Introduction

Knowledge about gender has generated a number of approaches and techniques for furthering what counts as progress for women in the discourse of development. This 'has become an especially disputed and politicized question in the face of visions of "the good society", and of women's place within it' (Molyneaux and Razavi 2006:3). Consequently, progress for women will take different forms and will happen at different rates. Inherent in knowledge about gender is the tension between the universalising discourse of women's rights and notions of gender equality, and contextualised cultural relativism and difference (Stivens 2000).

The relationships between gender, religion and development, in which tensions between 'religious' and 'secular' traditions are evident, have attracted increasing scholarly attention in a number of journals' special issues. An issue of *Gender & Development* (1999) is devoted to analysing how gender and development work deals with 'the complex relationship between culture, religion, and feminism' and considers how 'both organised religions, and personal spiritual convictions can shape, challenge, and potentially transform gender relations' (*Gender & Development*, Editorial 1999). A further issue of *Gender & Development* (2006) explores the complexity of working with faith-based communities. The implications for gender equality and feminist politics of the interface between religion and politics in a number of national settings are discussed in an issue of *Third World Quarterly* (2010). More recently, an issue of *IDS Bulletin* (2011) focuses on the engagement with issues of religion, politics and women's equality in the so-called Muslim world. The diverse ways religion operates in women's lives in public and private spheres influences both opportunities for oppression and opportunities for freedom from oppression (Oluwafunmilayo 2006, Razavi and Jenichen 2010, Walker 1999).[1]

From a 'secular' feminist perspective, patriarchal religious teachings and practices are often viewed as a contributory factor to women's inequality and oppression, as are many 'traditional' cultural practices (Mukhopadhyay 1995). All this highlights the importance for 'secular' development actors to understand and engage with religious institutions; indeed, the implementation of gender strategies and programs depends on such understandings. However, for some scholars, there is potential for progress that has been made towards gender equality to be jeopardised by an ill-informed engagement that does not recognise the plurality of women's voices within religious traditions, or that male leaders may silence those voices (Pearson and Tomalin 2008).

In this paper, I explore the sensitivity and complexity of the relationships between gender, religion, and development in the processes of translation of the gender agenda between the 'secular' donor AusAID, the faith-based Australian non-government organisations (NGOs) and the Papua New Guinea churches at work in the Church Partnership Program (CPP).[2] When ideas move from one social world or frame of reference to another, they are subject to appropriation, adaptation and alteration and are thus translated (Rottenburg 2009:xxxi). Here, individual actors in Papua New Guinea churches are engaging with different forms of knowledge about gender and utilising different techniques for women's empowerment as they work towards their vision of experiencing 'life in all its fullness'. In so doing, change to culturally and socially constructed gender relations is being initiated.

Background to the Church Partnership Program

The CPP (AUD$25m for Phase 1, 2004–2009, and AUD$51m for Phase 2, 2010–2016) comprises partnerships between seven Australian faith-based NGOs, seven mainline churches in Papua New Guinea (which have a presence in almost every community in the predominantly rural country), AusAID and the Government of Papua New Guinea. The design for each phase of the program is contained within two documents (AusAID 2004, 2009), each produced after a lengthy consultation process.

The Phase 1 Program Framework (AusAID 2004:29) states the goal of the CPP as being to 'enhance the capacity of PNG Churches to contribute to PNG development and social stability'. This framework constitutes the design document. In it, the rationale for the CPP identifies three significant development issues in Papua New Guinea to be addressed, which are translated into program outcomes or desired dimensions of change (AusAID 2004:5, 30). The first development issue is expressed as:

The need to strengthen governance in PNG, including increasing participation by civil society in policy dialogue, improving public sector management of service delivery and contributing to strengthening acceptance of the rule of law.

The corresponding outcome is 'enhanced PNG church involvement in improving governance'. The second, about 'the need for more effective service delivery, particularly in health and education to complement government-provided services', produces the outcome of 'improved services delivered by PNG churches to local communities'. The third identifies:

the need for improved governance, in relation to development activities within the churches' own structures, which will also enable them to more effectively address the first two issues.

This yields the outcome 'strengthened PNG churches' institutional capacity for development'. The stated rationale is that by building the institutional capacity of Papua New Guinea

Table 1: Relationship Between Papua New Guinea Church, Australian NGO and Australian Church

PNG church	Accredited Australian NGO	Link Between ANGO and Australian Church
Anglican Church	Anglican Board of Mission	Anglican Church organisation linking Australian Church with Anglicans around the world
Baptist Church	Baptist World Aid Australia	Activity of and accountable to the Baptist Union of Australia
Evangelical Lutheran Church	Australian Lutheran World Service	Principal channel for overseas aid for the Lutheran Church of Australia governed by an appointed board
Roman Catholic Church	Caritas Australia	Catholic aid and development agency
Salvation Army	Salvation Army Australian Development Office	Salvation Army Church Development Office
Seventh Day Adventist Church	Adventist Development Relief Agency	Seventh Day Adventist Church Development Relief Agency
United Church	UnitingWorld	Agency of the National Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia that facilitates the Uniting Church's International partnership

