



AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN "WOMEN AT WORK"

FEBRUARY, 1977.

A NEW YEAR GREETING FROM DOROTHY WACKER

1977 is here! I greet you again from "Women at Work". I hope that it is a memorable year for us all - as individuals and as an organization of Australian Church Women. It is the year of our Biennial National Committee Meetings, and that gives us a special opportunity for thinking, planning, worshipping, encouraging and doing.

As I look forward to those meetings in July I am aware of the spirit resources that are available to us, and I pray that they may be released to **BREAK DOWN THE WALLS THAT SEPARATE US FROM GOD AND FROM ONE ANOTHER.**

I ask for your prayerful support for the Working Committee - especially for Isobel McIntyre, who will act as President at the monthly meetings from now until July, and for Vera Dean as Secretary.

I commend the July meetings to you and urge your wholehearted participation - through a full representation of all possible delegates, and through creative sharing together.

I thank you for all the greetings received on the eve of my departure to Adelaide. I, too, need your special prayers as I undertake this new venture with the people of Pilgrim Church with a great sense of responsibility and privilege.

I look forward to meeting all who will be in Perth for the N.C.M., and I am deeply grateful to the other members of the Working Committee for their willingness to accept the responsibility of the detailed planning of these last few months. May the Lord bless them and to Him be the glory, this year and always.

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ALMIGHTY GOD....OUR CREATOR GOD....OUR FATHER GOD....

The February meeting of the Working Committee opened with these words as Dorothy led in prayer.

When we knew that Dorothy was actually leaving Perth and that the Working Committee would be without her leadership for the last five months of its existence, we just wondered how we would manage. But we have been reassured as Dorothy has turned our thoughts to our Almighty God; for Dorothy went on to pray that we might be "renewed in our understanding of all that is available to us"; as we recognize our dependence on our Creator God, who knows us so thoroughly and entrusts to each the task for which she is best fitted; as we lose ourselves in the love of the Father God and become his true children, knowing that he hears and understands "all the prayers that are deep within us".

We thank Dorothy for her inspiration, and acceptance of us as we are, and we take hold of the word she has left for the people of her parish in Mount Pleasant - **DARE!** On the Friday before Dorothy left, Carmel Downes invited the members of the Working Committee to a luncheon in her home. For two hours we relaxed and learned happy and surprising facts about each other as we chatted about family and other interests. This will be one of our special memories of our two years of working together. Thank you, Carmel. We loved your home and the blackboys in your garden. And we love you for making it possible for us to share such a happy experience. There was the sadness of farewell as we said goodbye to Dorothy and gave her a gift and the assurance of our thoughts and prayers. But far outweighing the sadness was the joy and thankfulness ...

that we, from such different backgrounds, were sharing in this A.C.W. work. There was also the joy of welcoming Isobel and the thankfulness that she was there to take over from Dorothy. We expect to dare great things with Isobel as our leader.

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WINIFRED KIEK SCHOLARS

In a letter from Violet Sampa (now Bredt) we read that she was preparing to leave for a three years' stay in Germany, accompanying her husband, who will be there for purposes of study. In her letter there was all the excitement and apprehension of facing life in a country with such different customs and language - especially language. Violet's address in Germany is:

Rev. Violet Bredt,
Talstr. 11,
4030 Ratingen,
West Germany.

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Jean Vincent reported that all application forms for scholars for 1978 have been sent - this year to India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Replies have been received from the Councils of Churches in India and Pakistan. Applications must be in by 1st May.

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Kalpna writes (November 1976) from Satara that the school building for the "Narmada Education Academy" will soon be under construction:

"It's not a large building but we will meet our need at this stage. The floor area is 2900 square feet. Our next stage of development to which my father has turned his attention is residential accommodation for needy children from our school which of course will include children from the Project who have joined the school. Two special features of this residential accommodation will be a Hobby Centre on the ground floor and a free reading room for people in the neighbourhood. Like the School Building and the Project this will also depend on the financial cooperation from friends. We are grateful to God that there has been a growing response and help. There is a need which might look sophisticated but has a great educational value. ie. a T.V. set. Such a set in India costs nearly Rs. 5000. I am writing this long letter to you with a deep sense of gratitude for your prayers, good wishes and financial help."

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FELLOWSHIP OF THE LEAST COIN

Sometimes we emphasize the coin to the exclusion of the fellowship. It is a fellowship of prayer. We read in the Circle of Prayer that the Basis of Belonging to F.L.C. is "concern for reconciliation, prayer for Christians, intercession for those in special need of God's grace". And from the introductory Highlights of History of F.L.C. comes this paragraph: "As she (Shanti Solomon)... read again the story of the widow's mite, the thought came to her that women everywhere - poor or rich, educated or illiterate, from country or city areas - could pray for those in other lands, and, as a token of their prayer and desire for reconciliation, set aside the least coin of their country for a common fund. So, the Fellowship of the Least Coin was born. "The coin is the token of the prayer. They belong together."

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The Missionary Sisters of Charity send us news of their work in Bourke, N.S.W. through a letter from Sister M. Fidelis: "Our work is in Bourke among the Aborigines. We have sewing for the ladies and a nursery for the babies. We prepare the children for school, visit the families and help them in many ways, and look after the old people. Please pray for us that we can do God's work properly".

