

AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN

WOMEN AT WORK



SEEKS:

- 1) To unite Australian women in their allegiance to their Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ;
- 2) To help Christian women to take a more effective place in the total life & mission of the Church.

JUNE, 1978

My personal greetings to you all at this time are contained in a quotation from Thomas a Kempis who wrote, "My Lord what is my confidence which I have in this life? or what is the greatest comfort I can derive from anything under heaven? Is it not Thou, O, Lord, whose mercies are without number?"

Many of us have shared in the joy of our having our Sisters from the Asian Church Women's Conference Executive visiting with us after their Conference in Adelaide. They were all very dear and lovely people, but, as Convenor for the Fellowship of the Least Coin, it was my special joy to have Shanti Solomon in my home again after a lapse of six years. So I felt, who better to give you a greeting at this time than Shanti! She writes: Greetings to you, dear Sisters in Christ and the members of the Fellowship of the Least Coin, through which we, the members of the Asian Church Women's Conference seek the fellowship of Christian women around the world. Together in this fellowship of Prayer, we learn to love and have a concern for God's people throughout the world.

Through God's grace I have had this second opportunity of

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visiting your country and renewing friendships. You Australian women have been wonderful in extending your hospitality. Thank you.

The 25th anniversary of the FLC will be celebrated in 1980 in all member countries and our task will be to interpret the meaning and significance of this movement of Prayer to the younger folk. May God bless each one of you and make you instruments of Peace." Shanti

Finally: "I could not make it today,
upon my own;
For obstacles along life's way
Would get me down alone;
For God is with me and
The two of us combined
Can make it today
and all the tomorrows
He may have in mind."

author unknown.
Marjorie Stanhope
Cenvenor of FLC

Report from the Victorian State Unit of A.C.W.

In April I was one of the representatives of A.C.W. at the Women's Rally of the Salvation Army entitled "Celebration of Faith Congress". It really was just that, a joyous and inspiring occasion. The guest speaker was the wife of the Army's World Leader, Mrs. General Brown who is World President, Women's Organisations.

The meeting was well under way when it was suddenly interrupted by a ghost! Who was this woman, dressed in bonnet and dress of a hundred years ago, jumping up and demanding to be heard? Yes, it was "Mrs. Catherine Booth". She told us that we lived in a privileged time compared with her day, when women did not have the same chances as we did to speak in public. She exhorted us to make the most of it and do our best for God's Kingdom in our own day as we had so many more opportunities to serve than the women of her generation.

This "act" was much appreciated by all present.

The heart of the message expressed in the final hymn is the same universal evangel for all ages - "JESUS CHRIST LIVES TODAY."

"Trade Unions and Women" chosen for Study Programme.

In line with our study for the year, we invited a leading unionist, Mr. John McMahon, to give us background information on unions. He traced the rise of unionism in Australia from the beginnings with the first British and Irish settlers. At first, they were really 'craft societies' concerned only with their own conditions and offering some support to members in difficulties. Later, unions as we know them, emerged and two elements came into existence which we see today.

- 1) The Government saw the need for a body to deal with industrial disputes so the Arbitration system was founded;
- 2) Unionists saw the advantage of having legislative power so this led to the formation of the Labour Party.

Today unions concern themselves with affairs beyond their own local conditions, and use their power in all kinds of public issues such as "green bans" and other national issues. Opinion is divided in the community as to whether unions should do this. It is a 'thinking point' for consideration.

Mary Hutchinson

C.W.F. Concert Helps Children.

Every year Victoria-Tasmania Women's Fellowship helps a "March Effort" and has supported many good works with finance and promotion.

This year on March 15, the "Effort" took the form of a celebrity concert at the Melbourne Town Hall.

The top flight artists: Suzanne Steele, State and concert musical star; Kel McMillan, saxophonist; Philip Gould from Young Talent Time; Martin Fields, pianist from Channel 9 and the Kelmier Orchestra - all gave their services free. During the evening Freda Morris, C.W.F. President, presented a cheque for \$3,228. to Ron Brooker of Save the Children Fund.