Source: Adapted from the CPP Phase 1 Program Framework (AusAID 2004:12–13)

churches, they will be better able to contribute to strengthening governance in Papua New Guinea, and improving service delivery. Although suggestions are made about potential activities, processes and areas of focus (AusAID 2004:30–31),[3] the framework does not prescribe how these outcomes are to be achieved other than through a strategy of 'partnership'. There is no 'log frame' detailing outcomes, objectives, activities and indicators. This leaves considerable flexibility for each of the church–Australian NGO partnerships to determine what they do towards realising the outcomes. There is similar flexibility for church–church partnerships to agree on shared initiatives. However, a number of principles were agreed that represent aspirations and standards to guide decision-making on future activities and approaches to implementation.

Figure 1: Guiding Principles and Values

1. **Local ownership**: promoting local participation in setting priorities and managing implementation.

2. **Inclusiveness**: ensuring that all PNG communities have equitable access to the benefits of the program irrespective of gender, religious beliefs or ethnicity.

3. **Partnership**: developing and maintaining transparent relationships that are based upon values of honesty, confidentiality, mutual support, respect, willingness to listen and learn from each other and being committed to all partners' interests.

4. **Local sustainability — maintaining integrity of PNG responsibility:** ensuring that the program does not detract from the mandate and responsibility of the Government of PNG; working within established protocols of GoPNG-Church and NGO relationships.

5. **Commitment to learning and flexibility**: taking the opportunity to share experiences, lessons, understanding of the context and desires for change throughout the program.

6. **Innovation, experimentation and risk taking**: recognising that the context requires some new approaches and new methods of engagement and action.

7. **Diversity**: acknowledging the wide variety of local cultures and contexts within which the program will operate and the differences in institutional mandates, capacities and approaches.

8. **Trust and accountability**: mechanisms of accountability will build a sense of trust between partners, recognising that all the partners are acting in good faith with a commitment to the desired outcomes and benefits by their participation in the program.

9. **Realism**: the expectations and aspiration of the partners and the program should reflect a realistic understanding of the context and structures within which the program operates.

10. **Holistic development — understanding of the holistic nature of development:** acknowledging that the development of the whole person is understood to embrace their physical, emotional, spiritual, community and political well-being.

11. **Supporting existing institutions, networks and structures**: recognising the strengths and capacities for change which exist in the context, and ensuring that the program does not duplicate or replicate existing mechanisms for development in Papua New Guinea. In particular, relevant program activities should be integrated within established PNG Government systems, particularly in health and education, and should be planned and implemented with reference to other existing AusAID activities in the sector.

12. **Building partner capacity**: Fostering the primary development and capacity of indigenous Papua New Guineans to develop and assume responsibility for their own development.

13. **Lessons learned**: sharing and disseminating the lessons learned and experiences of this program to the broader aid community including NGO peers, ACFOA and AusAID.

14. **Relationships**: each organisation accepting the strengths and weaknesses, successes and failures of each member of the group.

Source: Program Framework (AusAID 2004:24–25).

There is guidance on monitoring and evaluation processes, emphasising a mutual learning orientation, and an assessment of risk factors. There is an outline of crosscutting issues, including gender, to be addressed. Rather than there being a managing contractor for the program, the CPP utilises the Australian NGOs, which are accredited under the AusAID NGO Cooperation Program, to manage the funding arrangements through its established procedures for financial accountability and audit, program-level monitoring and evaluation. During Phase 1, an Australian NGO Charter Group, comprising representatives of the Australian NGO partners, was responsible for the overall management of the program.

The design for Phase 2 (AusAID 2009) retains the outcomes to be achieved and the guiding principles, as well as the emphasis on the strategy of partnership. During this phase, opportunities are envisaged for building on what had been achieved in relation to institutional strengthening and improvements in service delivery, and for a stronger focus on governance through church engagement with the Government of Papua New Guinea at the national level in terms of policy and at local levels in terms of implementation, particularly in the health and education sectors. Program governance has been shifted towards greater Papua New Guinea ownership with the creation of a governing council, instead of the Australian NGO Charter Group, with a secretariat in Port Moresby to fulfil a co-ordination role.[4]

These design documents represent the building of a coalition among diverse actors and interests. However, in order to manage the amalgamation of interests — those of the donor, the Australian NGOs, the churches, and the Government of Papua New Guinea — policy, in the form of a program design, has to contain suitably ambiguous concepts such as 'partnership', 'governance', and 'capacity for development'. This allows for flexibility in interpretation and 'room for manoeuvre' on the part of those involved in implementing the policy (Mosse 2005:35–36, 46) during the life of a 12-year program, which has already seen considerable turnover of staff in partner organisations.

