



AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN

"women at work"

AUGUST, 1971.

No. 5.

From Eileen Dingle -

Sorry for the delay in this issue of "Women at Work". I have been away and since my return have been inundated with meetings.

HOLIDAYS? In July I spent three weeks in North Queensland and New Guinea. At Townsville I was able to finalise arrangements for Miss Violet Sampa's August visit. There, and at Mackay and Rockhampton the local people were eagerly looking forward to her arrival.

A "MOVING EXPERIENCE" - In New Guinea I had some unique experiences - notably the earthquake (14th July), tidal waves, tropical downpours and innumerable earth tremors. It is difficult to describe one's feelings when the earth is rocking beneath one's feet, hillsides are breaking away and covering the roadways, and trees are crashing down. To say the least it is frightening! I know nothing more menacing than to see the waters surge toward the land and relentlessly advance across roadways into shops and dwellings. In some areas the tidal waves wiped out villages, coming in $\frac{1}{2}$ mile from the shore!

Three quarters of an hour after I left Rabaul on July 26 an even more severe earthquake shook New Britain, New Ireland and other islands. From July 14 until the end of the month the whole area experienced more than 1000 earth tremors or "gurias", two of which registered over 8 on the Richter scale and at least three over 6. There haven't been such strong shocks since 1906.

The damage caused by an earth quake has to be seen to be believed. At Gaulin Teachers' Training College (a United Church project) not one staff house or dormitory is now habitable. Some blocks of buildings were completely demolished, others were broken-backed and off their stumps, and every tank was ruined. (Replacements after the first quake were burst asunder in the second.) Great cracks appeared in the ground. On the night of the first quake the missionaries and students slept on mats in an open area of ground which quivered and shuddered at intervals throughout the hours of darkness. It is not to be wondered at that one family flew home to Melbourne after the second big 'quake. Praise is due to those who remain, trying to continue the work under improvised conditions. They need our prayers, and our sacrificial financial support. What took years to build up was destroyed in less than a minute!

An Appeal has been launched in Australia and no one should have difficulty in finding a way to contribute. The overseas mission boards of the Congregational, Presbyterian and Methodist Churches would welcome donations. (Any amount over \$2 is tax deductible.)

FELLOWSHIP OF THE LEAST COIN GRANT - As a representative of Australian Church Women I visited Rarongo Theological College when I was in New Britain, to present the cheque from the Fellowship of the Least Coin, which is to be used in the training of the theological students' wives. I attended the Women's Fellowship meeting of the 40 wives now in residence and presented the cheque to the president. I met Miss Norma Graves, a New Zealander, who is the Dean of Women studies at the College. The main damage they had suffered during the first 'quake, two days prior to my visit, was the cutting off of their water supply - storage tanks were down and the pump had been shaken from its foundations and had been submerged for several hours causing considerable damage. The gift brought encouragement, especially at that particular time.

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WOMEN'S MEETINGS - In Rabaul I joined with a group of United Church Women at their regular prayer meeting. Following Bible study they reviewed the various activities of the Church and brought special concerns before God in prayer. It was a privilege to be with them and to share with them Australian Church Women news. They have asked to be added to our correspondents' list.

Another interesting experience was to attend a women's fellowship meeting at Pila Pila village Church. More than 60 women were present - and as many children, ranging in age from a few months to about 5 years, and they were incredibly well behaved! The singing was inspiring. They had a Bible reading and an exposition, some testimonies, and I was welcomed. The whole proceedings were in the Kuanua language, and I only understood those parts which were translated for my benefit. At one stage I was asked to stand at the door and the women all filed out, shaking my hand and making some small gift - an egg, piece of fruit, bead necklace, etc. Then they came back into the Church by another door and the meeting proceeded! Later they assembled on the verandahs for hand-crafts and sewing instruction.

