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Helen Jacobi in focus

Oenone Woodhams writes:

Since 2007 Helen Jacobi, Dean of Waiapu Cathedral, has been immersed in the art of preaching. In 2010 she completed a Doctor of Ministry in Preaching, the only one in recent years to have done this particular Doctorate from New Zealand. So how did such an interesting course of study come about?

In 2006 Helen was thinking about doing a DMin, but the usual topics didn't appeal. While searching on the internet for inspiration she came across a fascinating doctoral programme in preaching, offered by the Association of Chicago Theological Schools. This is a practically based, ecumenical, 3 year course of study involving the combined talents of the staff of 6 contributing theological seminaries and other respected academics and practitioners. It immediately piqued her interest as it is specifically designed for people currently in ministry roles.

Each year of the course began with a 3 week residential block in Chicago. A full programme of lectures, discussions and reading was enhanced by opportunities to visit churches in the Chicago area and listen to inspiring preachers. Helen recalls a memorable visit to Trinity United Church, President Obama's home church. Rev'd Otis Moss, who had just taken over from the controversial Rev'd Jeremiah Wright, was the preacher.

Continuing relationships forged with other students and with lecturers helped Helen maintain her energy levels and enthusiasm for her study. She says that she always came back energised, it was such a privilege to learn from the best in the field, 'pure gold' is Helen's description of some of the lectures she attended. Her electives included Mystagogical Preaching, chosen she says because she didn't know what it was, but which turned



out to be 'an utterly brilliant choice'. (For those of us who also don't know what that means, me included, it is the study of preaching on the sacraments.)

As preaching is never carried out in a vacuum, Helen needed a group of people to assist her. And so the Cathedral Support Group was born. This dedicated group not only met with Helen before an assessment sermon was delivered, but also met afterwards and wrote a feedback report. They led group discussions with Cathedral Parishioners, wrote and compiled surveys and were given reading homework! There are now some very skilled 'sermon assessors' sitting in the pews at the Cathedral.

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Helen's thesis is called 'Guests in the House: Preaching a Cathedral service'. It poses the following questions.

- ⇒ How do we preach to our occasional guests, and what happens then to those who sit in the pews most Sundays?
- ⇒ Are the sermons for each audience the same or are they different?
- ⇒ How do we reach each group?

Surveys of the congregation found that listeners placed more emphasis on delivery than content, by a ratio of two to one. This did not just mean 'too fast, too slow'. It meant engagement, being invited into the context of the sermon. As Helen commented, "For us preachers who spend a long time on the

content that was a real wakeup call, because you can have the most brilliant content in the world, but if it isn't delivered well and doesn't actually answer any questions that anyone's asking, well there's no point."

And what conclusions does Helen reach? Has she produced a guide to writing excellent sermons? Yes actually, she has.

"My message to preachers...would be that paying attention to the guests who come ...as a prime focus for preaching will also serve the regular parishioners well.

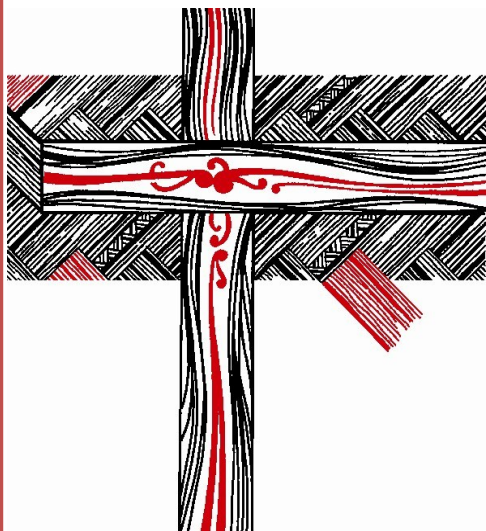
Helen is grateful to Te Kotahitanga for funding her study and shares her knowledge by teaching homiletics to lay people and clergy in Waipapu.

Announcing

Women in Ministry Provincial Hui

PASTOR AND PROPHET

Women in Ordained Ministry



Workshop Sessions:

GENDER & GENERATIONS *

PARTNERSHIPS *

WHANAU *

IDENTITY *

CHANGE-MAKING *

Very Limited Places Available

If you would like to receive more information regarding this Hui please contact your Link Representative in your Diocese or Hui Amorangi

A Reflection...

On Shifting Relations in the Pacific and its Impact on Women and Children

Amy Chambers writes:

Walk through any city or town in Fiji and the chances are that you will meet someone of Chinese descent. Look more closely and if you get a chance to speak to this person you may discover that he or she is a third or fourth generation Chinese with close links to the *vanua* and most likely be included in the *Vola ni Kawabula* the register of the *I Taukei* or indigenous people. The story of how this came to be is often an intriguing and intricate one, going back to the 19th century, to the time of beche-de-mer and sandalwood trade and sailing ships.

