth at most levels.

Doctrine:

The need for a personal faith and the possibility of personal holiness.
Bible as an important source, but always interpreted
Tradition in and ongoing dialogue with each particular context
A view of church which respects both the participation of all and the leadership role of those authorised by ordination.

Structure:

'Connexional' - the national church is a linking together of local parishes, so that strengths and weaknesses can be shared; ministry is of the whole church.

Treaty based power sharing the basis for major decisions, and for core structures

Presidency of one year provides Connexional leadership, plus District Superintendents, and people appointed to do tasks for the whole Connexion (eg General Secretary)

Differentiate the ethos of the Methodist Church from other members of the Christian Church in New Zealand.

- Concern for mission: evangelism and social action put together
- Prophetic stance in relation to social and political issues
- Hymn singing as expression of theology and worship.
- Stress on contextualisation, as in Bi-cultural journey base on Treaty of Waitangi and affecting theology as well as practise.
- Small, flexible, able to change quite quickly
- A mix of elements, from evangelical to radical, from low church to high church, which don't always sit easily together - more a movement than a church.

What is the particular contribution of the Methodist Church to New Zealand society?

Passion for issues of social justice, for example

- the Temperance Movement of last century,
- Treaty issues - justice for tangata whenua and Constitutional Change today
- Public Questions Committee (joint with Presbyterian) makes submissions to Select Committees and raises awareness of justice issues.

Deep involvement in social agencies, such as inner city missions.

Rev John Salmon, Trinity Theological College, 1998

The Presbyterian Church

What are the essentials that define the Presbyterian Church in Aotearoa New Zealand?

Practise:

- The primary meeting place is the in the local congregation or parish gathering weekly for worship.
- The Scriptures remain central in worship and in preaching and in Bible Study, both private and corporate.

Doctrine:

The Presbyterian Church is a confessional Church. Its Supreme Standard for faith and life is the Bible. The Westminster Confession and the Longer and Shorter Catechisms provide for its Subordinate Standards.

Structure:

The Church's supreme court is the General Assembly which meets annually (at present bi-annually) and is comprised of an equal number of elders (ordained lay people) and ministers of word and sacrament (clergy). The regional court is the Presbytery and

parishes are governed by elders who meet in sessions or Parish Councils.

Differentiate the ethos of the Presbyterian Church from other members of the Christian Church in New Zealand.

- The main element in the gathered worship is the preaching of the Word.
- There is an equality of lay elders and clergy in the government of the church.
- The church at the local level is governed by lay ordained elders
- Women have full rights in leadership and ordination (since 1955)
- There is a commitment to acting ecumenically (a large number of parishes are involved in Union and Co-operating ventures)
- There is a commitment to providing a parish in all geographic areas throughout the country and to have a serving presence in local communities
- As a national Church there is a tradition of more prosperous parishes supporting those less prosperous through a national budget
- There is a strong commitment to education at all levels (The University of Otago was founded by the Presbyterian Church and there are a number of secondary schools that were founded by the Presbyterian Church.)

What is the particular contribution of the Presbyterian Church to New Zealand Society?

The Presbyterian Church has always been committed to social action, to welfare and family care, and to the involvement of its members in the life of the community.

Bruce Hansen, Moderator, 1999

Ordaining Women to Ministry in the Church

For nearly the whole of the Church's history, the role of ordained ministry has been more or less exclusively for men - until this century. In the last 50 years women have demanded equal opportunities in the workplace, and have regarded ministry as a place of work to be opened up along with medicine, law and astro-physics.

But the Church is not merely a workplace, and ministry is not merely a job. Issues of sacramentalism, calling, the example of Christ, biblical interpretation, and tradition, are just some of the factors in the discussion.

This resource material is an attempt to give a history of four denominations route to decision making on this issue in New Zealand.

Some terms to be aware of:

Deaconesses: These pop up in various guises and don't always mean the same thing. For the Methodist, Presbyterian and Anglican Churches deaconesses were a lay, vocational order, mainly involved with social work, youth and women. Early on, the Methodists and Presbyterians ordained women, but the Anglicans made a Deaconess order, which meant women could be ordained to certain tasks within the church.

Lambeth: The International Anglican Conference of Bishops once every decade.

WCC World Council of Churches

NCC National Council of Churches (This is now known as the Conference of Churches in Aotearoa New Zealand, with the acronym CCANZ)



The Catholic Church

The issue of ordaining women continues to be a contentious topic for Catholics. Tracing their origins back to Jesus' words and actions, Roman Catholics place great store in a church structure held to be instituted by Christ and maintained through the ongoing selection of Popes (referred to as the "unbroken Petrine succession"). Building on this understanding Catholics have traditionally held that Jesus' recorded selection of men only at the last supper meant that the role of presiding over the eucharist was rightfully reserved for males alone. this basis for argument is hotly debated today.

With the Protestant churches to a greater or lesser extent accepting the ordination of women, pressure is now being applied from within the ecumenical movement as well as larger segments from within the Catholic Church itself. What follows is a brief timeline of how Catholics in New Zealand are responding to the issue.

1963 Pope John XXIII in *Pacem in Terris* commented that "women's greater consciousness of their dignity, and their entrance into public life, should be seen as signs of our times, and should lead to their fuller participation in the life and mission of the Church. This awareness of the need for women to participate more fully, widely and responsibly in the mission of the church has been taken up in Council

documents and papal teaching since ..." (Catholic Bishops Pastoral letter 1994). Nevertheless the Catholic Church remained convinced that this did not include sacramental ordination as instituted by Christ.

1976 In response to pressure, both internal and external, Pope Paul IV had traditional teaching re-examined by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and upheld said teaching in the Declaration *Inter Insigniores*.

1988 Pope John Paul II dealt with the issue of cultural conditioning in his letter *Mulieris Dignitatem* and concluded that Christ demonstrated freedom from cultural norms in other situations, therefore must have intended only to ordain men.

Inconsistencies between church teaching about equality and church practise of discrimination led the Catholic Bishops' Conference NZ to not formally institute the ministry of lector (officially reserved for men) but to simply allow women to act as readers and extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist.

1990 The Catholic Commission for Justice, Peace, and Development (Aotearoa NZ) published a report by Christine Cheyne entitled *Made in God's Image* (MIGI) which researches the existence and extent of sexism in the Catholic Church in NZ, based on the experience of women.

1991 The New Zealand Catholic Bishops present a Theological Reflection on the MIGI report, arguing that because the Church does not have authority to ordain women, an injustice is not being done.

1994

22 May Ordinatio Sacerdotalis by Pope John Paul II contains the Church's conclusions and teachings drawn from the Holy Father's study of relevant scriptures. It upholds the traditional teaching of the Church.

31 May New Zealand Bishops write a pastoral letter supporting Pope John Paul II

14 August A pressure group called *Catholic Women Knowing Our Place* is formed in Christchurch.

The Anglican Church

Some Background on the Ordination of Women in the Wider Anglican Communion

The Reverend Janet Crawford

Although women have been actively involved in Christian ministry throughout the history of the Church, their ordination to ministry is a relatively recent development. The first woman to be ordained was Antoinette Brown in the Congregational Church in the USA in 1853, but although a few other American denominations ordained women in the late nineteenth century, it was not until this century that the question of whether or not women can or should be admitted to ordained ministry became a significant issue for most churches.