Negotiating the Gender Agenda

The gender agenda is concerned with the progress of women (however imagined), patterns of gender relations, and gender justice — equality and equity — framed in terms of rights (Molyneux and Razavi 2002, Wyrod 2008). It is increasingly understood that gender is a matter for men as well as women (Chant and Gutmann 2000, Cleaver 2002, Cornwall et al. 2011). While 'gender talk is everywhere' in organisations in the field of development co-operation (Pearson 2006:159), it has been observed that the limited but important advances that have been made towards gender equality fall far short of feminists' aspirations for social transformation (Cornwall et al. 2007:1).[5] Cornwall et al. (2007:1) contend that as development institutions take up the arguments made by feminist researchers, what were once critical insights derived from careful research, have been turned into 'essentialisms and generalisations, simplifying frameworks and simplistic slogans'.[6] However, they recognise that such simplification or sloganisation, e.g. 'educating girls leads to economic development', has been necessary for gender to become part of the development agenda. For technocrats and policy makers, the original political intent of the term 'gender' has been removed to the point where, in the 1990s, gender became 'a buzzword in development frameworks' (2007:5). Cornwall et al. (2007:6) go on to argue that gender has proved to be a 'double-edged sword', as revealed by the way development institutions make use of research and by the workings of the policy process itself. In this process, particular representations or narratives of the subjects to be helped by development end up being used not only to frame, but also to legitimise particular types of intervention and forms of knowledge (Apthorpe 1996, Hajer 1995).

AusAID's gender policy (2007) reflects the dominant narrative of international development institutions, in which gender equality is seen as essential for development and aid effectiveness (OECD 2009, World Bank 2012). Kilby and Oliveri (2008), in their analysis of Australian aid policy, question the extent to which women's rights can be advanced within a neo-liberal aid program

and argue the current policy is influenced more by a neo-liberal approach than by a human rights approach. They compare the stated policy outcomes with objectives in the 1997 gender and development policy, which explicitly aimed 'To promote the human rights of women and assist efforts to eliminate discrimination against women' (AusAID 1997:7). This was in addition to promoting women's access to economic resources, to promoting women's participation and leadership making at all levels, to improving women's access to education and health care, and to incorporating a gender perspective in Australia's aid activities AusAID 1997:7). The 2007 policy outcomes are stated as: improved economic status of women; equal participation of women in decision-making and leadership, including in fragile states and conflict situations; improved and equitable health and education outcomes for women, men, girls and boys; gender equality advancing regional co-operation efforts (AusAID 2007:4). In its partnership with the Government of Papua New Guinea, AusAID seeks to support Papua New Guinea's progress towards realising the ideals of gender equality enshrined in its constitution (GoPNG 1975) and its commitment to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), reiterated in the current national development strategies (GoPNG 2009, GoPNG 2010) and the *National Policy for Women and Gender Equality 2011–2015* (Department for Community Development 2011). However, numerous reports and statistics testify to the significant lack of progress towards realising these commitments and ideals, and the reality of all forms of inequality.[7] For example, Papua New Guinea ranked 133 out of 169 on the United Nations Development Programme's Gender Inequality Index for 2008 (UNDP 2010), with only 12.4 per cent of females aged 25 and older having at least secondary education. High levels of gender violence experienced by women also have a negative effect on progress (AusAID 2008).

AusAID's gender strategy for Papua New Guinea, *Equality Matters* (2010), takes a mainstreaming approach,[8] and frames its objectives

in three phases over five years to align with the Paris Declaration's (OECD 2005/2008) partnership commitments for aid effectiveness. These are: partner country ownership of development strategies and plans, donor alignment with partner country development priorities, harmonisation between all donors partnering with a country, managing for results, and mutual accountability between donors and recipients for the achievement of development goals. *Equality Matters* includes a statement of seven principles underpinning AusAID's gender equality work in Papua New Guinea (2010:7), which provide insights into how the gender agenda is articulated by the donor. 'Gender equality is at the heart of sustainable development', and has to be appropriately resourced. It is necessary to focus on both the practical and strategic needs of women, men, boys and girls. Special action is necessary to support women's empowerment. 'A skilled and respectful approach, that combines individual and cross-cultural awareness' is a particularly pertinent principle in relation to gender work in the CPP, as is 'seeking out diverse voices' and supporting local initiatives. Working with all country partners including non-government and business is seen as vital in the process of achieving gender equality.[9]

In an annex to the strategy, there is a phased 'road map' detailing actions, 'not intended to be prescriptive or exhaustive' that are considered to 'increase gender equality outcomes' (2010:13). Gender stocktakes and work completed or piloted during the period 2008–09 provide the basis from which activities in the road map have been determined. Each sector in the AusAID program is to use the road map as the basis for its own action plans. For example, for the Democratic Governance sector, in order to 'support women's leadership in PNG so decision making reflects the needs of women as well as men', and achieve 'greater gender balance within civil society leadership', it is suggested a gender audit of the CPP be conducted, building on the Anglican Church audit, to identify ways of supporting women's leadership through the churches (2010:18).[10]

