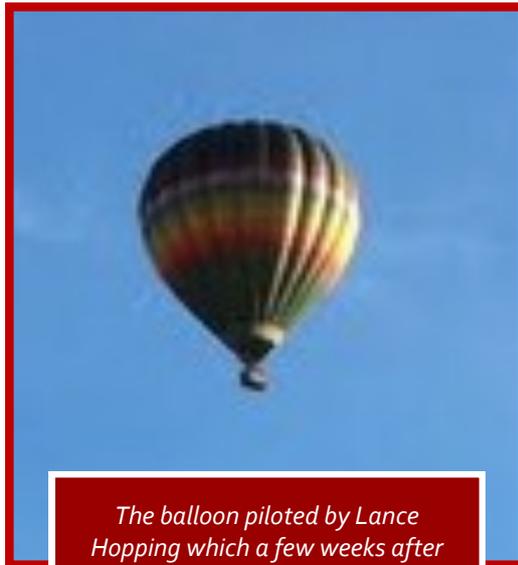


After the Balloon Accident

By Revd Jenny Chalmers



The balloon piloted by Lance Hopping which a few weeks after this was taken, crashed and burned.

Carterton is a small, rather featureless Wairarapa town. Although there are vestiges of the railway, freezing works town it once was, it is becoming a lifestyle commuter town, a place for artists and musicians, a small town where it is easy to become known. On still spring, summer and autumn mornings, it is common to see hot air balloons over the town, The town dogs bark and howl and underneath that sound is the sound of the gas burners heating the air for the balloon.

Carterton people are balloon spotters and many conversations during the balloon season start with a discussion on the balloon that flew, where it left from, whose balloon it was, what direction it flew in and where it landed. A couple of times the balloon landed in the paddock next to our house.

On January 7th, like many Carterton people, the first sign John and I had that there had been an accident, was the sound of our electronic gadgets pinging and purping as the power went off. Then we heard the sirens, not the local fire siren, but the Greytown siren. Later we learned that our brand new state of the art fire station does not have a back up power supply, so the siren could not sound and the doors could not be opened.

Shortly after eight am, after the power had been restored, John saw on 'Stuff' that there had been a balloon accident north of Carterton. Neither of us knew that the balloon we frequently saw carried eleven passengers. I continued on with my day; on Saturdays I routinely have a lot of parish work to do. I doubted that I would have much to do with the crash. They will all be tourists I reasoned.

The following day, crews from both the television channels arrived at church at 9.30am and asked if they could video parts of our service. We were baptising a new baby during the service, but I had decided to pray for the dead before the service began. A parishioner gave the television crews coffee and ginger crunch and the church provided a warm refuge on a cold wet day.

After church, and after a couple of television interviews, I went home and started to cook for a dinner party we were having later in the week. The mayor rang and asked me if I could come to a press conference. I thought this would be quite interesting. It is twenty years since I worked as a current affairs journalist and twenty years since I have sat in a press conference. Nothing much has changed.

Subsequently, I attended a meeting with the police, families and balloon ground crew. The police victim support people seemed to have everything in hand, but I loitered in case someone might want to talk.

The following day, I did much the same thing, but later in the afternoon I went out to the crash site and waited in the cold rain and wind for some of the bodies to be taken from the site. The police had organized a quite complicated ritual of families waiting down the road, then walking up the road toward the crash site, in a mass. I waited with a few others near the barrier to the crash site for the families.

After the Balloon Accident *continued*



The eleven victims of the balloon tragedy. Clockwise from top left: Chrisjan Jordann & Alexis Still, Valerie Bennett, Denise Dellabarca, Desmond & Ann Dean, pilot Lance Hopping, Diana Cox, Howard Cox, Stephen Hopkirk and Belinda Harter.

TVone

The families arrived from one direction, the hearses arrived from another, being driven by two friends. I stepped forward and found that all my prayers had disappeared into (my) inarticulate babble. However, at that moment the wind howled and the rain poured down. Nobody heard anything. The hearses continued the journey bearing the precious bodies, leaving the families standing there; ashen faced, enduring perhaps the worst moments of their lives.

The next day, I did the same as the last bodies were taken away. On this day the bright sun baked the roadside grass. As the hearses arrived I stepped forward and heard myself introducing myself and was extraordinarily surprised to hear myself say 'some of these people are my people'. Where did that come from? I don't even think like that. I prayed a couple of prayers and led the Lords prayer, not a memorial service as was widely reported. The hearses started up and departed.

Two days later, in partnership with Reverends Hariata Tahana and Mihi Namana, priests from Te Hurunui o Rangi Marae and with the police, fire personnel, paramedics and families of the victims, the land where the accident happened, and where the bodies had lain, was blessed.