For Anglicans the question of the ordination of women seems to have arisen first in the Church of England in the early part of this century when it was advocated by a number of women, including Maude Royden (1876-1956) and Edith Picton Turberville (1874-1958). (Maude Royden in 1928, on a speaking tour of Australasia, became the first woman to preach from the pulpit in Christchurch Cathedral. The Cathedral was densely packed, many women having travelled up on the night train from Dunedin for this historic occasion.) Maude and Edith were both prominent suffragists and "church feminists", involved with other church women in the struggle for women's suffrage in England and in the parallel struggle for rights for laywomen in the Church of England. They wanted laywomen to have the right to be eligible for membership of church councils at all levels and the right to speak and pray in church under the same conditions applying to laymen. Largely due to the work of an organization called the Church League for Women's Suffrage which began in 1909, these rights were gradually won, and in 1919 the CLWS was replaced by the League of the

Church Militant which had the avowedly political aims of achieving equal rights and opportunities for women and men in the ministries of the Anglican Church as well as in the franchise. With the final end of the struggle for women's suffrage in 1928, when women were granted the full franchise equally with men, the LCM too came to an end in the belief that its second aim, the ordination of women, was not far distant.

Although 'militant church feminists' pushed for women's ordination (a conference which they had planned on the topic for August 1914 had to be abandoned when war broke out) and were supported by a few theologians such as Charles Raven, they remained a minority and were in fact opposed by 'moderate church feminists', who were more concerned to press for the rights of lay women generally and for more professional training and recognition for lay workers and deaconesses. In particular they wanted the role of the deaconess to be expanded from being purely pastoral to include participation in preaching and worship on the same basis as male deacons.

The Lambeth Conference in 1920 discussed the ordination of women for the first time and although the assembled bishops gave no encouragement to a female priesthood, they did agree that "the ordination of a deaconess confers on her Holy Orders". The exact status of deaconesses however remained uncertain and, unlike male deacons, they were still not permitted to preach or to read the Gospel. In spite of continued pressure from church women, deaconesses remained in practice inferior to male deacons, and in 1930 the Lambeth Conference reversed its earlier decision, declaring that deaconesses were not female deacons, but laywomen. According to this decision, which was not changed until 1968, the Order of Deaconesses was not a Holy Order, but an order sui generis, "supplementary and complementary" to the three historic orders of bishop, priest and deacon. From 1930 on church feminism, like secular feminism, went into decline and although some pressure groups continued to lobby for women's ordination, the movement did not really regain momentum until the 1970's.

The first Anglican women to be ordained to the priesthood was not English, but Chinese. Li Tim Oi, a deaconess in the Chung Hua Shing Kung Hai (The Holy Catholic Church of China) was ordained in Xingxing, China on the 25 January 1944. Bishop R.O. Hall of Hong Kong, who ordained her, believed that this was the necessary response to a desperate war-time situation, but after the war her ordination was repudiated by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Pressure was put on the Chinese House of Bishops and on Bishop Hall and, in order to avert conflict, Tim Oi resigned from the priesthood. She continued to work as a deaconess until she disappeared into the turmoil of communist China for thirty years. What the influential Church Times dismissed as 'the incident', was largely forgotten, as was Tim Oi herself. Now living in Canada and working as assistant priest in a Toronto parish, Li Tim Oi was honoured at a special service held at Westminster Abbey in January 1984, to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of her ordination.

The Lambeth Conference in 1948 endorsed the view that ordination of women to the priesthood was not permissible and in 1958 reaffirmed this decision. The real breakthrough occurred in 1968 when, by a very narrow margin, the bishops at Lambeth agreed that deaconesses were within the historic diaconate. On the possibility of women's ordination to the priesthood, the Conference ruled that the theological arguments for and against were inconclusive, and allowed that individual Provinces should consult with the Anglican Consultative Council and make their own decisions on the matter.

On Advent Sunday 1971, June Hwang and Joyce Bennett (an Englishwoman) were ordained to the priesthood in Hong Kong, so once again it was the Chinese Church which led the way. However, more publicity was attracted by events in the Episcopal Church in the USA, where on 29th July 1974 (the Feast of St Martha and Mary), eleven female deacons were ordained as priests in Philadelphia. Technically these ordinations were valid, but 'irregular' because they had not been approved by the Church, and as a result they were the subject of some controversy. In 1976 the General Convention of the Episcopal Church made the necessary canonical changes declaring that

the ordination to the three orders "shall be equally applicable to men and women", thus paving the way towards the ordination of women as priests as well bishops.

By the time the Lambeth Conference met in 1978, women had been ordained to the priesthood in Hong Kong, the USA, Canada and New Zealand. Since then, there have been ordinations of women priests in Brazil, Kenya, Uganda, Puerto Rico and most recently (1990) in Ireland. There are women deacons in Cuba, Japan, South Africa, Scotland, Wales and since 1987 in the Church of England. At the 1988 Lambeth Conference women were officially present for the first time, as the Reverends Nan Peete (USA) and Margaret Wood (New Zealand) were invited to attend as consultants.

With the ordination of women in the Anglican Communion a reality, Lambeth 1988 turned its attention to the possibility of women in the episcopate, acknowledging that each autonomous Province had the right to proceed in this direction, but that it would put some strains on to the 'Communion'. It was not long before the possibility of women bishops also became a reality, with the election of Barbara Harris as suffragan bishop of eastern Massachusetts - the largest Episcopal diocese in the USA - in September 1988, followed by her consecration in Boston in February 1989.

Later that same year Penny Jamieson was elected as bishop of Dunedin and, with her consecration on 29 June 1990, she entered history as the first woman diocesan bishop.

In the Church of England the struggle for women's ordination continues, with legislation due to come before the General Synod in 1991. Across the Tasman too, controversy continues and as yet there are no women priests in Australia, although a number of dioceses have expressed their willingness to ordain women. Developments are taking place in other Provinces and in spite of continuing opposition to the idea of women in the episcopate, at the next Lambeth Conference, there should be at least two female bishops. Slowly the vision of an equal ministry of women and men is being realised.

Legislative Changes leading to the ordination of women

Dr Judith McMorland

Introduction

In 1985 I set out to research some of the stories of ordained Anglican women in the Auckland Diocese. For many reasons the full project was never completed. I am delighted that this is now being undertaken again and in a more fulsome way. I wrote this chapter on the actual legislative changes that took place in the 1970's as a backdrop to those stories in 1985.

Early Beginnings

There was some discussion in the Province on the ordination of women to the priesthood at least as far back as the 1930's. Archdeacon Cox is one name associated with the movement in some of its earliest days, but it was not until 1970 that the movement was given public form at Synodical level, and not until 1977 that legislation was finally passed enabling the ordination of women to take place.

Women did not play a prominent part in changing the legislation, but there were women by the mid-70's who were actively seeking ordination. Perhaps as a consequence of their absence in early debates, very little attention was given to issues that have become central concerns of women priests in subsequent years. These issues include the patriarchal ordering of church structure, models of ministry, sexist language and the use of inclusive and feminist theological symbols. I am aware that I write this account from the hindsight of the mid 1980's. I have tried to reflect the historical and cultural context against which the debate occurred within New Zealand. I have made no attempt to set this within the wider debate of the Anglican Communion.

That there was opposition to women at the altar - and to some extent there still is, as I shall attempt to show - is evidenced by the slender majorities by which legislation was passed at each stage. I believe that the men priests and bishops have yet to appreciate fully the meaning of opening up ordination to women and the effects and implications this could have for the men's lives within the

Church. Even those men priests who have welcomed and worked for ordination equality have yet to demonstrate their full commitment to giving place to women within church structures, or seeking out the theological and spiritual gifts and understanding that women bring.

The sources for the historical materials have been the Minutes of General Synod, the papers reporting the Proceedings of the Tribunal and personal conversations with John Mullane and John Morton. I cannot claim that my coverage is comprehensive. A fuller historical account would have searched out further the discussions taking place in the separate dioceses, fleshing out the debates offered on both sides. Synod records have little 'flesh' on them. Because of this much of the richness of the church's life is lost. I have attempted to outline the political moves that occurred between 1970 and 1977. The full historical documentation I leave to another's attention.