WORKING COMMITTEE - On July 26, the Working Committee met. Amongst the correspondence was a letter from Indonesia which had been referred from the Y.W.C.A. of Australia. It was over the signature of Angela E. Hope on behalf of the Scholarship Fund Committee of "Satya Watjana". This is a small Christian University in Central Java. Because of rising costs (living and tuition) students from low income groups are debarred from continuing their education at this Christian University. In 1970, 29 Scholarship holders were sustained but depleted financial resources and a growing list of applications for scholarships prompted the committee to seek help from Australia. The letter set out the Location, Principles and Objectives, Status, Relationships & Finance, Administration, Academic Structure and Enrolment. "Satya Watjana" means "Faithful to the Word". In conclusion, it stated, "At present the financial support within Indonesia is very limited. As Indonesia's economic position improves, "Satya Watjana" should become more self-supporting while still aiming for higher academic standards, stronger Christian character and greater sacrificial service. And to this end we would direct the prayers and practical interest of all those who believe with us that Indonesia needs intelligent and educated Christian leaders who in the midst of our changing society, remain 'Faithful to the Word of God' - "Satya Watjana"."

COMMITTEE ON CO-OPERATION OF MEN AND WOMEN IN CHURCH, FAMILY AND SOCIETY - This committee has produced a folder entitled, "Parents and The Teenage Revolution". It is designed to be used as study material in Church discussion groups - in parents' groups, in women's groups, in adult groups in local congregations and in inter-church groups of men and women. It is one of a series planned by the Committee to encourage men and women to face together the great issues of our time, in the light of the Christian faith.

Copies may be obtained at a cost of \$1.20 a dozen, post free, from Mrs. T. H. Coates, Convenor, A.C.C. Committee on Co-operation of Men and Women in Church, Family and Society, Wesley College, Prahran, Victoria, 3181. (Cheques should be made payable to "A.C.C. Committee on Co-operation".

MISS VERONICA Kafa - WINIFRED KIEK SCHOLAR, 1970 - In June, Mrs. Joy Udy went on a missionary cruise on the "Kuala Lumpur" visiting New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. She was delighted when she knew the ship would call at Honiara where Veronica Kafa is stationed. Veronica had been informed of her visit and it was arranged that she should have a tour of the Anglican Mission to which Veronica is attached. In reporting to the Queensland Inter-Church Council, Mrs. Udy said, "It was wonderful to see her so well and happy in her work. She took me up 'her hill' where 2 dormitories, a lecture room, cookhouse and Veronica's own quarters had been built - all native structures. Veronica had just finished training 11 girls and 13 boys how to teach English as a second language to young children. It was a six months' course. She was to have a 2 weeks' break and then a new batch of students would commence the course. Her work is attached to a large Anglican Boys' School. The Bishop of Melanesia is high in his praise of the valuable experience Veronica had received in Australia. He said they had another girl they would like to send.

VICTORIAN WOMEN'S INTER-CHURCH COUNCIL - The Victorian Women's Inter-Church Council is to be congratulated upon the production of its "History". An attractive little booklet, it contains many extracts from Minutes of the Council, year by year, which show how "the Council has brought Christian women together to pray and work together, and to help many causes at home and abroad." It contains also a list of presidents and secretaries from 1941 until 1971.

The Working Committee also received a copy of their Annual Report. Special reference was made to the 'homecall' of Mrs. Elizabeth Ashton with the suggestion that gifts to the 'Winifred Kiek Scholarship Fund' might serve as a fitting memorial.

Features at meetings have been varied, informative and inspirational. The Twelfth Baptist World Alliance Congress held in Tokyo was depicted in film slides; Mrs. Strack gave a colourful description of her experiences at the Fourth Asian Church Women's Conference in Indonesia; a resume of the National Committee Meetings of Australian Church Women was given by the four members appointed to attend as delegates and observers; and under the title "Partners in Progress", Mrs. T. H. Coates illustrated projects of World Christian Action in a number of countries visited in 1970. (This excellent set of slides with taped commentary is available on application to the W.I.C.C. office at 100 Flinders Street, Melbourne, 3000).

NATIONAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS - A draft programme had been drawn up and was considered. The theme suggested, "FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS" was accepted. Members were asked to give further thought to the suggested Agenda with a view to its alteration or amendment at the next meeting, on August 23rd.

SPECIAL P.S. - You might be interested to know that the lines, "Slow Me Down, Lord", (Newsletter No. 4) were written by Cardinal Cushing, Archbishop of Boston.