The following Monday I took the funeral of Lance Hopping, the pilot. Lance, was a local person. He held one of the highest qualifications in balloon piloting in New Zealand, the license to take eleven people on a flight. He was a methodical, safety conscious person. He was a person who believed in community. He was a truancy officer who believed in young people. He was admired and respected, the kind of person whom we are the better for having had him amongst us, and the worse for his premature death. He died, I believe trying to save the lives

of his passengers.

The much harder task for me, though is listening to the very many witnesses. The ground crew who drove behind the balloon in constant contact, waiting to take the balloon and basket back to the hanger. The photographer who routinely took photos of people having a wonderful time. His photos captured the apprehension, and then the joy, and then the delight of the balloon flight. On this day his photos also showed the balloon caught in arcing power lines. There are the children and grandchildren of passengers who were following the balloon anticipating a champagne breakfast and who stood transfixed as the accident unfolded, and the witnesses going about their business who saw the balloon catch on the power lines above their farm and two people fall or jump from the balloon. There are people who watched the balloon as they drank their morning cup of tea and then saw it and the basket burst into flame.

The work of loitering and listening continues long after the television crews and journalists have departed, long after Carterton has disappeared off the Diocesan and provincial prayer lists.

For the past few weeks the readings for Epiphany have focused on calling. Over these weeks, I have reflected that 'calling' is not peaceful, quiet or gentle as the Samuel Eli reading seems to suggest. Like Paul's calling on the road to Damascus, it comes at a time when you're busy thinking about other things, when you least expect it, indeed when you're about to plan for the coming year.

The calling for our parish at the time of the Balloon tragedy was to be hospitable and I believe my calling was and is to interpret our Christian belief in the light of the tragedy. This calling continues and will continue for the next few months. Please continue to pray for our town, for the many witnesses and for the families of those who died.



The Revd Jenny Chalmers is WSC Link Representative for Diocese of Wellington and Vicar of Carterton and Chaplain of St John Wairarapa Area

Register your interest now in the
2012 WOMEN IN MINISTRY
PROVINCIAL HUI

TREASURING WOMEN IN MINISTRY

For Anglican Women in Ministry
Lay and Ordained

A VARIETY OF WORKSHOP SESSIONS WILL BE
OFFERED INCLUDING:

- *URBAN MISSION
- *PIONEERING WOMEN
- *WOMEN OF GOLDEN YEARS
- *PACIFICA SPEAKS
- *THE LISTENING PROCESS

Wednesday, 27th June—Friday, 29th June
St John's College, Auckland

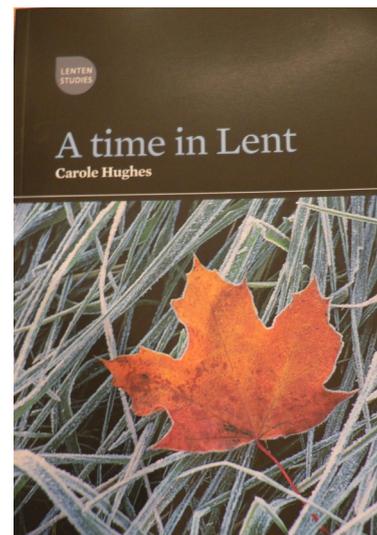
HARDSHIP ALLOWANCES are available to assist those who require help with Travel and / or Accommodation costs. Please register early—non-stipendiary women will be given first preference.

**FOR ALL HUI ENQUIRIES & REGISTRATION OF
INTEREST PLEASE CONTACT**

Karena de Pont

anglicanwomenstudies@gmail.com

Ph: +64 9 630-1131 or 027 631-3083



Only
\$20 per
copy
PLUS post
& packaging

You can order your copy now directly through the General Synod Office on +64 9 521-4439 or email

gensec@ang.org.nz

A handy collation of some Lenten Studies programmes which offer some guidelines and starting points to work together, as the people of God, during Lent.

PASTOR & PROPHET HUI: Women in Ordained Ministry

A reflection from the Gender & Generations Session

Name this Women

By Revd Gillian Swift

I followed my gaze to the name of Mary,
the name of my beloved mother now resting
in peace with her God.

I followed instructions to find her partner
and found the name of Elizabeth, her cousin
sharing the same grace.

A story that amazes me of courage and kinship,
of solidarity and woman wise, of sharing secrets
of the puzzling and complex.

And what of me? Child of Mary, born to a woman,
different place, wrong time, circumstances similar:
needing to hear, unravel and understand.

And what of my church? The women who nurture
the women and men, who care about story telling
so I can receive, stories of the strong women.

Women who count but remain hidden.

Old, young, single, partnered,—all willing to tell
the stories of sisterhood, womanist stories with which
to praise and thank God.

All for me.

