

Will you strive for justice and peace among all people?

Empowering women can empower us all to transform the world

Biblical women can be role models for today

Fourth in a 10-part series

By Margaret Rose

Throughout the Bible there are stories of women whose courageous choices and actions made possible a new world for themselves and others. There is the woman who argued that “even the dogs get to eat the crumbs under the table” as she begged for healing for her daughter. There is the widow who gave all she had to the temple treasury, putting the wealthy to shame. There is the widow whose hospitality in feeding the prophet Elijah was rewarded with a jug of oil and jar of meal that were never empty. There was the woman who had the audacity to anoint Jesus’ feet with oil and wipe them with her hair. There was Mary Magdalene, first witness to the resurrection, who proclaimed the Good News despite disbelieving disciples, and Mary, who said yes to Jesus being born within her.



These are women of biblical times whose witness has shaped the faith we live today. They dared to act, confident that, like their brothers, they were created in the image of God.

Many women around the world today live in circumstances that make it difficult, if not impossible, to act with such confidence. A recent United Nations report documents an increase in violence against women at every level. Rape as a weapon of war, bride burnings, sex trafficking, and honor killings are but a few of the violations women suffer simply because they are women.

Editorialist Bob Herbert noted in the New York Times (November 2, 2006) that a recent study has shown that in the U.S., homicide is the second leading cause of death for girls aged 15 to 18, and most are killed by someone they know.

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equal opportunities and equal roles in decision making in church and society — is to promote human equality in a world healed and reconciled to the heart of God.

One of the many ways the Episcopal Church supports the attainment of the third Millennium Development Goal is through Anglican Women's Empowerment (AWE), a partnership of the Episcopal Church's Women's Ministries Office and the Office of the Anglican Observer to the United Nations. AWE promotes an effective Anglican presence at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, which will next meet February 26-March 9 in New York. AWE is an international grassroots movement promoting gender equality and using the power of women to pursue a humane agenda worldwide. The organization seeks to strengthen women's voices and presence in the church and in the world, using the blueprint of the Beijing Platform for Action and the MDGs. AWE is also committed to the empowerment of women from the multicultural perspectives of the Anglican Communion. ■

Let us pray for an end to the barriers to freedom faced by God's children because of gender, that all who have been formed in God's image might have equality in pursuit of the blessings of creation.

- Episcopal Church Office of Government Relations

The Rev. Margaret Rose (mrose@episcopalchurch.org) is director of women's ministries for the Episcopal Church.

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