The Program Framework for the CPP refers to gender as a 'crosscutting issue' (AusAID 2004:48). The Australian NGOs in the CPP were expected to

'recognise gender in the identification of priorities for activity implementation', and furthermore to 'identify gender as a thematic issue for institutional strengthening activities' because of 'the prominence of gender issues within church institutions' (AusAID 2004:48) — an assertion laden with ambiguity. This can be interpreted in a number of ways. It may refer to the almost exclusive male leadership in the church hierarchies, restricting women's participation in church decision-making forums at the national level. It may also refer to the institutional proscription against the ordination of women (with the exception of the United Church) that denies women the right to occupy a formal role in the spiritual ministry of the church. Some readings of the Bible have produced Christian teaching that assigns women a subordinate role to that of men, reinforcing existing cultural and social gender relations. The model of Christian families presented by the early missionaries, where women were cast in the role of wife and mother occupying a domestic space, remains prominent today. For their part, the Australian NGO partners' approach to gender issues is situated within a human rights framework underpinned by their Christian belief in equality and justice.[11]

For all the CPP partners, the gender agenda represents a struggle to negotiate the goals, the concepts, the language used, and the practices for achieving those goals. Gender has been labelled an extremely sensitive issue within the churches, and for some church leaders there is resistance to the language that Westerners use about gender. During an early CPP Forum when participants were asked for their understandings of gender, views expressed ranged from 'female priests to violence against women, to basically removing the biological need for men at all' (Interview with Australian NGO CPP Coordinator March 2011). There was such a wide range of ideas, and both women and men were uncomfortable with the term, possibly even threatened by discussing what it meant:

> A lot of people thought it was around changing people's roles and making men do women's tasks and giving all the good stuff to women and leaving nothing for the men, and even women thought that and weren't happy about

it. So we did a lot of information sessions on gender and trying to frame it as looking for opportunities for both men and women, at responsibilities (Interview with Australian NGO CPP Coordinator March 2011).

During Phase 1, a certain amount of formal gender training and less formal awareness-raising was carried out aimed at reducing levels of discomfort or resistance and to clarify meanings.[12] The Adventist Development Relief Agency held a week-long gender workshop for its entire staff in Lae in 2006, to which it invited women from the Anglican and Evangelical Lutheran churches. The Anglican Church ran a similar workshop for its gender working group, and church leaders have received gender training as a result of a recommendation in the audit.

However, for one Australian NGO CPP Coordinator, 'the rights-based approach to gender is not going to work in the church forum, so there's that sort of translation of rights and gender into a biblically sensitive language'. In reverse, an approach to gender expressed in biblical, faith-based language requires translation for the donor community. The Phase 2 Design document states that a 'more deliberate gender strategy will be developed' (AusAID 2009:7,17). To this end, terms of reference for gender research into what churches have been doing, taking a strengths-based approach, were agreed. The findings would provide the basis from which to develop a strategy.[13] Nevertheless, according to one Australian NGO CPP Coordinator, such a strategy would only specify key principles and would inevitably have to be fairly broad to cover seven churches. What was seen as more important is how to strengthen churches, so that they develop their own gender strategies or policies. As she told me:

> We don't want gender work in those churches being driven by Australian agendas and Australian perspectives. We'd rather have them coming from a local understanding of context of what's going to work, of what is needed (Interview Australian NGO CPP Coordinator, March 2011).

The Anglican Church has developed a gender policy (2010), and a strategy informed by the findings of a gender audit conducted in 2008. A gender co-ordinator has also been appointed. The Baptist Union has included the development of a gender policy as an objective in its Institutional Strengthening Strategy (BUPNG 2010).

The Gender Dimension of 'Life in All Its Fullness'

For the three churches where I carried out the fieldwork, the goal of engaging with development is to enable people to experience 'life in all its fullness' (John 10:10), or 'a better way of living among human beings as whole persons' (Longgar 2008:7). This entails: reframing the mission of the church to address issues of social and political concern, or 'living the gospel' through social action; holistic service for integral human development; and transformation. The premise that both man and woman are created in the image of God, with both exercising mutual dominion (Gen 1:26–27) is fundamental to the gender dimension of 'life in all its fullness', as is Christ's model of service to others in love and humility. Together, these provide the foundation for thinking about equality, gender relations and gender justice. The possibility is opened for addressing aspects of custom that have shaped current attitudes and behaviours that render women, as one interlocutor told me, 'like this a bit lower [gestures with his hand] or they have no place'. In addition, possibilities for challenging patriarchal interpretations within the Christian tradition are presented. A brief discussion of three examples of translations of the gender agenda follows.