To the church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia,
Glory be to God I have lived to see the day
when three tikanga women can tell their story.

Of love and fearfulness, shared and tightly held
resources of gifts by grace and friendship,
sisterhood and womanist theology.

Feelings emerged out of engagement of thankfulness,
hope, strength, courage, friendship.
How much I have, how little I share.

Thanks be to God for this time of refreshment
of understanding the three tikanga stories of women,
the grace to be exposed in safety.

As I write I feel the warmth of remembered laughter,
the joy of dance, the loving embrace.

May I continue to conceive, grow and give birth.

*Gillian Swift attended last year's Women in Ministry
"Pastor & Prophet - Women in Ordained Ministry" Hui. Gillian
is the Ministry Enabler for Riverton Union Parish.*



The Michael Ramsey Prize for Theological Writing

www.michaelramseyprize.org.uk

The Michael Ramsey Prize aims to encourage the most promising contemporary theological writing and to identify it for a wider Christian readership. There is a generous monetary prize awarded to the author of the prize-winning book as well as smaller monetary prizes for those books shortlisted.

The Award, which is sponsored by the Lambeth Fund and administered by SPCK, was inaugurated by Archbishop of Canterbury Dr Rowan Williams and the biennial prize commemorates Dr Ramsey, who was Archbishop of Canterbury from 1961-1974, and his commitment to increasing the breadth of theological understanding of people in general.

The Women's Studies Centre supports the aspirations of women theologians to be recognized internationally for their work and encourage them to consider submitting their published work if it meets the regulations of this prize or to consider the criteria required for the Michael Ramsey Prize as an option in any future publishing venture undertaken.

The closing date for nominations is 16 March 2012 for the 2013 Michael Ramsey Prize. The nomination form and regulations are available on the Michael Ramsey Prize website www.michaelramseyprize.org.uk

The Centre for Anglican Women's Studies

Karena de Pont, Administrator

Email: anglicanwomenstudies@gmail.com Cell Phone: 027 631-3083

Home Office Phone: + 64 9 630-1131 Synod Office Phone: + 64 9 521-4439

Postal c/- General Synod Office,
P O Box 87-188, Meadowbank, Auckland 1742, New Zealand



The Centre for Anglican Women's Studies, commonly known as 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.

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.

**WOMEN IN MINISTRY
PROVINCIAL HUI
26th–29th JUNE 2012**



Women's Studies Centre Council Members — 2010/2012

TIKANGA MAORI -

- Dr Jenny Plane Te Paa
jenzat@xtra.co.nz
- Revd Mere Wallace
mere.wallace@westcoastdhb.org.nz

TIKANGA POLYNESIA -

- Revd C. Amy Chambers
mumsy@connect.com.fj
- Revd Tai Tuatagaloa
taimarice03@yahoo.com

TIKANGA PAKEHA

- Revd Erice Fairbrother
ecfairbrother@xtra.co.nz
- Revd Carole Hughes (Convenor)
carolesunrise@xtra.co.nz

Women's Studies Centre Diocesan & Hui Amorangi Link Representatives

Diocese of Auckland -

- Revd Cate Thorn
catethorn@slingshot.co.nz

Diocese of Christchurch -

- Revd Annette Cater
revannette@gmail.com

Diocese of Dunedin

- Jenny Campbell
jennycam@xtra.co.nz

Diocese of Nelson

- Revd Dr Sue Patterson
registrar@bishopdale.ac.nz

Diocese of Waipapu

- Revd Oenone Woodhams
oenone@waiapu.com

Diocese of Waikato & Taranaki

- The Ven Patricia Carter
revtrish@ihug.co.nz

Diocese of Wellington

- Revd Jenny Chalmers
jenny@clear.net.nz

Diocese of Polynesia

- Refer to Tikanga Polynesia Councilors
(see above)

Hui Amorangi o te Tairawhiti

- Revd Numia Tomoana
numia_5@hotmail.com

Hui Amorangi o te Tai Tokerau

- Revd Jenny Quince
quincemail@xtra.co.nz

Hui Amorangi o te Manawa o te Wheke

- Rahera Biddle
RaheraB@tepunahaurabop.co.nz

Hui Amorangi o te Upoko o te Ika

- *No current appointment—Contact the Hui Amorangi administrator*

Hui Amorangi o te Waipounamu

- *No current appointment—Contact Mere Wallace (see above)*

EDITORIAL DISCLAIMER: *The Women's Studies Centre is committed to encouraging and enabling women's voices and perspectives from across the diversity of the Church to be shared more widely. We acknowledge that women's experiences of church differ considerably and that resultant theological perspectives also differ considerably. In general the WSC does not exercise editorial control, rather we welcome as many voices as are willing to contribute.*