



ARCHBISHOP OF
CANTERBURY'S
RECONCILIATION
MINISTRY

WOMEN ON THE FRONTLINE

Newsletter | Winter Edition

January 2024



Greetings and Happy New Year from Women on the Frontline.

Part of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Reconciliation Ministry, the project engages, enables and equips Bishops' spouses and women leaders across the Anglican Communion to share their experiences, break down the sense of loneliness, use their God given gifts and in their own contexts run retreats and reconciliation training.

In our Winter Edition, we bring you highlights from our visit to the Church of South India in September 2023 and we look at our next steps for 2024.

Highlights from the Church of South India visit

In September 2023, the Women on the Frontline (WFL) team led by Mrs Caroline Welby including, Sarah Snyder, Keren Lewis and Jane Namurye, visited Bangalore, South India. They ran a retreat and reconciliation training for the Bishop's spouses and their secretaries from 7 to 14 September 2023.

The visit was guided by our five Principles:

- Presence: being there to strengthen relationships
- Parity: being in solidarity with one another regardless of hierarchy
- Particularity: God knows everyone's needs
- Potential: every woman is called, loved and chosen for the various roles in her diocese
- Prayer: before, during and after every visit.

The retreat focused on activities including reconciliation training, creative art, drama, and sharing stories and testimonies.

The Retreat

The two-day retreat was led by Caroline Welby using the Ignatian contemplation approach with support from the team. It brought together thirteen Bishops' spouses from across the diverse language groups spoken in South India (Kannada in Karnataka, Malayalam in Kerala, Tamil in Tamil Nadu in the South East and some areas, Telugu in Andhra Pradesh in the East and Tulu in parts of Karnataka and Kerala).



Sarah Snyder with Karnataka and Kerala group

During the retreat, Women on the Frontline engaged with the spouses in their respective groups helping to overcome the language barrier and improving communication significantly throughout the programme. The sessions during the retreat were created to enable the spouses to experience a deep connection with God and with their calling.

This emphasized the ways in which Jesus calls individuals by name through the story of Zacchaeus in Luke's gospel and Mary's encounter with Jesus in John 20. The session gave the spouses the opportunity and space to pray, listen to God and get to know one another.



Mrs Caroline Welby deeply enabling spouses.

Prayer partners and praying for one another, one of the Principles of Women on the Frontline was an affirmation that they are called and chosen for the role they have alongside their husbands.

The retreat offered space for the spouses to be on their own and hear God speak to them. It also provided them rest, spiritual nourishment and time away from daily duties and responsibilities.

Reconciliation Training

The retreat was followed by reconciliation training where seventeen secretaries, Executive Committee members and other women leaders joined the thirteen spouses, making a total of 30 participants.

The training too was guided by the core Principles of Women on the Frontline. The interactive session enabled the women to develop skills that they would be able to use in their dioceses and various contexts. It included elements of art and drama on the prodigal son (daughter).

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Spouse enacting the Prodigal son (daughter)

The retreat sessions were linked to the retreat themes, highlighting the Biblical story of the woman with the issue of blood who received healing when she touched the hem of Jesus' garment.

The participants reflected on a fabric they sewed together that represented the hem of Jesus' garment and ended the session with reflective prayer.



Spouses reflect on the woman who touched the hem of Jesus' garment.

Our impact

Women on the Frontline not only engages and enables spouses and women leaders across the Anglican Communion but it also equips them for ministry.

The retreat and the training enabled spouses to develop leadership skills and equipped the participants to return to their dioceses to work as reconcilers in their families, churches, communities and the wider community. The feedback on both and retreat and the reconciliation training was positive.

“It was good to see all the leaders were also part of the sessions and we felt they were among us. Thank you for the effort you have made.”

“The learning reflection of the Bible passage through activities gave me wisdom to think deeply and understand the word of God, the testimony in paint and the other sessions touched my heart.”

Your prayers and support

We are forever grateful for the generous support rendered by the Anglican Communion Fund, Community of St. Andrews, Lambeth Partners, Trinity Wall Street, and our friends and well-wishers.

The work of Women on the Frontline has only been possible because of your prayers and financial support. This has encouraged and given us the momentum to commit to our plans, visits and next steps for the year 2024.

Please continue to pray for our toolkit which was piloted and very well received by the Church of South India and the work in progress to resource other provinces across the Communion and enable the work of Women on the Frontline to flourish.

Women on the frontline team

- Caroline Welby, Founder
- Jane Namurye, Coordinator
- Mandy Marshall, Director of Gender Justice, Anglican Alliance
- Sarah Snyder, Director, Rose Castle Foundation
- Kay Hunter Johnston, Fundraising Specialist,
- Comfort Fearon, Advisor
- Keren Lewis, Art Specialist
- Fiona Ruttle, Art Specialist



Become a friend of Women on the Frontline

If you would like you to become a friend of Women on the Frontline and help support Bishops' Spouses and other women leaders in this Ministry, whether with prayer or by making donations, please contact the Women on the Frontline team at wfl@lambethpalace.org.uk.



Keep up to date with us

To keep up to date with future activities of Women on the Frontline, please look out for our next newsletter coming up soon. We can send you the newsletter by email if you send us your email address to wfl@lambethpalace.org.uk.



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