Women in the Anglican Church - pre 1970

New Zealand is a surprising country and culture for many reasons. It is a country of raw hills and raging seas, of pastoral tranquillity and thermal activity, of open spaces and dark sombre places. In every way it is a country of contrasts, where institutions transplanted from overseas undergo radical change and take on a character of their own. There can be no assumptions that structures that look alike will follow their colonial blueprint. New Zealand has been noted for far-reaching social and legislative innovations, but it is as if there is a deep seated flaw within the culture, for the promise of early vision is seldom experienced in institutional structures.

Women's suffrage, women's education, and women's political awareness of one another were all apparent by the turn of the century. Women were on the move in the early 1900s but the Anglican Church did not support them. As indicated in previous chapters, some women were finding places within the formal structures of some of the protestant churches, some women were exploring their ministries as deaconesses, religious or missionaries, but other church organisations were strongly conservative in supporting the domestic roles of women.

The first formal recognition of women as ecclesiastic office bearers within the Anglican order came with the passing in 1964 of a Statute "The Manner of the Making of Deaconesses in the New Zealand Province".

General Synod records the duties of the Deaconess. They were to: "Read Morning and Evening Prayer and the Litany (except those portions reserved to the priest), to preach, give instruction in the faith, to baptise in the Church, and to assist in pastoral duties assigned to them by those in authority" They were extolled to live a godly life and give "due obedience to them set over you in the Lord"

General Synod, Dunedin 1966 made the firm distinction between the "Statutory Provision for the Ordination of Deacons" and the "Making of Deaconesses". The Auckland Diocesan Synod made no distinction between the ordinations of men and women, though the services were not held together. Behind these semantic shifts lies the whole question of the clerical status of women.

Some women had sought theological training through St John's College, some had been overseas for study, and some had done correspondence courses from Australia as private students, but from 1966 the formal training for the Deaconess Order was through Deaconess House under Deaconess Glenys Lewis. General Synod 1966, also nominated Deaconess House as the appropriate location for lay training. There is a strong suggestion in this association of ideas that deaconesses were seen to have a ministry with women and children, supporting other lay workers in this role, rather than having a ministry to the full (adult male) church.

The Lambeth Conference of 1968 declared deaconesses to be part of the diaconate, and this was endorsed by a majority of dioceses in New Zealand in 1969 and by General Synod in 1970. The movement towards the ordination of women to the priesthood arose largely out of the discussions on church union - an issue that had been before the Anglican Church for a number of years. Prominent in the early moves was the Diocese of Christchurch which set up a committee in 1967 to study the issue; that Committee reported in 1969 recommending that the General Synod be asked to

begin the process of legislating for change.

Under the plans for union Anglicans would be required to give equal status to all ministers of the other uniting churches, just as they in turn had to accept episcopacy. Some of these denominations, the Presbyterians and Methodists in particular, had fully accepted women ministers.

As John Mullane reported in an interview in 1983:

"My own involvement with the Christchurch thing about the ordination of women had a bit of a personal conversion about it. I started off as conservative over the issues as anybody when I first got ordained and really got confronted with the inappropriateness of the issue as far as it affected men through the church union movement who were confronted with 'you've got to do it, whether you like it or not' kind of thing. That was the initial stage. It wasn't a matter of commitment to any principle. But as we started to work on that I started to believe that it was not only important making statements about priesthood, but it was an issue of human rights and that kind of thing as well, but that we were lacking something in not having women ordained"

General Synod 1970

The Christchurch clergy attempted to have the whole issue of women's ordination opened up and John Mullane moved a two part motion, seconded by the Bishop of Wellington (Bishop Baines):

"a) that this General Synod approves in principle the Ordination of women to the Priesthood

b) that this Synod appoints the Christchurch representatives on General Synod (with the mover as Convenor) as a Commission to prepare and introduce legislation into the next session of General Synod to give effect to this."

An amendment was made to the first part of the motion, moved by Mr I E Fitchett, substituting the following words: "a) that this Synod requests all Diocesan Synods to consider the question of the Ordination of Women to the Priesthood and to report to the Commission, to be set up, the views of such Synods."

Further amendments were made to the second part of the motion to the effect that the Synod was asked to appoint a select committee to bring down the names of the Commission. The select committee proposed the following names to serve on the Commission:

The Reverend John Mullane (convenor)

The Right Reverend Peter Sutton

The Venerable David Dunningham

The Venerable Peter Mann

Mrs Margaret Rowe

Mrs Miriam Dell

Miss Diana Goss

Dr Joan Metge

Professor John Morton

The Reverend Colin Brown

The motion was then put and carried. The first step in the debate had been taken.

I find it interesting to note that at the same synodical gathering a statement was tabled drawn up by the Provincial Council for Ministry. Set in the context of the union debate, this is an interesting record of expressed opinion on the role of clergy at the time. There was obvious concern about declining numbers of suitable candidate for ordination and the statement opens stressing the 'urgency of reaffirmation' that 'the ordained ministry is still vitally necessary for the total task of the Church in the world'. The Provincial Council were concerned to spell out the tasks facing clergy "in terms which mean something to our generation (as to) the justification for and tasks of this ministry..."

How widely supported this report was amongst synod members I do not know, but the statement puts forward a view of the parish priest that is essentially conservative. The central role is described as that of "leader of a group, guiding and equipping it for its ministry to others". The priest is seen as "meeting these urgent needs in our modern society:

a) He deals specifically with persons, showing human personality is the most precious thing on earth and in Jesus Christ receives a new status and dignity. In an age where technological and scientific progress tends to deal with numbers rather than persons, he must show that God is

concerned ultimately with our individual integrity and purpose.

b) He deals with human relationships, demonstrating that in Jesus Christ reconciliation may be found and that human misery and hopelessness, stemming from relations that have broken down, may give way to fresh opportunities and a new beginning.

c) He deals with people in communities and his task is becoming more and more important with the greater movement of families and the urgent need to create a stabilised environment in which families may find the security they need. He must endeavour to build the community in which he works into a worshipping and caring community.

d) He must show, through study and understanding, that there is a valid Christian viewpoint in all matters which concern men and women today and that this viewpoint can bring all disciplines of learning as well as political, social and economic matters into a right relationship with each other since they are all being viewed in the light of the sovereignty of God."

The statement further accepts the concepts of team ministries and of priests "who will also continue in their former occupation". All these comments are to be set in the wider context, in recognition that "God is calling lay people to make greater and more imaginative use of their gifts in ministry alongside the ordained ministry."

The model of priesthood presented in this statement is essentially a patriarchal, conservative one. The clerical role is deemed to be a pastoral one, enabling individuals and groups to adapt to accepted patterns of community life. The vision is a limited one. Though there is acceptance of non stipendiary priests and of co-operation with laity, there is no mention of opportunities that might be afforded by the extension of women's ministry, nor of issues arising out of cultural diversity and values differences, or of issues to do with church union.

In later years the term 'reconciliation' was to take on a very specific political meaning - the reconciliation of Pakeha and Maori over the abuses of the Treaty of Waitangi. It seems to me that this statement epitomises a 'domestic' view of the relation of church and community, with church (and priest) and state working in harmony, in order to maintain a stable social order.

The stories of the early orders of deaconesses and nuns and of the ordained women indicate that traditional roles were being challenged, and assumptions about ministry suitable for women were being rejected. And for some, the personal rejection of the old roles led to a political rejection of the church as the sustainer of the status quo. Women were not vocal in the debates of 1970-72, though they were beginning to recognise their personal discomfort within the church structures. It is indicative of the lack of visibility of women within the church that none of the deaconesses were asked to participate in the Commission's deliberations.

