

HAPPY New Year From the Li Tim Oi Foundation



Message from the Chair, Margaret Sentamu



Exciting times ahead!

It's been a while since you last heard from us and quite a lot has happened during that time. I am reminded of the story of the widow of Zarephath, who was on her last ounce of flour and drop of oil when a man of God came by and asked for a meal. You can imagine how shocked and upset she was because this was her last meal which she was going to cook, eat with her son and prepare to die of hunger!

Over a year ago, as Trustees of the Li Tim Oi Foundation, we found ourselves on the 'last morsel' of our resources, having paid out the fees for the first year for the students we had agreed to support but not being entirely sure how we would meet the needs for the remainder of their courses. To our amazement and joy, the Lord provided for us through a generous legacy and we have been able to meet all those students' needs, for now.

'For now' it means that we continue to rely on the support of friends of the Foundation, like you, to help meet the needs of the women we give grants to in the majority world. This is so that they can become agents of change and transformation in their own churches, communities and dioceses. We continue to be amazed at what they go on to do with the degrees they have undertaken. We hear of visionary leadership and faithful and courageous ministry in the most challenging situations.

Plans for the future

The Li Tim Oi Foundation has been going through a period of review and discernment to see how we can better support even more women. Over the past 20 years, we have supported over 450 women from around 20 countries for a wide variety of roles, including as ordained priests, evangelists, literacy advisors, community and health workers, diocesan administrators and many others. It would be wonderful to be able to say that such support is no longer necessary. Unfortunately, that is not so. The proper status of women is still woefully unrecognised in many cultures. Because of recent conflicts, in some ways the need is more urgent now than ever. In many countries there is an even greater education and training deficit, especially for women, who are still under-represented in courses of initial and further ministerial training.

Until now, the Foundation focused on initial training across a wide range and diversity of courses, but the Trustees became increasingly aware of a dearth of women at higher degree (MA & PhD) levels. We recognised that if we were going to enable women to become leaders and future theological educators and to attain senior positions in other fields, we would have to change our policies. We are excited by what these changes will mean for the women we support, and we believe it will greatly expand our potential to reach more women.

Goodbye and Hello

In the past year we have also had other changes. Last March our Honorary Secretary, Canon Christopher Hall, retired. Christopher was a founder and main driver of the Li Tim Oi Foundation. We have honoured him by making him Life President. The Foundation's stalwart Treasurer and a founding member, the Revd John Wright, also retired. We are immensely grateful to them for so faithfully building and developing the work of the Foundation over several decades. Their wives, Viviane Hall and Liz Wright also deserve our gratitude for all they have done 'behind the scenes' over so many years. As you can imagine, Christopher and John's shoes have not been easy to fill!

We are pleased to be able to announce that our new treasurer is Tom Travers, who has been with us for several months now and our new Executive Secretary, Stephanie Lewis-Grey, has just started this month, taking over from Sue Parks who held the reins for a year.

So, the past 15 months have been about discerning the way ahead and making decisions to strengthen and optimise the work of the Foundation, honouring the founding vision of empowering and equipping Anglican women in the majority world for work in their own countries. Over this time, we have seen the fulfilment of the promise "*My God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ*" (Philippians 4 v.19).

Thank you!

We would like to thank you for all your support in the past, for your prayers and your active involvement as well as for your financial support. We would ask you to continue to support the work of the Foundation in the future, especially now as we enlarge our vision to empower even more women. We are aware there are many demands on your time and resources and we do not take your commitment and generosity for granted. We look forward to bringing you up to date with the developments taking place within the Foundation and with the incredible stories of what the women who receive grants go on to do.

May the Lord continue to bless you mightily in 2019.

Margaret Sentamu

Congratulations

to one of our patrons,
the Right Reverend Libby Lane, on her appointment as
the next Bishop of Derby!



New Ways of Working

The Li Tim Oi Foundation has decided to change its original policy of giving grants only for initial degrees. Over the years we have heard many heartfelt requests from some of the women who have already received grants, who have explained that, without the opportunity for further study, they have been falling behind their peers and colleagues, most of whom are men who the church is more likely to support in studying for further degrees. In time, this has led to a large gap between the women and men, with the women failing to be appointed to senior positions.

As a result of listening to these women, last year the Foundation agreed on new ways of working. From now on, we will

- **support women in both their initial and further degrees**, equipping women for more senior positions, including as future theological educators
- **work more closely in partnership with other agencies and organizations**, identifying where the need is greatest and being able to be more flexible with our grants
- **give special attention to providing grants to women living in areas of conflict**, responding to special one-off requests or for highly specific training
- **increase our geographical spread**, reaching Anglican women who face multiple disadvantages and who have few resources, in countries like India, South America and the Far East, where the Foundation is little known.

The Revd Rosemary Maina

Rosemary will be taking a degree in Counselling so that she is better equipped to help the many people who come to her suffering from trauma, domestic violence and other serious issues. When Rosemary learned that the Foundation would support her further study, she wrote to us, saying, "I'm lost for words! Indeed, God hears from heaven! He only knows how desperate I was. I actually couldn't figure out how things could happen. I'm experiencing afresh the feeling of being a child of God, that whatever we ask in faith, our Father in heaven will grant us. May God bless the Li Tim Oi Foundation and expand the boundaries. Amen!"