Each of the case study national church offices has a women's department to co-ordinate the extensive structures of women's groups and their activities. Each department has a single staff member. For the Evangelical Lutheran Church it is the Women's Affairs Division working with the *het meri* (women's leader) of each of the seventeen Districts. In the Baptist Union there is a women's co-ordinator in the Ministry Department, who works with the Women's Associations in each of the three Unions. In the United Church there is the Women's Desk, which co-ordinates the work of the Women's Fellowship throughout the eleven Regions. Women's conferences are important events providing opportunities for women to meet for spiritual fellowship, to present reports on activities undertaken, to discuss issues of relevance to their lives, and gain strength through the sharing of experiences. They include the participation of men as invited guests.

For example, the theme for the Evangelical Lutherans' biannual National Women's Conference held in 2008 was overcoming violence against women.[14] At the conference, a male theologian at Martin Luther Seminary gave a presentation in which he expressed opposition to what he called the 'cultural taboos', or gender normative roles, denying women the freedom to participate in partnership with men as instituted by God.[15] This has initiated a process of challenging a commonly held idea that *meri em samting nating* (women are nothing) through formal workshops. This involves reshaping identities through an emerging understanding and practice of what church members call 'Christian partnership' that begins in the family. A Bible study workshop was held as a follow-up in 2009 under the auspices of the Women's Affairs Division, with the theme of: *Jisas I kisim bek ol PNG Meri long ol kalsa we ol man I bosim olgeta samting* (Jesus liberated women in Papua New Guinea from male dominated cultures). The key text was John 4:4–42, which tells the story of Jesus's encounter with the Samaritan woman who relinquished her cultural practices after meeting with Jesus, and whose testimony resulted in the conversion of many Samaritans. A key discussion point in the workshop was whether it is biblically and legally acceptable for men to deny women's rights, and the question 'what is God's placing for women in the family and other walks of life?' (Anon. n.d:1).[16]

In making their theological contributions, five ordained ministers recognised that 'awareness to educate men must be done by men themselves' whose input into the process of 'women's liberation' is part of the responsibility of partnership (Anon. n.d:3).[17] A desire for the equal participation of

women in God's mission, to be included as spiritual authorities with the same opportunities for theological education and training as men, was also expressed in the workshop; a desire shared by several female interviewees during the course of my fieldwork. In addition, another series of workshops was being planned called 'PNG Women and Culture' that aims to get women and men talking about the relationship between cultural practices, such as bride price,[18] and gender relations as an important step towards conscientisation that facilitates change towards realising the responsibility of Christian partnership. For some members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the combination of Bible study and gender issues opens up opportunities for critical dialogue that includes ideas about women's rights, and challenges them to think through how they will bring about change.

The Productive Power of Sewing Training

Church-run sewing training activities for women appear to focus on women's practical gender interests (Molyneaux 1985, Moser 1989). I initially perceived sewing training to be a relic from the missionary times of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries across Melanesia, and the project of 'domesticating women' (Douglas 1998, Eves 1996). However, examining not only *what* was being done, but also the *meaning*s women and men in the Min Baptist Union gave it in 2010 reveals sewing training as having a productive power that opens space for strategic gender interests to begin to be met.

A graduation ceremony in Telefomin marked the end of a four-week training of trainers course for twelve women. The purpose was to cascade training and to generate income to sustain women's work in social development and ministry.[19] The ceremony served as a performance that raised the issue of women's strategic interests. A number of local dignitaries, all men except one, had been invited. In a speech, the Baptist Union's self-reliance co-ordinator laid down a challenge to the dignitaries to see women as 'partners in development' through what she called 'partnership

support' for women's activities between the district administration, the local level government and the Min Baptist Union.[20] This was a timely appeal to make gender a political issue for local government planning forums in Telefomin in which two influential Baptist women, and a pastor held formal roles and saw themselves as well placed to influence funding decisions for activities and services through the budget process.

For the women themselves, being able to participate in such training was significant at a personal level in terms of their self-esteem, creating responsibilities as trainers of others. Furthermore, it laid the foundation for their political action. It was through such collaborative effort that women understood themselves to play an active role in development alongside men in an equal capacity. As one woman explained it:

When I think of some bigger issues on development raised by the politicians for the last 10–15 years till this day, I can now take into consideration that development is something we as the women can make happen — the clear indication of the beginning of the development is our graduation that has occurred yesterday — the knowledge of sewing, cooking and literacy we can bring it down to help our mothers and together we can bring some kind of development, or together we can make the difference (Interview Telefomin June 2010).