The Provincial Commission on the Ordination of Women to the Priesthood

Two changes were made to the original composition of the Commission: David Dunningham and Peter Sutton both resigned. Neither was in sympathy with the Commission's task. David Dunningham had strong theological objections to the ordination of women, but Peter Sutton's objection is reportedly more personal. He was said to have found the image of a pregnant vicar too abhorrent to contemplate. Their places were taken by The Reverend Peter Baker and The Venerable Robert Witty. The Commission produced a substantive report on the issues arising from the ordination of women and found no serious impediments as to why ordination should not proceed. There certainly was some dissension among Commission members, but no arguments were put forward of sufficient substance to hinder the presentation of the Report. Amongst those in favour of women's ordination, there were indeed pressing reasons why the Church should proceed forthwith.

Prominent in church circles was the debate on church union. It was felt that the ordination of Anglican women would foster closer relations with protestant churches, and the antithetical attitudes of the Roman and Eastern Orthodox churches, as well as other parts of the Anglican

Communion itself were not seen to be sufficient reason to inhibit developments within the Province of New Zealand.

A decision against the ordination of women would have been taken as a decision against union, and might well compromise the autonomy of the Church of New Zealand. The Commissioners recognised that there would be opposition to their stance, but they felt strongly that the ordination of women would open up the church to those who had not hitherto been satisfied. John Mullane stated this in his short but penetrating statement on the nature of priesthood:

"The representative nature of priesthood demands it be available and open to all suitable persons from any background - men, women, persons of all colours..

As long as the priest symbol is pointing Christwards, the person of the priest is immaterial; the priest only becomes personally important when the symbol is interpreted literally which is at once a boundless presumption and a negation of the priestly role."

The Commission summarised their findings thus:

"The whole Commission is agreed that these studies (biblical evidence, tradition and history, theological issues, biological, psychological and anthropological considerations) provide no reason why the church should not proceed to ordain women to the priesthood. Some members hold that the qualities which women may bring would add to the strength of the priesthood."

John Mullane who had played a substantive part in getting the Report together moved from Christchurch to Auckland at this point and lost his seat on General Synod. It was John Morton, the Chairman of the Commission, who presented the Report to General Synod and introduced the Bill that would bring the ordination of women into effect.

General Synod 1972

The proceedings of the 1972 Synod were critical for the ordination movement. They indicate the extent of the support and opposition to the movement, and some of the conflicts within the church which approved the ordination of women in principle, but which failed to enact the legislation that would bring this about. The political events are important and some explanatory information on synodical proceedings is necessary if the different interests are to be understood. The basis of all Anglican activity in New Zealand rests on the Constitution which was established in 1857. Changes to this Constitution are possible under the Church of England Empowering Act 1928, but only insofar as they do not violate the immutable clause of the Constitution, which states the Doctrine and Sacraments of Christ as received by the Anglican Church. Power to change the Constitution, or enact other forms of legislation binding on the Province, rests with General Synod, a Provincial gathering of diocesan representatives, which meets every two years.

General Synod is divided into three 'houses': Bishops, Clergy and Laity and a majority agreement has to be reached in each house for legislation to be approved. Legislation under the Empowering Act has to fulfil certain stringent conditions of review. Passage through General Synod is the first step. The next step is that agreement has to be reached by a majority of the diocesan synods, and then the matter is referred back to General Synod for confirmation on a second presentation.

This process is known as the 'twice around' procedure. Thereafter, legislation has to 'sit on the table' for a twelve month period to allow for appeal. The Empowering Act makes provision for a Tribunal to hear appeals, but the only grounds for appeal at this stage is that the legislation violates the immutable clauses of the Constitution.

It was within these constraints that the Provincial Commission on the Ordination of Women made their report. Two political moves had to be taken. First, the Report had to be accepted in principle. This meant that the arguments for ordination of women had to gain acceptance in all three houses. Secondly, changes had to be made to the Constitution to remove the prohibition on women in clerical orders.

Synod proceedings follow closely the formal rules of parliamentary debate. John Morton presented

the Report and moved that it be received. He then moved the introduction of a Bill intituled 'A Statute to Amend the Constitution'. The first reading of Bills being a formality, the discussion of the Report was deferred until after the Second Reading of the Bill. John Morton and Peter Mann moved the motion to read the Bill a second time. The motion was declared by the President to have been agreed to. A division was called for and it was declared lost by one vote in the house of clergy. Voting was Bishops 7 for and 3 against, Clergy 12 for and 13 against, laity 22 for and 8 against. The names of the members voting was asked to be recorded in the minutes.

That motion having been defeated, the discussion returned to the Report of the Commission. An earlier amendment to the motion that the report be received, suggesting that the Report be sent for comment to the Anglican Consultative Council - an obvious delaying tactic instigated by H MB De Latour and Rev. John Rymer was withdrawn once the threat of imminent legislative change was removed.

The motion "that the General Synod receive the report of the Commission on the Ordination of women to the Priesthood" was amended (and strengthened in political punch) to "That General Synod approves in principle the Ordination of women to the Priesthood."

This motion was put and declared carried. Another division was called for which indicated that 1 Bishop, 6 clergy and 5 lay persons who had voted against the bill to change the Constitution had voted on this occasion in support of the principle. It is difficult to understand why there should be this discrepancy of response, and how the principle could be enacted without legislative change.

A further amendment was accepted: "That we inform the Anglican Consultative Council of this decision and take no action until we hear from it through our representatives" . This indicated perhaps the pace at which the Province wanted to move on this issue.

So that was the progress made in 1972. The Commission had gained support in principle for the Ordination of women and machinery for informing the Anglican Consultative Council had been set in train. The ACC is the co-ordinating council of the Anglican Communion, but has no powers over the individual Provinces that constitute the collective. The Commission itself ceased to exist, but John Morton sustained an interest in proceeding with legislative change.

General Synod 1974

Two years later, the climate within General Synod had become much more accepting of the ordination movement. The Bill to Amend the Constitution was placed for first reading by JC Cotterell in John Morton's temporary absence. The motion for the second reading was moved by John Morton and seconded by Peter Mann. "The Bill was read a second time and considered in Committee. The Committee reported that the Bill had passed with amendment".

The amendment was not specified in the Synod minutes. The third reading passed with equal lack of drama. It was agreed without division. Thus the Bill passed its first stage. Under the Empowering Act, it was now referred to diocesan synods for their comment, and for assent at this level by a two thirds majority. That assent having been achieved, the Bill came before the General Synod in Nelson, for its second time around.

General Synod 1976

In his opening address, Archbishop Allen Johnston drew attention to the Anglican Consultative Council's report summarising the present situation regarding the ordination of women in a world context. The ACC accepted that opportunities were afforded "the Anglican Communion as decisions about ordaining women to the priesthood give way to action and the number of women priests is increased." They affirmed the autonomy of Provinces to "give witness to diversity without breaking the bonds of love which bind us in one Communion". With an expectation of success, therefore, John Morton put the motion for reading the Bill for its final assent. He was confident that it would gain support, was conscious of the sense of historical occasion, but was also astute enough to do some active lobbying over breakfast on the day of the debate, in order to ensure a firm majority. The continued dissension of clergy within the Diocese of Nelson was a concern,

but John Morton reports he was able to persuade sufficient support for the legislation to be passed through personal ties of loyalty and friendship.

The debate itself brought few speeches of any substance, though David Dunningham was still eloquent in his opposition, not so much this time on theological grounds as psychological and sociological grounds. Bishop Sutton reiterated his concern about the impact of unilateral action on relations with the Roman Catholic Church. On the third reading 6 bishops, 17 clergy and 23 laity voted in its favour; 1 bishop, 5 clergy and 2 laity voted against it. The Bill was passed on 7th May 1976.

Under the Empowering Act provision, the Statute now had to lie on the table for twelve months to allow for appeals to be lodged. As I indicated earlier, the only grounds for appeal at this stage were that the proposed change was contrary to the "Doctrines and Sacraments of the Church as defined in clause 1 of the Constitution". In the event of an Appeal being lodged, the case would be heard by a duly constituted Tribunal of the Province. Six clergymen from the Diocese of Wellington led by Canon Walter Arnold, the City Missioner, lodged an appeal on 5th May 1977.