"The Australian Christian"

FORTY YEARS OF UNITED SERVICE.

The Annual Service of Thanksgiving and Dedication for the NSW State Unit of A.C.W was held on May 29th at Our Lady of Dolours Church, Chatswood. It was also the occasion of the installation of their new President, Mrs. Marie McCann. Mrs. McCann is the first member of the Roman Catholic Church to be appointed to this position. She is one of eight Roman Catholic women who were appointed four years ago as the first representatives of their Church to the A.C.W (then the Women's Inter-Church Council).

It is customary for the retiring President to hand on to the incoming President, the President's Bible as a symbol of acceptance of the responsibility of office. In relinquishing the office, Mrs. Lt.Col. Edna Baker said, "I pass on this Bible, not because the task is done, or even my part in it complete, but because it is an ongoing task which another, in turn, takes up."

In her address, Mrs. McCann said, "It is with joy that I have accepted the position of President of Australian Church Women (NSW State Unit). It is because our Saviour, Jesus Christ taught us to love one another that our organisation is in existence. This year, A.C.W reached its fortieth year of service and has been working continually to promote fellowship and co-operation between women of all branches of the Christian Church. Paul said, "Love never gives up; its faith, hope and patience never fail." We, the followers of Christ, persevere in our ACW activities. We endeavour particularly to display love which, as St. Paul says, "is not jealous, is not ill-mannered or selfish, does not record wrongs and is not happy with evil." By practising our faith this way and coming together on occasions such as this, surely the world can see that Christians of different denominations do care about each other and can worship God together."

The Service, attended by about 300 women of all denominations, was one of inspiration and challenge and not the least contribution to the worshipful atmosphere was the singing of the choir of the Lane-Cove-Longueville Women's Inter-Church Fellowship.

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Perhaps a fitting summary to this report would be the words of the final Hymn sung by the choir: "Filled with the Spirits power, with one accord the infant church confessed its Risen Lord: O Holy Spirit, in the Church today no less your power of fellowship display."

Evelyn Ridley
Publicity Officer
(NSW State Unit)

THEOLOGICAL CONSULTATION.

Extracts from report from Mrs. Fran Bailey, Vice President, Executive of A.C.W.C.

This consultation held in Adelaide in April was valuable in reminding us as individuals that we are not searching and ministering alone, but that we are part of a lay and ordained sisterhood seeking to find forms of ministry that are valid at this time. We reaffirm the value and dignity of the ministries of women and men together.

It was agreed that an Interim Association of Theologically Trained Women be formed for support and consultation. It was envisaged that this association would be a "FLEXIBLE, LOOSELY ORGANISED AD HOC SPIRIT MOVEMENT". - a network of people across Australia concerned for each other and for the Church of Jesus Christ at a very particular time in the Church's history.

A contact person was appointed in each State, and each one was encouraged to take whatever State-based action is felt to be necessary or helpful.

Rev. Dorothy Wacker (South Australia) agreed to be the Co-Ordinating Person with the Asian Church Women's Conference through Fran Bailey and other members of the Executive.

Possible Action.

- a) the appointment of a person full-time for a short time - to gather information, do research, establish relationships.
- b) The establishment of a Women's Desk/Human Rights Desk in association with The Australian Council of Churches.

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- c) the seeking out of funds to enable the above e.g. an application to the Fellowship of the Least Coin.

Future Meetings/Consultations/Gatherings.

It was noted that a group of women ministers in Victoria had invited Letty Russell (U.S.A) to come to Melbourne in 1979, and it was agreed that all States be kept informed of the plans for this visit and of the possibilities for Interstate visits. (Coralie Ling - Contact Person).

It was also noted that the Tasmanian Council of Churches had arranged a visit by Henri Nouwen for February, 1979.

A further ^{consultation} gathering of members of the Interim Association to be considered as the year 'unfolds'.

It is with deep appreciation that we record our indebtedness to The Asian Church Women's Conference for initiating this 1978 series of meetings and we affirm that this is BUT THE BEGINNING of a new chapter in the Christian story!

Deaconess Andrews in Zambia.