Women's management of and participation in sewing training displayed their capabilities to men, demanding their respect:

We can prove to our male counterparts that we women can manage. We can now manage good workshops, present the reports on various activities and the men at the higher office are now beginning to respect us … They are now realising the kind of respect, co-operation in our group which enables us make things happen. The approaches we are now taking has changed the mindset of the government and other organisations to see that ladies are capable of implementing the

Figure 2: Graduating Sewing Trainers, Telefomin June 2010

Source: Photo by the author.

little of what they have been taught in their trainings. I believe there will be changes in the future (Interview Telefomin June 2010).

This story of sewing training represents a translation of the gender agenda at the grassroots within the Baptist Union, highlighting a political dimension to women's participation in an activity that is ostensibly domestic.

Rethinking Masculinities

There is an increasing amount of literature on masculinities, gender and violence in Melanesia highlighting the importance for the implementation of gender policies of understanding the shifts and continuities in masculinities. It also provides insights into the relationship between tradition or custom, Christianity, gender, and experiences of modernity.[21] Putting men on the agenda of Pacific development is necessary in order to achieve the MDG of gender equality, requiring 'men to think and act in new ways, to reconsider traditional images of manhood, and to reshape their

relationships with women' (Eves 2009:3). There are two examples of church-run discussion forums for men that hold promise for change. Presentations on these were given during a CPP Forum in October 2010. The Anglican Church and the Salvation Army are promoting opportunities for men to consider their roles, their ideas about masculinity, how these impact on social issues, and their relationships with women. Here, men are seen as having the potential to influence positive changes in gender relations.

CPP funding has enabled the Salvation Army's Men's Ministry to expand from its humble beginnings in 1999 in a tool shed in Badili, Port Moresby; meetings were held during which men could share ideas about their roles and how to deal with the problems they faced. The experience of being a man was summarised as follows:

In Papua New Guinea, man is regarded as a leader in the family, clan, tribe or community. As such, man is expected to be the decision-making of all cultural and/or domestic matters. It is ethical for men to exercise that

authority wisely for the good of the family or community at all times. However, in most PNG societies, human nature is such that men abuse their position of authority selfishly for the personal interest. On the other hand, men also struggle to deal with problems they face in the family, society (Salvation Army PNG 2010).

A National Men's Convention on the theme 'Men and Culture' is one example of how the Ministry has been scaled up.[22] At the convention, the keynote address called for 'men to be ready to distinguish the change of culture in themselves and in the church and allow only good changes for the betterment of the church and family' (Salvation Army PNG 2010). Men's leadership role in addressing social problems was also affirmed, as were the virtues of trust. There were elective sessions on men and health, men and integrity, men and culture, and men and family.

Following the success of the national convention, the Salvation Army decided to extend such opportunities. In July 2010, a Men's Only Weekend was held in Sogeri on the theme 'Men in Society'.[23] During the keynote address, it was stated that 'a real man avoids domestic violence and societal disharmony' (Salvation Army PNG 2010). The Men's Only Weekend provided a vehicle for training and awareness raising on: cholera; HIV/AIDS; and 'Going to Court' which is part of the Salvation Army's Restorative Justice Program, offering advice and awareness on how the legal system functions, advocating against men taking the law into their own hands. Such events provide opportunities for discussion, raising awareness, reflection, and learning, and offer the possibility for men to determine how to change unjust gender relations. The extent to which these opportunities and possibilities are realised depends on who sets the agenda, how the sessions

Figure 3: Participants at the Salvation Army's Men's Only Weekend

Source: Salvation Army CPP Co-ordinator's presentation 'Men In Society' at the CPP Forum, Goroka October 2010.

are facilitated, and what type of follow-up is envisaged. Interviews with participants, their wives and family members would yield some interesting insights into the extent to which the experience of such events contributes to change.

In addition to the Men's Ministry, the Salvation Army has also been undertaking gender advocacy work through its Community Advancement and Reform Enhancement (CARE) Coffee Program in the Highlands. The CARE Coffee Program aims to assist farmers sell their coffee by setting up a co-operative society, establishing savings accounts for members, and organising market and export facilities. The predominantly male coffee farmers form a target group for gender advocacy, given perceptions about poor working relationships with females also involved in the coffee business, and men's irresponsible use of money earned. The vehicle for this is basic skills training in financial management, raising awareness on drinking, gambling, polygamy, and other issues that impact on gender relations.

A second example is the pilot *Man Tru* project that contributes to the implementation of the Anglican Church's gender policy.[24] The rationale for the project was explained in the CPP Forum in these terms: men need to understand their roles, and the responsibilities of being a man in a changing world. Adopting a strengths-based approach, the idea was for men to tell their stories in their own language, sharing and searching for what is good or positive in their lives. This was envisaged as being an unfolding and limitless conversation about what 'good' means and what the 'good' man is and can be. The aim of the project was described as being to change community norms about what it means to be a *man tru* in the different roles of husband, son, brother, father and worker. After the presentation, there was some vigorous discussion about the connotations of *man tru* and how to translate it into English: the adjective 'good' was felt to be insufficient. For some, a *man tru* is someone who spends time and listens and who shares insights, for others it is best translated as 'a real man'. What is significant here is a move away from the macho connotations

of being 'a real man' towards an embrace of more positive values. On implementing the pilot, a key issue that emerged for the men was violence in the home, and how to stop or manage it. Thus, the project has performed a role in 'assisting communities to adopt a different understanding of masculine identity in order to create a safer home environment' (Dulhunty 2012). Insights gained from the pilot could provide a springboard for further work under the auspices of the church to facilitate men's reimagining of their masculine identities, so significant in how gender relations are experienced.