The Tribunal, November 1977

The proceedings of the Tribunal are fully documented and I do not intend to go into detail here. There are however some interesting features of this Tribunal that are worthy of fuller discussion and explanation, since they point to features of the Anglican Church structures where there is tension.

The Tribunal is an anomalous body in that it is judicial in function but may be composed of members who have already had political involvement in the issue under appeal. All the Bishops, but not necessarily the clergy and laity, would have participated in earlier debates. Under the Tribunal provisions a committee of one bishop, one clergy, and one lay person is required to put the case for the General Synod. It may be the case then that individuals who have voted against an issue in Synod might find themselves entrusted with putting forward the case that Synod endorsed. It is also the case that the Bishop at least then has a vote on the Tribunal itself. The Tribunal is concerned solely with the interpretation of doctrinal matters as these impinge on the Constitution, and members are required to set aside their previous political involvements and biases. As the senior counsel for the appellants stated:

"By the very nature of the composition of the Tribunal it is inevitable that members of the Tribunal and perhaps even the majority will have been involved previously in the passage of the impugned proposal through its various legislative stages at Diocesan Synods and successive General Synods. Such a mixture of legislative and judicial functions is, to a lawyer at any rate, rather unusual"

The Tribunal is made up of twenty one members, seven each from bishops, clergy and laity. Under the Empowering Act, an appeal can be dismissed only by a two thirds majority, but members are not required to vote in houses. The Tribunal met in Wellington from 15-17 November 1977. One layman declined to be present giving as his reason his sense of 'being out of touch'. However this very quality would have made him a useful, dispassionate member of the deliberations, which were formal and in camera. Fifteen members of the Tribunal were satisfied that the "said proposal does not involve departure from the Doctrine and Sacraments of Christ as defined by clause 1 of the Constitution." and so the Appeal was dismissed. Five members of the Tribunal dissented. The Statute to change the Constitution had been enacted five years after its first introduction. The first ordinations of women took place in three dioceses before the end of 1977. History had been made.

Conclusion

The introduction of ordination for women within the Anglican Church in New Zealand was achieved largely through the efforts of a few dedicated men. The movement arose out of the moves towards church union, but this latter association was never achieved, also failing to gain support by one vote in the House of Clergy. The majorities passing the ordination vote were also small, but in the end there was a general acceptance of both the principle and the timeliness of the legislation. Though the church failed in its bid for union, other significant changes were occurring during the ordination movement.

The Bishopric of Aotearoa was established, and new forms of ministry were being established along Maori patterns. The Church of Melanesia became an autonomous Province in 1974. There had been substantial opposition from Bishop Sutton to women's ordination because it was seen to contravene cultural norms in the Mission District. Bishop Manu Bennet had also been vocal in his rejection of what he saw as Pakeha values being imposed on Maori culture. Although this brought them into conflict with traditional values, Maori women were offering themselves for the ordained ministry. In the early 1980's there were several attempts to bring 'secular' issues into the ambit of the church's concern - the plight of psychiatric patients and staff, opposition to the Springbok tour, the Nuclear Free movement and an increasing awareness of Maori land issues and the Treaty of Waitangi.

But I think that there was little awareness that the ordination of women would have any impact on traditional patterns of ministry, or necessitate any changes or adaptations on the part of the men. I found no mention of any expectations that the women might introduce new theological insights to the church, and no expression of changes that might be brought about in traditional patterns of authority. I cited a statement issued by the Provincial Council for Ministry in 1972. A similar statement by the Commission on Training for Ministry presented to General Synod in 1974, the year the legislative change was first passed, still made the assumption that all clergy would be male. Accommodation was to be made for the needs of older men in training, but women's needs ranked no mention, despite the fact that women (deaconesses) were resident at St John's Theological College in training for ministry.

The stories of the women priests in this book indicate that the re-interpretation of their priestly role did not emerge from outside the church through a secular movement, but rather it unfolded through the lives and experiences of 'fit persons' ordained to participate in the sacramental life of the church. Their stories are diverse, their experiences varied, their understanding of theological and social issues often at variance with one another. They are, however stories worth telling for they bring alive priesthood in a modern way and challenge the church - men and women, clergy and laity - to come to terms with some central issues of faith.

Taken from *The Journey and the Vision* a study report by Rosemary Neave, 1989



**Ordained
1989**

Anglican Women:

METHODIST CHURCH

Prim Preachers to Ordained Ministers

With significant exceptions, leadership and priestly roles throughout the history of the Christian Church were reserved for men. There were, for instance, the learned, influential women who, between the fourth and ninth centuries, served the Orthodox Church as deaconesses, and the distinguished abbesses who took their seats next to bishops in the synods of Anglo-Saxon Britain. There was no steady development; as in the history of women's social progress in general, periods of advance were followed by setbacks, sometimes long lasting.

When Methodists reacted against high church Anglicanism in the eighteenth century, they set out to cast off the sacerdotal function of the priest in the church, the aura of holiness and special power which he acquired through ordination. Though some priestly functions, such as the administration of Holy Communion, were strictly retained, the new ministry established by Wesley was not expected to set itself apart. The minister was to be pastor and preacher to the members of his flock, who were equally called to God's service. To begin with, no special qualifications were required that would exclude women, though, as the organisation of the Methodist Church took shape, custom ensured that women were not called for ordination. As lay preacher, they could exert their influence, particularly in the more highly evangelical societies of the Primitive Methodists and Bible Christians.

Among the lay preachers who sailed out from England either as settlers or as visiting evangelists was Mrs Joan Scott (nee Boag) who came to live in New Zealand in middle life, in 1863, and continued to preach till well into her seventies, conducting missions up and down the country in fifty different circuits. Travelling long distances, sometimes on foot or horseback, she was unconcerned about physical hazards so long as she was doing God's work. Her influence on young men entering the ministry is said to have been strong. In 1885, she held a mission in the Wanganui Circuit, resulting in 'fifty souls being led to the Saviour'; in September 1892, she had a large attendance at Willowby (Ashburton) where there were five or six conversions and 'the half-night of prayer was a blessed season'; in November 1891, her address at Freeman's Bay was said to be 'fruitful of good'. Her competence was such that questions were asked about the restrictions on women's full participation in church leadership. Mrs Scott was said to leave a far better result than many more prominent evangelists, and the comment was made: "though not allowed the honour of being Conference evangelist, she is certainly God's evangelist".

During this period of religious revival, Mrs Andrews and Dr Kate Bushnell came from England as visiting evangelists. The former impressed the Rev Joseph Barry of the Pitt St Methodist Church to such an extent that he said he could now see why some of his brother clergy opposed women getting into the pulpit "It would be their death knell." her 'pertinent and lucid address' was apparently a contrast to that of her colleague, Dr Bushnell, who dealt with her subject, "Social Purity" in a deliberate, logical and argumentative way with 'noble scorn and lofty invectives.'

The combination of revivalism and an upsurge of feminism in the early 1890's brought a fresh airing of the question of the leadership role of women in the church, and whether they should be licensed to preach. *The New Zealand Methodist* took a liberal view. A reader was attracted by an inconspicuous report that two ministers' wives in South Canterbury had efficiently stepped into the pulpit in their husbands' absence. Signing himself 'Order' he wrote strongly opposing the action, citing St Paul: "Let your women keep silence in the churches." (1 Cor 14:34-5) The editor dealt with him firmly, pointing out that the biblical evidence is indecisive and finally closing the correspondence: 'Seriously, our friend in these days might as well try to argue against the multiplication table as against the right of women to preach. They are preaching and will continue to do so in increasing numbers.' he thought it would be a good thing for readers to hear testimony on this topic from various sources, and printed at length the view of Catherine Booth, who, having first become a Methodist, worked with her husband to establish the Salvation Army in England. 'Why should women be confined exclusively to the kitchen and distaff any more than men to the field and workshop?' Mrs Booth asked. 'Did not God and his nature, assigned to man *his*

sphere of labour, “to till the soil and dress it”? And if exemption is claimed from this kind of toil for the male sex, on the ground of their possessing ability for intellectual and moral pursuits, we must be allowed to claim the same privilege for women ...’ She went on to question why God, in this solitary instance, had endowed a being with powers he never intended her to employ.