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MISSION TO ARNHEM LAND

My January holiday time took me to Derby and Fitzroy Crossing in Western Australia, to Darwin and Milingimbi, Alice Springs, and Ayers Rock in the Northern Territory, and to Adelaide in South Australia. It was a humbling experience to worship at Mowanjum, and a great experience to share with the nursing staff of the A.I.M. hospital at Fitzroy Crossing. It was a joy to be part of the United Church community in Darwin and a journey of faith to really meet the people of Milingimbi. It was what I call a very "Australianising" time for me at Alice Springs and a time for reflection and wonder in the Ayers Rock/Olgas area. Then in Adelaide my short visit was marked by plans and questions.

Three meetings formalised my holiday as an A.C.W. happening. One in Darwin and two in Alice Springs; and I greatly appreciated the opportunity to give news of Australian Church Women to those gathered together by Maizie McKenzie and Jean Bucknall. In particular, I thank these two women for their commitment to the people of their special areas, and I thank all who gathered, for their concern to be responsible Christians, and for their stimulating questions. There was a special A.C.W. flavour also to my sharing with Sopit Chockchai and Rose Gurupatham in Darwin. Sopit will return to Chiangmai in Thailand this month to continue her teaching and her work amongst Christian women, and Rose works with a great vision concerning Aboriginal women throughout Australia.

But I have titled these notes "Mission to Arnhem Land", because that is the name of Maizie McKenzie's second book - published when I was staying with her and Doug in Darwin. It is a story of the north of Australia, written vividly and with a great love for people, giving insight into the lives of the Aborigines and the members of the Methodist Church who shared their lives with them. I commend this book to you at a time when the history of the Church in Australia is taking new directions and when the history of the Aboriginal people is increasingly raising questions about our history. I ask you to join me in a great "Hurrah" for Maizie whose first book was "Road to Mowanjum" and whose third is in the process of "creation" - one about Alice Springs experience.

Dorothy Wacker

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We have also a short paragraph from Maizie herself: "High air fares and hundreds of miles between us effectively isolate women's groups in the north of Australia. We are cut off from each other, from church work in the southern cities and from progressive thinking elsewhere. Consequently when Dorothy Wacker and Phyllis Abbott came to Darwin in January, it was like a shot in the arm for us. They were interested in the way we tackle our isolation problems and asked for a few lines on a recent activity.

At the invitation of the European women's staff in five Aboriginal towns along the top of Arnhem Land, Rhonda Hendry and I (both from Darwin) flew to each centre. The theme of our discussions was the breaking down of walls that mar relationships in small communities. We tried to communicate to the women a vision of where they fit into the family of church women throughout the world. We were delighted to find that in most centres, Aboriginal women came along too, and made their own special contribution. At Goulburn Island, the Aboriginal women had an animated discussion in their own language, and came up with a list of suggestions to help the wives of emerging Aboriginal ministers and leaders to grow in faith and responsibility alongside their husbands.

The whole tour, financed by the women themselves (on missionary pay!) seemed to meet many needs, and the cry was "More, more, more!".

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ANGLICAN UNITY AND THE UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA

This is the title of the newly released report of the Anglican Missionary and Ecumenical Council. In a special release from A.C.C. Jean Skuse reviews the report. We cannot reproduce the whole review here, but we commend it to you and reproduce three significant paragraphs:

"The Anglican Church in Australia has a historical interest in Christian unity. Each of the Primates who has held office since 1962, has included significant passages relating to Christian unity in Presidential addresses. Each has seen the unity of the Church of Christ as having a spiritual basis and disunity as an act of disobedience to God's will for his people. This pilgrimage towards Christian Unity becomes more urgent in the race of worldly divisions and the global search for the unity of all humankind."

"One question remains for all of us. How can the deep concern for the unity expressed by our leaders become a vital reality at the local level? Many believe that ecumenism must begin at the local level. Certainly this is important. But often the efforts here are for expedient reasons and not necessarily in obedience to the Christian gospel. This gap between leaders and the local level needs to be closed, else the difficulties and frustrations of each level will discourage the necessary perseverance".

"The final reminder of the report leaves any reader with the issues clearly before him or her: 'the gospel concerns the whole person, the whole of human society and the whole of creation, and that the Church has a double calling to be the Church in the world, to serve the Kingdom of God in the world, and at the same time to be separate, distinct from the world. Anglican and other Christians need more than anything else to learn what it means to confess Jesus Christ as Lord in our Australian environment. We will learn this together or not at all'."

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NEWS ITEMS

In a Christmas greeting card received by the Working Committee from Korea, one of the signatures was that of Oo-Chung Lee. We had heard that Oo-Chung Lee had been imprisoned again, and so we were delighted to hear from her, for we gathered from this that she was at least out of prison.

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We learn that the New South Wales Women's Inter-Church Council has changed its name to Australian Church Women. We expect that the committee will be just as active and efficient as A.C.W. as it has been as W.I.C.

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Will you please note the name and address of the new President of South Australian A.C.W.:

Mrs Alder Hall,
30 Lawson Avenue,
Morphettville, 5043. Phone: 295,6303.

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Secretary Working Committee

Miss Vera Dean,
33 Booker Street,
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