The opportunity to be connected with women from all across the world, who are deeply committed to the World Day of Prayer brought great joy and blessing.

To arrive in an African country surrounded by problems within and without, where life is becoming more and more uncertain for the ordinary person, but where the Christian witness shines forth as a beacon. Never shall the delegates forget the loving hospitality enjoyed in Zambia.

The loving concern when my handbag, overnight bag and especially all my documents were stolen about 5.20 a.m one morning. What sacrifice and love went into the gift that was the equivalent of a cook's wages for five months, which the President of the Zambian Women's World Day of Prayer gave me.

Mr. and Mrs. Martin Kaunda, the President of the Zambian Christian Council gave a moving message at the opening

Service in Holy Cross Cathedral in Lusaka in which he said that the one act that binds us together is prayer, our open acknowledgment of the Greatness of God to whom we seek to be united and our appeal to God for peace among ourselves, not in future, but now. Prayer is dynamic.

Eighty women from 40 different countries shared their experiences and insights which were challenging as delegates saw the way in which God's Spirit is working in different parts of the world, especially in African countries where the Christians are growing in greater rate than that of the population. From all accounts, the Women's World Day of Prayer is becoming a movement that is uniting Christians more than any other ecumenical movement.

In Zambia, I met three of the leaders of Church Women United. In the USA The Women's World Day of Prayer is an integral part of Church Women United and the Administrative Secretary of the Women's World Day of Prayer, Miss Dorothy Wagner is supported by and is, on the staff of Church Women United.

Miss Wagner with the help of Mrs. Joyce Tembo of the Zambian Christian Council did a wonderful job in organising the International meeting under very difficult economic and political situations.

Mrs. Mary Louise Rowand, the President of Church Women United gave the address at the closing Service at Mindola Ecumenical Institute which was based on the 1979 World Day Prayer Service. Students from the Institute were responsible for preparing the Service on "Spiritual Growth".

Mrs. Martha Edens, the Secretary of Church Women United I got to know as we were in the same Bible Study Group and we also travelled together from Kitwe to Lusaka on the same bus, and were able to discuss the work of Church Women United, and Australian Church Women.

The opportunity to be with women from all across the world who are deeply committed to the World Day of Prayer brought great joy and blessing.

Life in the twentieth century is like a parachute jump: you have to get it right the first time.

Margaret Mead

FROM THE SECRETARY'S DESK

Members of the National Working Committee find their monthly meeting both interesting and challenging as they become acquainted with the many facets of their task.-and they sometimes wonder where they will find time to do the things which must be accomplished before the next meeting day!

Our June meeting proved the busiest we have had.- and the longest, and I think readers may like to hear of some of the matters dealt with that day.

First we had before us the Report of the Theological Consultation, sponsored by Asian Church Women's Conference and held in Adelaide in April. Some news of this will be found elsewhere in this issue; we hope that Churchwomen throughout Australia will hear much more of it and of the plans which the participants have drawn up for the future.

Then we took the first step towards planning for the next National Committee Meeting, realising with something of a shock that we are approaching the 'half-way mark' of our term in office. We hope that the N.C.M. will take place from 10-13th September 1979; the venue will be the Caritas Christi Conference Centre at Wahroonga, with excellent facilities for such a meeting and set in delightful surroundings. We hope to include a Consultation with fellow Churchwomen from North America and New Zealand and if they find it possible to visit us at the time. The Consultation sessions would dovetail with the closing part of the N.C.M and continue over the following day, 14th September.

Since our financial year will close June 30th, several important decisions had to be made as to the disposition of funds. We were delighted to find that a sum in excess of \$8,000. is available to send to the Fellowship of the Least Coin Committee and well over \$2,000. will be passed on to the Australian Council of Churches for the World Community Day project 1977 - Rehabilitation of families of leprosy patients at Lucknow, India.

We also considered the applications for the Winifred Kiek Scholarship awards for 1979, and applications for grants from the Fellowship of the Least Coin, 1979. News about our decisions must wait until next month. Meanwhile, we send our warm greetings to you all.

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