In 1907, an unprecedented step was taken when a woman, Sister Moody Bell, was sent to take charge of the Home Mission Station at Kumara, a dwindling mining town on the West Coast. The appointment was made by the Chairman of the Nelson District, with the approval of the Home Mission Executive, and it drew a somewhat arch response from the religious press:

Now Miss Moody Bell, look to your ways! The eyes of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, are upon you. Yours is the honour of being the first lady to take charge of a Home Mission Circuit in connection with the Methodist Church of Australasia ...[this] could be the beginning of a new era ... You also will be watched by the president and the Conference, and synods, and supers, and stewards, and the whole Christian public. If you were once ecclesiastically hidden, you are now on the housetop. We expect great things from you. Benedicite!

There was no nonsense about Sister Moody Bell and, having settled into the commodious parsonage, she went off to her welcome, intent on announcing that ‘she hoped to do a great deal of visiting in the homes, but would like the ladies to know that she would not always take afternoon tea; she did not visit them for that.’ In an area that was known for its high proportion of hotels and its sectarian animosity, she had a struggle, but established a ‘splendid Band of Hope’ and started a form of sex education. Her ‘Talk with Girls on Sweethearts’ had already been delivered in other parts of New Zealand and we are told that this advice, ‘given in an impressive yet humourous vein’, attracted an intelligent group of Kumara girls who waited with interest for Talk Number Two. The concerns of young women were close to her heart. She had been international corresponding secretary of the YWCA and, using her world-wide links, had helped to plan a YWCA section at the New Zealand International Exhibition in Christchurch in 1906. She brought unusual qualities to her task and, though her energies may have been somewhat diminished by an accident with a horse, she held the post at least till 1909. Her appointment was looked upon as a daring irregularity to meet a desperate need, and the experiment was not, in the meantime, repeated.

During the twenties and thirties, questions concerning the full use of women’s talents were seldom raised. A few women continued as local preachers in the Methodist Church and this was considered sufficient to show that the door was not closed to them. However, the tendency was to sentimentalise, and therefore diminish what women had already done. In 1927, the *New Zealand Methodist Times* reminded its readers that Wesley was reluctantly brought to believe that women had a clear call to preaching, quoting his comment, ‘God owns women in the conversion of sinners, and who am I in that I should withstand God?’ The writer felt that the Methodist Church was not troubled by the problem: ‘Women played a great part in early Methodism, the fragrance of their devotion and piety meets one on every page of the records.’ This is a curious comment when the records acknowledge only slenderly the presence of women in the church.

To some extent, the devotion of women to church activities, to youth and social work, diverted attention from their exclusion from wider leadership and ministry. This was in keeping with the attitude which prevailed in society after the First World War and was reinforced in the churches: women should chiefly be concerned with the home and family and in organisations devoted to their welfare. They were expected to be comfortable in this position and, for some time, it appeared that they were.

In the meantime, single women seeking dedicated work could offer themselves for the Deaconess Order. In the 1930’s, with increased attention to social problems and religious education, the work and training of deaconesses was under constant review. The 1926 report of the Deaconess Institution Commission drew attention to the general question of the ministry of trained women in the Church, stated that greater use could be made of the gifts of women in all departments of

church work, and called for a progressive policy. Resulting reports emphasised the need for training in the special sphere of women's work.

Sister Rita Snowden, we already know, worked as a supply minister in 1928 in Raetihi and then in Otorohanga. Once again, in 1936, a woman was sent to take responsibility for a circuit. Sister Edith Beer (Boal) was stationed at Upper Hutt from 1936 to 1940, and was well received in the community. She was remembered as a fine teacher, especially in her work for Bible in Schools, and as an excellent preacher. going beyond the normal bounds of pastoral work, she took up local causes, showing concern for the needs of isolated railway worker families at Kaitoke, and taking a strong stand against the desecration of the Sabbath by the letting of Maidstone Park for picnics and organised games on Sundays. Her pacifist stance during World War II was a courageous but not a popular one. In her later life and work, in Fiji and at Takapuna, she has continued to work for peace and has been a leader in the MWF.

The Second World War saw many women stepping, if only temporarily, into men's work. the gaps left at home as men were called to chaplaincies showed up the limitations placed on women's leadership. In America, women were given the chance to work in the forces as 'Chaplains' Assistants'. In Australia and New Zealand, inter-denominational groups of women tried for the same opportunity, if only to work among women in the forces, but their representations failed, the authorities claiming that the numbers were not great enough to justify such action.

In 1940, specific proposals for the training of women for the ministry were brought forward to the Board of Studies of Trinity College. The Board saw no insuperable difficulty in training women candidates 'if that were desired', but, because of the urgency and importance of the question, the recommended that it should be referred back to a large representative committee.

The unwieldy Commission set up in 1942 had problems in meeting and, four years later, it was reconstituted. At the time the delay was regarded as a good thing because the British Methodist Conference was about to put out a valuable report on the topic. New Zealand was not in any way bound to follow the Mother Country; on the other hand, with a reputation for progressive social measures, she did not want to be seen to lag behind. The newly formed Commission comprised seven ministers, one layman and five women, some of whom had been on the original committee. All of these women had done significant work as deaconesses, in mission organisations and youth work, and the fact that there were already capable women such as these taking responsibility for important areas of the Church's work prepared the ground for the ordination of women. On the Commission were Mrs E.M Laws, Mrs W. Walker, Mis Helena Hendra, Sister Ivy Jones and Sister Rita Snowden. among the corresponding members were Winifred Dudley, Lorna Hodder, Anne firth, Dora Sheat, Ruth Thomas, Mrs C.E. Taylor and Sister Annie Tocker.

One of these corresponding members was bold enough in her suggestions to the Commission to affirm that the day of deaconesses was over, and to ask that the question of Women and the Ministry be faced squarely and courageously as a paramount issue involving the whole organisation and set up of the Elder ministry. In their report, the committee members were encouraged by the unanimous passing of a resolution at the British Conference in 1946 that the sphere of service of deaconesses and missionaries should be enlarged so that, having attained the standard required for ordination, they should receive the presbyters' orders to administer the Sacrament as well as preach the Word of God.

The support of congregations still had to be won, and the Commission was firm but cautious in its recommendation s in favour of the ordination of women. They emphasised their belief that 'there are spheres of service for women in the ordained ranks of the ministry'. However in 1948, Conference declared itself ready to accept women for ordination, and agreed that their training and conditions of acceptance should be the same as those for men. Practical issues such as avenues of service and the possible effects of marriage were still to be investigated.

It was obvious from the next committee's report that they still saw women ministers functioning in a subordinate role, preferably in circuits with two or more ministers, and giving some special attention to women's activities and 'the more intimate aspects of Pastoral Office to women.' They envisaged special opportunities for women in City Missions, and they foresaw that women offering for the ministry would be those of outstanding capacity in some special field.

The barrier was down, but official approval did not make the path completely clear. Theology was not thought of as anything but a male field of study, and the entry of women into the ministry raised other questions on which there were divided opinions in most churches. These questions, as Dr Kathleen Bliss pointed out at the time, involved the relation of the ministry to the laity, the autonomy of the local congregation and 'the age-old question of the relation of religion and sex which still exercises a powerful influence, largely inexpressible in words.'