A Message from Elaine Storkey

Dr Elaine Storkey is one of the most experienced and knowledgeable people about the challenges facing women today. Her hard-hitting book, Scars Across Humanity, continues to shock, with its unflinching descriptions of the prejudice and violence that feature in many women's lives.

Here, in an exclusive article for the Li Tim Oi Foundation, Elaine focuses on the challenges still facing women, especially those in the Anglican Communion.



Over the last century there is little doubt that the lives of women have changed enormously. Today, in most of the affluent world, women have choices unimagined by their great-grandmothers. Not only can women choose both motherhood and a fulfilling career, they can acquire skills previously unheard-of. Developments in women's health, mobility, technology, education, and expectations mean that so many skill-based opportunities and professions are open to them. Furthermore, since the advent of digital technology and computerization, they can do much of their chosen work from the comfort of their home.

However, this cheerful, buoyant picture is, sadly, only a small part of the story. The more sober reality is that, across the globe, the disadvantages and hardships faced by women have persisted, despite progress in technology. Many of these continuing drawbacks are shared by women everywhere. We now know a good deal more about sexual harassment, and gender-based violence, which can affect women whatever the income level or culture. But women in those parts of the majority world where few protective laws exist (or are ever implemented), are particularly at risk. For these women, physical danger is compounded by many other disadvantages. Poverty, early-enforced marriage, risk of trafficking, subservience within family hierarchies, and greater value given to boys mean that so many young women also miss out on training and education. Consequently, they are never able to develop their God-given talents to their full potential.

Much of the Anglican Communion operates in cultures where women experience these disadvantages. Of the tens of millions of Anglican Christians today, the average is not white, British, affluent and educated, but is African, Asian and Latin American, and subject to levels of hardship. In particular, the women in this worldwide Anglican family face the drawbacks of other women in their culture. So many of them are talented, hardworking and energetic, yet their leadership skills are not developed to the same level as their male counterparts. Even in Christian education and training institutions, it is not unusual to see scholarly women doing the lion's share of basic teaching, but little research or new work. Many of these academic women are quite outstanding, yet they are not deemed as significant as their male peers, because they lack the resources to complete a doctorate.

At every level, the development of their education remains a life-line to women in the majority world and it is wonderful that the Li Tim Oi Foundation recognizes the vital need to provide resources to women. Money given in grants to those longing to study is never wasted, and it goes so much further overseas where costs of education are lower. The Foundation's faithful, ongoing commitment will help build up women of faith to take their place in Christian leadership within their own culture. And through those who support this work, new talents will be released for effective work in the kingdom of God.

Report from Uganda by Christina Rees, Vice Chair

15 years ago, I took an extended trip to Uganda and Kenya to meet with some of the women who had received grants from the Li Tim Oi Foundation. They invited me to their villages and churches and into their homes. I saw first-hand some of the challenges they faced, including not receiving their stipends for months, having multiple parish benefices stretching over many miles, yet not having a car and having to deal with some traditions very damaging to women and girls.

Last November I again visited Uganda to attend the 50th anniversary celebrations of the Bible Society of Uganda. While in Kampala I was able to meet with the Revd Susan Ameso and the Revd Meibo Nyangwen, two of the women I had last seen in 2003, and who had not seen each other since then.

Meibo had just completed an 11-year project as part of the Bible Society team translating the Bible into one of Uganda's many languages. She had also been ordained as a priest and was living in the north of Uganda with her husband and five children. In order to meet with me she had travelled with her three-year-old daughter for eight hours on a bus.

In an email, Meibo wrote, "It was a great and blessed moment to meet with you again after a long time. I thank God who enabled me to meet with you and Susan. "



Susan rushed into the lobby of the hotel where we had arranged to meet, apologising for being late. She had just conducted the weddings of 17 couples in the cathedral, insisting on saying the vows with each couple individually. Susan had recently been appointed as the Personal Assistant to the Archbishop of Uganda, after many years of extraordinarily difficult and dangerous work in a prison, a mental hospital, a children's home and working in a remote rural area, dealing with the aftermath of a massacre.



After our visit, Susan wrote to me saying "Thank you for your investment in me in particular and in women in general."

A Year to Celebrate!

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the ordination of the first women priests in the Church of England. As we rejoice for the past 25 years in our Church, we remember those women who are still unable to test their calling in other parts of the Anglican

Communion.

2019 also marks the 75th anniversary of Florence Li Tim Oi's ordination as the first Anglican woman priest. Li Tim Oi was ordained in Free China by Bishop R.O. Hall on 25th January 1944.

Please consider taking a collection for the Li Tim Oi Foundation at a service this month or at some other time during the year.

New Website Coming Soon!

Our updated website will soon be live, hopefully by the end of February!

Email Addresses, Please

If you are happy to receive future mailings and updates from us by email, please email our Executive Secretary, Stephanie Lewis-Grey, at Admin@LTOF.org.uk.

Sending you emails means we will be able to use more of our resources to support more women. Thank you!

The Li Tim Oi Foundation

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