

Minutes of the Meeting of the NSW Women's Inter-Church Council held at Pitt St. Congregational Church, Monday, 21st February, 1977 at 10.30 a.m.

PRESENT: Mrs. (Lt.Col) Baker in the Chair and thirty-three members and visitors as listed in the Attendance Register.

APOLOGIES: Miss D. Mitchell, Sister Ursula Freney, Mesdames Jessup, Udy, Badger, Nixon, Griffiths, Mrs. (Major) Hill, and Mrs. (Lt.Col) Petersen.

In the absence of the Secretary, Miss Mitchell, the minutes of the meeting were taken by Mrs. Joan Curtin.

OPENING OF MEETING: The President opened the meeting with a Devotion based on the reading from the Gospel of St. John (11.18) and drew out the implications of the words quoted therein 'Just now'.

A welcome was extended to Mrs. Leah Pickering who was deputising for Dame Monica Gallagher.

MINUTES. It was moved by Mrs. Stanhope that ^(the recommendation) the decision of the Executive ~~that~~ the Minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 20th September, 1976 be accepted as read. This was carried unanimously.

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS: Mrs. Baker announced that since the last meeting, Mrs. Pack, a member of the Salvation Army group represented on the Council, had died at a Salvation Army camp. Prayer was offered for the peace and comfort of her family.

Several members of the Executive and Council had been at a farewell arranged at the Manse in Roseville by Mrs. Helen Thorburn to farewell Mrs. Nancy Pfeiffer, a past President of the Council, who was leaving Sydney to make her home in Melbourne to be near her family, due to the recent death of her husband, the former Minister of St. David's, Lindfield.

FINANCIAL REPORT. The Treasurer, Mrs. Perriam, presented her report and stated that the books would close on 28th February, 1977. The adoption of the Report was sought. This was seconded by Brig. Smith, and carried.

CONVENORS' REPORTS: Mrs. Stanhope, as Convenor of the F.L.C. reported that books had closed for the year and money paid to the Treasurer. This was not only a fellowship where money was collected, it was very much a fellowship of people, and with people. Contact was maintained on a very personal level.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: The next meeting was announced for 21st March, 1977, when resolutions as circulated will be presented for adoption.

Nominations were invited for office bearers for the forth coming year; the Annual Meeting was announced to take place on 18th April, 1977.

GENERAL BUSINESS: ^{Rev.} Mr. Olsen, Pastor of the Pitt Street Congregational Church, came to the meeting to state that the City Ministers' Fraternal had been alerted of the pressing need for blood donors by the Blood Bank. Members were urged to volunteer and to ring the Blood Bank to verify eligibility.

Mrs. Perriam demonstrated a stole crocheted by Deaconess Andrews, who was prepared to take orders, wool being supplied, and the amount of \$5.00 for each stole would benefit the Travel Fund. This met with a good response.

Mrs. Dorothy Woodhouse from the Chatswood-Willoughby Inter-Church Fellowship announced that tapes were available of Canon Arrowsmith's address given at the Day of Renewal at Lavender Bay, in November, 1976. Also of the afternoon panel discussion. Each tape \$2.00

Mrs. Tytherleigh brought to the attention of the Council the appointment of Mrs. Lilian Wells as Moderator-Designate of the Uniting Church and Mrs. Baker was able to announce that a letter of congratulation had been sent by the Secretary, Miss Mitchell to Mrs. Wells and assuring her of the good wishes and prayers of Council members. As a member of the group representing the Congregational Church, Mrs. Wells had been a valued member of the Council for many years.

Brig. Smith, as a representative from the Council to the Committee for the Women's World Day of Prayer urged support for the forthcoming Service being held in St. Andrew's Cathedral at 12 o'clock on 4th March, 1977 to be followed later by a Service of Witness in Sydney Square. She asked as many as possible to make an effort to come after attending their own Service in their centres if at all possible. It being the Jubilee year of the inauguration of this Service, it was hoped to make the occasion a memorable one.

All business having been dealt with at this point, the President, Mrs. Baker welcomed the speaker, Deaconess Andrews, and asked her to address members about her recent visit to Asian countries.

Miss Andrews, beautifully and skilfully draped in a pure Indian silk sari spoke to Council members among a selection of arts and crafts obtained from the countries visited. She commenced with a prayer of gratitude for the privilege of meeting so many wonderful people and being enriched and inspired by the Christian faith, love and fellowship she had encountered. There were three purposes for the six weeks tour. As Chairman of the Regional Conference of the World Federation of Deaconesses, she wished to check on preparations for the forthcoming Conference being held in Manila in 1979; to be a representative on behalf of the National Council of Women at the International Council of Women Regional Conference in Delhi, and to join Sisters of the Church of South India in celebrating their Silver Jubilee at Bangalore.

What was most evident in the many incidents she recounted was the transformation the presence of Christ works in human personality and in human society. In personal relationships and on the social level, the vitality and dynamism of response to, and witness of, the gospel message invariably had far reaching effects. Kalpana Airan was discovering at the school she established in Satara that the method she was pioneering in integrating mother and child, rich woman and poor woman for education towards assuming a more meaningful role as women was having a far reaching influence which could gradually infiltrate into all parts of India.

Miss Andrews met Mrs. Indira Gandhi in Delhi and was charmed to find her gentle, lovable, feminine and most practical. It was her wish that Indian women would not imitate Western feminists and strive to be partners with men and not in competition, not to struggle for equality but to learn to complement each other. India was a country of 600 million people and her problems were immense. Miss Andrews had been in India in 1945-46 and had visited again in 1959. On her recent visit, she was amazed at the progress made in slum clearance and a real transformation had taken place. The people were living in much better conditions, martial law had given security and provided stability. Efforts were being made to educate women, raise their consciousness as women so that they might exercise their rights and assume their responsibilities.

In a world of physical hunger, there was also a great spiritual hunger. Those alive with the gospel message were doing all they could to distribute tracts, bear witness, show forth Christ in their living. Hand in hand with these endeavours were the skills they sought to bring to these people, well digging for irrigation, crops for food and hand crafts for a sense of achievement and creativity. This was a talk given by a woman who saw in others persons of value, persons worthy of love and respect - across the barriers of race, colour and creed, communication was established, human personality revealed itself and the openness thus effected resulted in shared experiences, and the discovery of the Spirit working in many different people in many different ways. All this was conveyed to us as Miss Andrews spoke of her tour. It was a veritable kaleidoscope of challenge and hope, a message so urgently needed in what is today a world dominated by fear.

On behalf of the Council members, Mrs. Curtin tendered a vote of thanks to Miss Andrews for such a wonderful address and expressed gratitude for the care and preparation she had taken

in presenting it. The meeting closed with prayer by Major Venables at 12.20 p.m.

Sydney.

Elena B. Baker.....President.
21.2.77