The Church could agree to accept women for ordination, but they still had to wait for a candidate to offer herself. In 1953, Phyllis Guthardt reached a point in her own life when she felt certain that she was to do full-time work for the Church, not, as she had been thinking, in the mission field, but in the fully ordained ministry. She had experienced the pull of family pressure to stay at home and look after her mother, while her own leaning was towards academic work. By the hard road of night school, part time university study, and a one-year Teacher's College course, she gained qualifications. At 23, she was teaching in Christchurch and serving her church as a local preacher. Opposition to her application to enter the ministry came from her Circuit Superintendent. He believed that, wherever it had been tried, it was a 'washout' and that, if once women were called in, the men would slip out altogether. She was able to apply through the Nelson synod where she still held membership and, in 1954, was the first Methodist woman to enter Trinity College as a theological student. Being female, Phyllis was required to live outside the College, but was allowed to study in a cubby-hole off the library. A three-year theological course was followed by three years probation in the Riccarton circuit. At the same time, she continued her studies in theology and for her MA degree. In 1959 she was ordained. The Conference report simply records the event and makes no reference to the importance of this step, which placed Methodists in advance of other mainline Churches in New Zealand. Having been awarded the Sir William Hartley Scholarship from the University of Canterbury and a British Council Scholarship, she went off to Cambridge to work towards a doctorate. The Methodist women of New Zealand collected one thousand pounds to help her go, and this she valued as a true sign of their love and support. Back in New Zealand in 1964, she took up full parish responsibilities in Melville, Hamilton, and as Methodist Hospital Chaplain. She taught some courses at the University of Waikato and served on their Council. In the vociferous sixties, she became University Chaplain. Six months in 1970-71 at the Bossey Graduate Study Centre run by the WCC near Geneva gave her the chance to see this experience in perspective"

Bossey showed me that students from many parts of the world share and cause the same frustrations, problems and aspirations. And the thrusting concern of students to 'build a community' meant a certain violation of one's own needs from time to time.

In 1975, she received an unexpected call which appealed to her ecumenical sympathies. This was to Knox Presbyterian Church in the centre of Christchurch. By this time, Phyllis had become well-known as a speaker, broadcaster and writer on theological topics and had served on Committees of the WCC and the Christian Conference of Asia. It was not surprising that when she returned, as she had undertaken to do, to a Methodist parish (Riccarton) in 1983, she was soon called to the highest office of leadership in the Methodist Connexion. In 1984, she became President-Elect of the New Zealand Methodist Conference, and in November 1985, she took over the office of president. In her plans for her term of office, she expressed a particular hope that she might help to develop the responsible partnership of women and men in church and society, and that she would meet groups of women, large and small, so that they might think together on the theme of wholeness as persons and communities.

In the 15 years after Phyllis' ordination there were four women ordained: 1960, Dorothea Jones (Noble); 1969 Enid (Slaney) Bennett; 1974 Norma Graves; 1975 Patricia Jacobson. In 1978 there were two, Johanna Bouchier and Lynne Wall. In 1979, there were significant changes: the order of deacon was introduced, and the ministers in full connexion became presbyters. Women holding the office of deaconess at the time were given the option of being ordained as presbyters. That meant that women outnumbered men at the 1979 ordination: Mary Astley (Ford), Marie Greenwood, Hana Hauraki, Barbara Miller, Diana Tana, Beverley Taylor (Pullar), Shirley Ungemuth and Joan Wedding. In more recent years, there has been a steady stream of ordinands: 1981, Lynne Frith-Upson, Edith Little, Gillian Richards; 1982, Lois Clarke, Gillian Telford, Ann Thomas; 1983, Glenys Anderson; 1984, Margaret Burnett, Audrey Dickinson; 1985, Margaret Springett.

From *Out of the Silence*, by Ruth Fry,
1987: Methodist Church of New Zealand

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The Church and Women in the Twentieth Century

The granting of universal suffrage in 1893 was not a panacea for women's rights. Grimsahw concludes that 'the enfranchisement of women was in itself an expression of the growing sense of justice and humanitarianism in New Zealand.' She also recognises that 'women did not enter public life in large numbers, they failed to compete favourably with men in the professions or industry, or to assume their share of responsibility in government and political life.' The same was also true of women's place in the leadership of the church. While women have played a significant role in areas such as voluntary, charitable, missionary and domestic work, the progress towards equality in ministry and leadership has been slow. As with so many other aspects of church life, the institution has been resistant to change and has seldom been in the forefront of reform. Evolving attitudes in society, as well as forces within the church, have worked together in promoting changes in the place of women in the church.

Within New Zealand the work of **deaconesses** and various orders was a consecrated vocation open to women within the church. Teaching, nursing, social work and parish visiting were the main expressions of this. The women worked for little or no remuneration and had no place within the leadership structures of the church. This work, although significant in itself, tended to be regarded as a second class form of ministry. This was also seen in the way in which the important voluntary, missionary and philanthropic work undertaken by church women was dismissed as 'women's work.'

Women and Church Leadership to 1939

In the inter-war period there does not seem to have been a strong Christian feminist movement in New Zealand to compare with the movement in Britain. There suffrage in both church and politics was only obtained after a considerable struggle. **Maude Royden**, and Anglican, who became an assistant preacher at the Congregational City Temple during the first world war, was a leader in the movement for equality for women with men in church meetings and ministry. This debate and a similar one going on in Scotland did, however, inform New Zealand Presbyterian discussion on the role of women in their church..

A proposal in 1926 to the Presbyterian Assembly that women be eligible for eldership and ordained ministry was considered by presbyteries in 1927. This was reduced to permission to ordain women elders, but in 1928 after 11 out of 20 presbyteries rejected it, the proposal was dropped. One minister supporting the motion considered that the time had arrived when women should be admitted to the courts of the Church. Women were now taking part in many activities outside the Church ... It had been stated that there were too many "old women" in the Church, but it was not made clear whether they were in the pews or the pulpits. He maintained that the best way to get rid of the "old women" was to appoint young women of ability and sense to eldership.

A further attempt to admit women to the eldership in 1937 failed when it was approved by eight presbyteries and disapproved by eleven.

Presbyterian women had limited membership in some Assembly committees, notably missions, publications and deaconess training. In 1937 the PWMU was also given membership on the Assembly's youth, public questions and temperance committees. Their president was granted right to speak during debate on the missions committee report. Deaconesses working in the Maori mission in 1934 were recognised for the purposes of the Marriage Act as ministers of religion, and permission was granted in 1938 for them to be elected and ordained as Elders as long as this did not imply any standing with respect to any other Court of the Church. These decisions reflect the way in which Presbyterians were slow in moving towards equality and indicate that involvement in mission could easily be marginalised as 'women's work'.

Among Presbyterians there was a deep division on the role and status of women within the church. *The Outlook* in its pages throughout the 1930's tended to reflect support for change. An editorial in 1937 declared that 'Logically we cannot withhold the eldership or the ministry from our women.' **Mary Salmond**, a former missionary in India and Principal of the Presbyterian Women's Training Institute in Dunedin, after a visit to Europe reported on 'Women's Work in the Church'. She referred to the work of women ministers and elders and the debates and movements supporting ordination. A slow process of education was necessary before Presbyterians were willing to make radical changes.

The Church and Women 1940 to 1965

The impact of the second world war in changing the role of women in society has been exaggerated. While more women joined the paid work force and took up jobs formerly a male preserve, this was not accompanied by equity in terms of pay, status and promotion. Deborah Montgomerie has identified three reasons for this. The wartime employment of women was seen as a temporary emergency measure. 'Women's work' was redefined without a significant change in the inferior status of that work. The pronatalist ideas about women's roles continued to be strong.