Your walk may also bring you in contact with the 'new Chinese' who have taken up Fijian residency in the past twenty years, mostly as farmers and restaurant owners. Walk through the Suva Market as the sun begins to rise on a Saturday morning and you will meet their families, bringing to town their vegetables grown in the hills and valleys on the outskirts of Suva city – land that had been idle for hundreds of years and now looking like a beautiful patterned mat-

covered in all and every vegetable that is edible. This the meeting place for these two groups – a mini Hong Kong market.

And your walk may also bring you in contact with young Chinese men who are here working on aid projects of China – the biggest donor in the Pacific at this current time. These men are only here for the duration of the project and come without their families. They have needs which the local community will have to take care of – needs which has become the cause of problems in the host society. It has contributed to breakdown in family values, STI's and the abuse of women and chil-

dren. I believe that the increase of prostitution in Fiji is linked to this. These men have accessible income which they can use at their whim - a draw card to the weak and the needy.

At this present time the job market in Fiji cannot cater for the number of young people the educational institutions churn out at the end of every year. The family expectation and demand continues to increase and so people are forced to earn money whichever way they can. For the young woman the lure of 'easy money' often

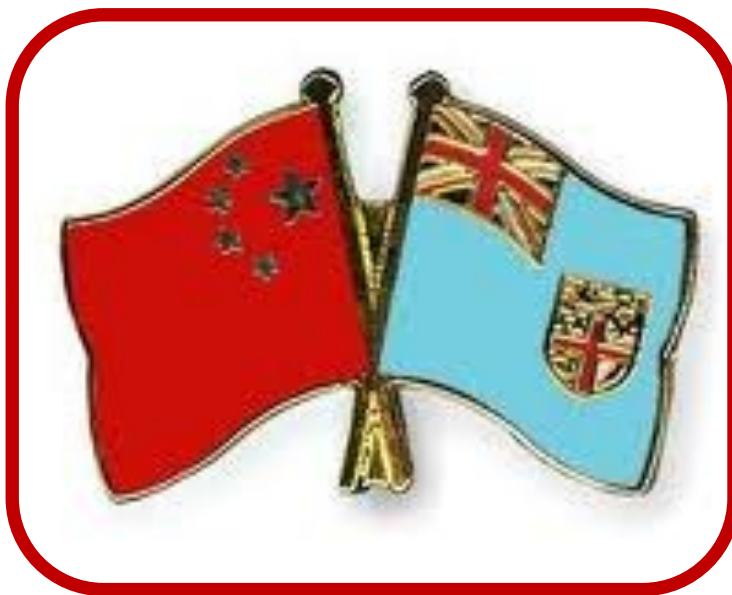
drives them into prostitution – a vicious cycle which impacts on the family, the home, the society, the church and the country. Soon Fiji will begin to have a new group of inhabitants - product of the shifting relations in the Pacific.

Society is aware of this problem but seem to have lost the urge to do something about it. Why? Because China is the one that came to the

aid of Fiji after 2006 when it was 'deserted' by her friends. China came in with an open cheque book policy and when you are hungry you do not question the politics and intent of the one who is at hand to feed you and feed you abundantly.

Fiji is a big player in the Pacific and she will share with her friends and neighbours the 'bounty' she receives. China will not go away now that she has her 'tentacles' firmly planted in the *vanua* and *moana* of Oceania.

Do our friends in New Zealand care that this is happening to us, do our Tikanga partners care?



WOMEN'S STUDIES CENTRE

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The Women's Studies Centre was set up to serve and to advance the interests and needs of the women of this Church particularly those undertaking Theological training.

**New Email
Address**

The Link Representatives from each Diocese and Hui Amorangi have been chosen for their leadership ability to identify, gather, facilitate, resource and encourage women in their educational preparation for ministry whether lay or ordained. It is hoped that the Women's Studies Centre can continue to enjoy the support of each Diocese and Hui Amorangi in this endeavour.

The issue of increasing numbers of women in representative positions across the councils and committees of the Church is seen as a high priority and the practice of intentional mentoring by those already in national and international representative roles is seen as a good way to expose women of this church to fulfill their potential as leaders.

Ensuring that women's voices and stories are heard now and in the future is also one of our continued aims whether it be by traditional methods of publication or using more contemporary technologies like website publication. We remain optimistic that through continued support the needs of women throughout this Province will be valued and recognized.



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Hui Amorangi o te Waipounamu

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