Conclusion

Being partners in the CPP means that Papua New Guinea churches are negotiating the gender agenda as presented by their Australian NGO partners and AusAID, and are working out their responses to gender as a crosscutting issue. Small steps have been taken to give women a voice in some churches' national decision-making structures, formally acknowledging their place as 'the backbone of the church'. For example, the Evangelical Lutheran Church's Constitution was amended in 2010 to include provision for greater women's representation; 40 per cent of lay representatives at the National Synod are to be women, and the Church Council now comprises two women representatives, nominated through the National Women's Coordinating Committee, and elected at the National Women's Conference.

Challenges to normative gender roles are happening in translations of the gender agenda in Papua New Guinea churches. These have emerged from the grassroots through a number of activities taking place among communities. As such, the challenges are coming from diverse voices, and the activities do constitute local initiatives. In recognising and respecting their value and potential for incremental change in gender relations in Papua New Guinea, AusAID can render its espoused principles for gender equality work meaningful. The challenge for the donor lies in how to make these types of activities visible in their road maps, and in how to accommodate the churches' timelines — that is, supporting the churches'

ownership of gender initiatives. The combination of Bible study and discussion of gender issues in the Evangelical Lutheran Church may perhaps seem incongruous to so-called Western gender experts; they may well see such a combination as serving as an opportunity to maintain women's 'unfreedom'[25] as defined and confined by Christian religious teaching and institutions. But for men and women within church communities, it is an entry point from which to question and redefine roles and relationships. It is also an opportunity for women to assert what they perceive as their right to equality with men in the spiritual ministry of the church. Through generating an understanding of what men and women living in 'Christian partnerships' actually means among communities of believers, more equal and equitable gender relations can be fostered.

Key to the success of initiatives such as the Men's Ministry and the *Man Tru* project is having a critical mass of gender-sensitive male advocates who understand the custom of the groups involved, and who are prepared to take risks, to challenge stereotypes, and who have the skills to facilitate such encounters. The dilemma for the churches is whether sufficient numbers of people emerge 'naturally', or whether there is a need to adopt a strategic approach to identify and train individuals to take on this task, or indeed whether it should be included in the training of clergy, particularly in-service training. This would really cement the clergy's role as transformative.

Churches, with their networks and influence, have the potential to effect significant change in attitudes and behaviour necessary for the implementation of national and international gender policies and laws. Churches are also negotiating what it means to be a partner with the Government of Papua New Guinea, and their inclusion as actors in national plans and strategies. Church leaderships have the power to build on initiatives that have emerged by developing a strategic approach within their churches that embeds gender equality in their structures and practices expressed through language that is meaningful to them: in other words, a strategic approach that makes gender equality part of their mission to 'live the gospel' and to achieve their development goal of experiencing 'life in all its fullness'. For ideas in the international gender equality agenda to be understood, they have to be translated in ways that are meaningful to people's experience in a particular context (Engle Merry 2006: 1). It is the role of Australian NGOs and AusAID to support the translation work of churches, which in itself strengthens the churches' institutional capacity.

Acknowledgements

Author Notes

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Endnotes

1   In a literature review for the Birmingham Religions and Development Research Programme, Tomalin (2007) outlines research that deals with the effect of religion on the concerns that form the content of gender-development debates, such as reproductive rights, HIV/AIDS, women's human rights, fundamentalism, and the environment. In so doing, she acknowledges not having paid attention to sexuality or masculinities, the latter having a significant impact on gender relations. This is especially true for Papua New Guinea.

2   This paper derives from eight months of fieldwork conducted in 2010 for my doctoral studies, with three Papua New Guinea churches: the Baptist Union, the Evangelical Lutheran Church, and the United Church. The fieldwork took place during the transition year between Phase 1, which began in 2004, and Phase 2 of the CPP, which is due to end in 2016.

3   Activities excluded from funding are welfare, evangelism or missionary outreach, partisan political activities, and emergency and disaster relief.

4   The Council comprises representatives from each Papua New Guinea church, representatives from each Australian NGO, two Papua New Guinea Government representatives (one from the Department of National Planning and one from the Department for Community Development), and two representatives from AusAID. It meets three times a year and has an independent chairperson.