Churches reinforced these attitudes with their strong emphasis on the role of women within the home and family. The pages of *Zealandia* and *The Tablet* during the war were sprinkled with articles about women, the home, and the importance of motherhood in the spiritual welfare of the community. But one contribution to *Zealandia* in 1945, entitled 'A woman's place is in the home?' stated that a mother should devote herself to her family, and encouraged women to take an interest in the world outside the home. 'When her children have reached the stage when they no longer require her constant care she will be equipped to take a more active part in outside activities and wield her good influence in wider spheres.'

Defence of the family influenced attitudes towards divorce. Anglicans, in the General Synod commission report in 1940, continued to take a strict approach, recognising adultery as the only grounds for dissolution. Provision was made, however, with a bishop's dispensation, for remarriage of the party who was not at fault. Referring to 'the astounding change which has taken place of recent years in the relations of men and women' the commission felt it had 'led to the over-estimation of the ideal of comradeship to the detriment of the ideal of the family and home.' Reflecting a strict approach they stated: "The Church is under no obligation to make things easy for those who marry in haste or insincerely and repent at leisure."

Presbyterians did not take such a strict line as Anglicans. In a major report in 1949 they accepted the need for dissolution in some situations, although they supported attempts at reconciliation and the work of the Marriage Guidance Movement. Ministers were given cautious approval to remarry divorcees. The report recommended 'that the most important factor in all cases is not the past situation but the present attitude of the parties concerned and the prospects for the future.' For Presbyterians as for Methodists preservation of the family was paramount, although for them a realistic attitude towards divorce meant coming to terms with its pastoral implications.

The Campaign for Christian Order advocated ‘a set of “convictions and standards” consisting of: God, family, work in God’s service, and a belief that the government of the country should reflect Christian values.’ A study in 1944 described marriage for a woman as a career and suggested that one way for the mother to deal with vocational ambition was to find her reward in ‘seeing her children grow up to do the things she had always longed to do.’ Recommending voluntary work in the community, the author suggested that:

Where men are efficient in running finance, women will remind them that after all people are more important than money; where men devise schemes of organisation women will keep before them all the time the effects their schemes will have on women and children; home will be represented, and the welfare of youth kept well in the forefront, and in a hundred ways the thinking of women will complement and humanise the thinking of men.

The **NCC Women’s Committee**, which had its origins in the campaign, developed studies on home and family and Christian responsibility. Some questioning of ‘the position of women’ was beginning to surface. **Molly Whitelaw**, a Presbyterian, who was present at the inauguration of the WCC in Amsterdam, attended a pre-assembly meeting of women from 18 countries to consider a WCC report on ‘the Life and Work of Women in the Church’. She was also a member of the WCC Assembly committee which considered this report. In a 1950 NCC study she pointed to the need ‘for fully-trained women’ who would receive ‘adequate payment’ and no longer be relegated to ‘a secondary position in the Church’. The ordination of women was recognised as ‘a burning problem.’ Pointing to issues which were not to be addressed for another 25 years in New Zealand, she concluded that

The Church at present offers to the world mainly a “masculine facade” in structure and fabric of doctrine and worship. The interpretation of the gospel, as far as theology and preaching go, is largely a man’s ... So far women have been forced to tread man-made paths and act according to the norms of a man-conditioned Church.

In their studies, the Women’s Committee went beyond domestic concerns, looking at issues affecting community and society both nationally and internationally. The Women’s World Day of Prayer, later renamed the World Day of Prayer, was organised by the Women’s Committee. Written by women from different parts of the world, these annual services became significant expressions of local ecumenism.

Attempts by the Women’s Committee to gain representation of the NCC Council in 1950 were delayed and it was not until 1974 that the chairwoman of the Women’s Committee was given a seat and vote on the NCC Executive. The committee’s ‘Ecumenical Schools for Women’ held from 1956 were important in building up women’s ecumenical solidarity.

There was a tendency however, for the work of women and men in the Church to operate in parallel structures with little interaction. ‘In 1964 Dr. Madeleine Barot of the WCC staff visited New Zealand and expressed surprise that little had been done in the way of co-operation between men and women in church, home and society.’ This led to a joint committee of women and men which explored the challenges of greater co-operation. Issues such as inclusiveness were still over the horizon in 1965, the Women’s Committee studies that year being entitled *The Kiwi looks at Himself!*

Ordination of women to both eldership and ministry were major concerns for Presbyterians throughout this period. Attempts during the war to admit women as elders met with opposition. It was decided in 1945, ‘pending the settlement of our servicemen and our chaplains in parishes’ and the decision of the Church of Scotland, ‘to defer for three years any further consideration of the matter of the eligibility of women for the eldership.’ In 1948 a Special Committee on the Position of Women in the Church was appointed. Over the next few years it undertook a process of educating Presbyterians on the role of women from a Biblical and historical perspective and examined the place of women in other churches. Ian Fraser, convenor of the committee, argued that

‘Elders are chosen by their worthiness for the duties involved, but nobody should be debarred purely through sex, any more than through race, or social class.’ In 1954, 19 out of 21 presbyteries supported the move with 148 sessions approving and 29 disapproving. Final approval was given in 1955 and the first women elders to attend an Assembly were present in 1957.

Presbyterian attitudes towards deaconesses were ambivalent. In the 1950's one editorial described them as ‘Almost a Minister’. **Mavis Kaarup** reflected many years later on her work as a deaconess:

“Although not ordained to Word and Sacrament, we did everything but ... We would minister to the dying, but not take the funeral service; we would prepare a family for a child’s baptism, but would not perform the sacrament ourselves. We became known as the Silent Service, and although in many respects we were regarded as the underdogs of the Church, we never felt sorry for ourselves. Perhaps we never had time to.”

With expansion into new housing areas, deaconesses were involved in pioneering ministry, but lacked the status, remuneration and ordination of their male colleagues. Molly Whitelaw, who served on the WCC committee for the co-operation of women and men in church and society, wrote in 1957 that ‘the urgent necessity for women to share more fully in the total life and work of the Church has not been a feminist movement, women striving themselves for recognition and opportunity; but rather the growing concern, especially over the last ten years, of thinking men and women all over the world.’

A conference on women’s work in 1958 looked at issues such as training, women’s organisation, ordination, status and lay women. It was a significant step in the continuing process of breaking down resistance to expanding the role of women within the Presbyterian church. The 1961 Assembly approved in principle ‘the eligibility of women for the office of the ministry’ after receiving a report indicating 21 presbyteries and the Maori Synod supported this, with only two presbyteries dissenting. A statement relating to women and ministry approved in 1963 recognised that ‘The decision of the Assembly was a frank acknowledgement of the spiritual equality of the sexes within the church.’ It recognised that the pioneer women ministers would face obstacles and prejudice. The regulations giving effect to the ordination of women were approved by all presbyteries in 1964. **Margaret Reid**, Assistant General Secretary of the New Zealand Council for Christian Education, was ordained as the first Presbyterian woman minister on 13 May 1965.

In 1983, the attempt by a prospective Presbyterian minister to claim liberty of conscience in refusing to participate in the ordination of women was rejected by the church. It reaffirmed ‘its recognition of the equal rights of both men and women for ordination to the offices of eldership and ministry.’ But the expression of such opposition to ordination was indicative of a wider conservative backlash against changes in the church which have been seen by some as destructive of traditional Christianity.

The election of **Joan Anderson**, a lay woman, in 1979 and **Margaret Reid Martin** in 1987 as Moderators of the Presbyterian General Assembly, and **Phyllis Guthardt** in 1985 as President of the Methodist Conference not only recognised their significant contributions but also marked the acceptance of women’s leadership.

From *Christianity in Aotearoa* by Allan Davidson. (Education for Ministry: Wellington, 1991)