

Paper Proposal for the IAMS Conference 2020: Gender and Mission Study Group

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The Angelina Noble Centre: Prising open a space for women missions researchers

Although the majority of the world's Christians and missionaries are women, women have only a minority presence among the faculty of theological education in Australia. Women with experience in cross-cultural missions find it difficult to access the opportunity to do research in theological colleges in Australia and have instead commonly pursued doctoral study in secular universities. While this allows us to research questions relevant to missions, it perpetuates our lack of access to a voice and employment in theological education. Women missions scholars therefore find themselves without a voice in the context in which most cross-cultural missionaries train. We also lack a recognised identity that enables us to do further research.

Recently, the Australian higher education accrediting authority raised the issue of gender disparity in theological education in Australia. This has provided us with an opportunity to prise open a gendered space in which we can develop a women's cross-cultural missions research community until such a time as we are welcomed as equal partners in the theological academy.

This paper presents the story of the Angelina Noble Centre (ANC). The ANC provides a space on the margins of Australian theological academia which allows women researchers of cross-cultural mission to access resources for research and mentor others as they investigate the challenges they face in mission. The paper will explore the concept of gendered space, reasons for the exclusion of women from the scholarship of cross-cultural missions and how women's models of research and scholarship challenge existing theological education practices.