

CITATION PRESENTED BY MRS. JOAN BACHE IN LOVING THE LIFE MEMBERSHIP OF
MRS. WINIFRED KIEK

Rev. Winifred Kiek grew up in the Quaker tradition and was an active member of the Society of Friends through her childhood, University and teaching days. Probably her ecumenical outlook had its beginning in the sharing of Bible Study and Prayers among all boys and girls of all denominations at the school she attended for 8 years as a child.

On her marriage to Rev. E. S. Kiek, a Congregational Minister, Mrs. Kiek made her spiritual home in the Congregational Church, and when her husband was appointed Principal of Parkin Theological College in 1920, the family came to live in Adelaide. Mrs. Kiek studied for the Degree of Bachelor of Divinity with the Melbourne College of Divinity, the first woman in Australia to do so. She now holds the degrees of M.A. (Adelaide) and B.D. (Melbourne).

Mrs. Kiek's interest then turned to organisations which were working for equality of rights and responsibilities for men and women, such as the League of Women Voters and the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and she was also active in work among Congregational women, the Women's World Day of Prayer, the Student Christian Movement and the National Council of Women. Between the two World Wars, Mrs. Kiek was involved in peace work with the International Peace Campaign, and held office in a number of the above organisations and in the Inter-Church Council of Women in S.A.

In 1926, Mrs. Kiek was ordained to the pastorate of the Colonel Light Gardens Congregational Church - the first woman to be ordained in Australia. After 8 years in that pastorate, Mrs. Kiek ministered to the Knoxville Congregational Church for 8 years. She was elected Vice-Chairman of the Congregational Union of S.A. for the term 1944-45, and, when the Chairman left S.A. for an interstate pastorate, acted in that office for the remainder of the term - again the first woman in Australia to occupy such an office, even in an acting capacity.

Mrs. Kiek became involved in the work of the World Council of Churches in 1946, when a questionnaire on Women's Work in the Churches was sent from Geneva to churches in 40 countries in preparation for the Amsterdam meeting of the World Council. Mrs. Kiek collated answers from Australia, which were eventually used by Kathleen Bliss when writing her book "The Service and Status of Women in the Church."

Recognising that there should not be a separate organisation for women within its organisation, the World Council of Churches appointed Mrs. Kiek Liaison Officer for work amongst women in Australia, and she made links by correspondence with women in the various federal denominational organisations and with the State Women's Inter-church Councils, to which she received a good response. Information and study material both from within Australia and from Geneva and overseas sources was shared in this way. Mrs. Kiek reported annually to the Australian Council of Churches; however, her suggestion that a federation of Women's Inter-church Councils be formed was not acted upon.

Having been a member of the World Council Commission since 1950, Mrs. Kiek's interest and work was recognised in 1953 when she was appointed Convenor of the World Council Commission on Co-operation of Men and Women in Society, and she held that office for 4 years.

After having represented organisations of which she was an active member at overseas conferences in a number of areas, and being particularly concerned that scholarships available in Asia often went to non-Christian women, Mrs. Kiek appealed, in her report to the Australian Council of Churches, for the establishment of a scholarship to help Christian women to study in Australia. However, no action was taken until 1965, when Australian Church Women, formed a few years earlier, established such a scholarship and named it in honour of one who had worked so consistently in the interests of the World Council of Churches and the Australian Council of Churches.

Now 90 years of age, Rev. Winifred Kiek delights in meeting "her" scholar each year and is very interested in them and the work of Australian Church Women.

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