5   This edited book contains a rich collection of analyses of the struggle over the interpretation of gender within the field of development, the ways in which gender has become institutionalised in development agencies, and the future challenges for feminist engagement in development. The analyses draw attention to the plurality of feminisms.

6   See also Smyth 2007.

7   The CEDAW Shadow Report (Papua New Guinea National Council of Women 2010) criticises a 2008 Government of Papua New Guinea report to CEDAW for failing 'to acknowledge or reflect the fact that Papua New Guinea women and development history has been built largely on bilateral and multilateral technical assistance'.

8   There are a number of critiques of gender mainstreaming in development institutions: see, for example, Standing 2007 and Woodford-Berger 2007.

9   The implications of Equality Matters for the CPP had not yet manifested themselves during the period of my fieldwork. However, the newly appointed AusAID gender adviser attended the October 2010 CPP Forum to outline AusAID's approach to gender equality as envisaged through this then new strategy.

10   Through the CPP, a gender audit in the Anglican Church was completed in 2008. This laid the foundations for the development of a gender policy by the church (ACPNG 2010).

11   As members of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID), Australian NGOs are signatories to its Code of Conduct, which states as one of its program principles that: 'Signatory organisations are committed to addressing the effects of gender inequalities and inequities as being fundamental to attainment of human rights for all and the effectiveness of their aid and development activity' (ACFID 2010:7).

12   As Smyth (2007:585) points out in her discussion of the vocabulary of gender in development organisations, while gender is often used to mean 'women', it is 'the most confusing of all terms', one which has had its meaning eroded.

13   After I had finished my fieldwork, in late 2010, a Gender Reference Group was established to fulfil an advisory role and act as a resource for all seven churches as well as for CPP. This group comprises two gender experts from outside of the churches (a Divine Word University academic and a disability advocate), a Government of Papua New Guinea representative, a senior Catholic Church leader, two implementers (one from ADRA and one from the Evangelical Lutheran Church), and AusAID's gender advisor. The research was due to be completed in the first half of 2012.

14   This was aligned with the World Council of Churches campaign. The Evangelical Lutheran Church is part of this international ecumenical network trying to build global partnerships working towards a culture of peace. See <http://www.overcomingviolence.org/en>.

15   Here, cultural taboos do not refer to specific restrictions on women relating for example to childbirth and menstruation.

16 While rereading Biblical texts yields seeds that might germinate into changed gender relations, the texts are reflective of the patriarchal societies in which they were written (White and Tiongco 1997:151). I was able to interview two members of the academic staff of Martin Luther Seminary, but there was no indication that a feminist approach to doing theology is current in theological colleges in Papua New Guinea. Tadros (2011:9) warns, 'caution is needed in assuming that a feminist re-engagement with religious texts within a religious framework is a panacea for altering gender bias in laws, policies and practices'.

17 The World Communion of Reformed Churches, World Council of Churches has produced two church manuals for use in gender training, adopting a gender conscientisation process. Both manuals recognise the Bible was written in the context of patriarchal cultures, and acknowledge the ways the Bible has been used in support of Christian teaching that maintains patriarchy. One aims to promote positive masculinities for men as partners, which involves a rereading of the Bible from the perspectives of gender justice. It argues that by promoting positive masculinities there are opportunities to dismantle the power inherent in patriarchy (Sheerattan-Bisnauth and Peacock 2010). The other focuses on promoting the understanding of gender issues within church communities, enabling the discussion of gender relations within the church and society to take place. It aims to develop an approach to leadership in the church that fosters partnership between men and women (Wickramaratne-Rebera et al. 2003). Such manuals would be useful resources for adaptation to a Papua New Guinea context.

18 The head of the Women's Affairs Division used the term bride price, perhaps denoting a shift in the experience of the practice of bride wealth towards commoditisation and the associated contractual connotations and assertions of men having dominance over women.

19 Although this course had been funded through the New Zealand Aid Programme, and was administered through the National Women's Association desk in the Ministry Department of the Baptist Union in Mt Hagen, the CPP has also funded sewing training through the church's Community Development Department.

20 She is a well-educated health professional from Telefomin, who as a role model enjoys considerable support within the community.

21 See Eves 2006, Sai 2007, Haley 2008, and Hermkens 2008.

22 It was held in Lae in September 2009, attended by over 700 men from the Momase, Highlands, New Guinea Islands and Southern regions.

23 Approximately 150 men from the National Capital District and nearby villages along the Motuan coast participated.

24 The Anglican Church's HIV/AIDS co-ordinator initiated the pilot in the Jimi Valley in the Highlands.

25 The term 'unfreedom' is used by Amartya Sen (1999:36) in his book Development as Freedom to refer to the state people finds themselves in when they are prevented from realising the capabilities they are endowed with. Being able to realise these capabilities depends on five forms of instrumental freedoms: political freedoms, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees and protective security. Sen sees these freedoms as being the means and ends of development.

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