

**** INFORMATION PAGE ****

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NEWSETTE

AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN -- NSW UNIT

A C W seeks:

- ⇒ to unite Australian churchwomen in their allegiance to their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;
- ⇒ to provide opportunities for Christian women of different denominations to worship, study and serve together.

Mission Statement

Australian Church Women believe that there is one God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit; one God, Three-In-One. We believe that Scripture teaches that salvation is only through faith in the atoning death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God's only Son.

PRESIDENT: Mrs Carmel Keys Tel: 9977 5156

NUMBER 113

NOVEMBER 2007

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends,

When you are reading this message we will have celebrated World Community Day and the ACWC Sunday Afternoon Concert at Hurstville.

World Community Day Service for 2007 was prepared by the NSW Unit and the theme "Enough For Each Day" continued the thoughts of the last two years on Matthew 6:11 "Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread."

The 2006 Theme "Sharing The Loaf" was constantly enhanced during the National Conference in September, and at each Devotion, morning and evening, there were so many refreshing thoughts that gave us a new spirit, new vision and new hope for the future. The Conference was a very happy gathering and a time to meet up with friends from previous conferences. We congratulate Elaine Johnson and her team from the Victorian Unit and extend our best wishes to the incoming team from the ACT Unit for 2008/9.

A special thank you to all who prayed for baby Cooper, the grandchild of

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Jennifer Pepper, our President-Elect - he is now well and back home with his parents - thank God.

As we are nearing the end of 2007, may I acknowledge your friendship and support. I have enjoyed and appreciated sharing your company, our common tasks and activities in our endeavours for the Lord. Thank you for your love and prayers while I was "out of action."

Jesus tells us to have faith in the power of God. Faith is a way of living. With just a little faith we can accomplish great things. Our ministry will yield fruit, but only if we place ourselves in God's hands.

God bless you and keep you and your families in the palm of his hand and grant you peace and great joy in the Christmas season.

Carmel Keys

ASIAN CHURCH WOMEN'S CONFERENCE:

As this Newsette goes to press, we are looking forward to the Sunday Afternoon Concert at Hurstville Salvation Army on October 21, which celebrates our affiliation with the other 17 countries of ACWC.

This is always a delightful occasion, with choirs and musicians from several Asian congregations around Sydney, and great fellowship as we join with them and so many friends over afternoon tea.

We do thank all who share their time and talents to make this "Pleasant Sunday Afternoon" possible, the Salvation Army at Hurstville for the use of their venue, and our own Council members who provided the "eats."

LOOKING FORWARD.....

2008 will mark the 70th Anniversary of Australian Church Woman, and the plan is to celebrate this at the Installation Service for *Jennifer Pepper*, who has been nominated as our next State President by the Baptist Church.

This will be at Eastwood Baptist Church on Monday May 19, 2008, and our ACW branches will be asked to bring their banners, so be sure to mark the date in your next year's diary now.

ACW NATIONAL CONFERENCE:

From all points of Australia on a bright chilly Monday morning of September 24, the delegates for the 21st National Conference set out with one aim in view - arrive safely and well in Geelong. Some had started

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from home a day or so before to arrive on time and others met at the airports so that they could journey together for this bi-annual event. The NSW Unit was represented by 19 members.

It was a joy to see two guests from The Northern Territory, *Mrs Clara Inkamala* and *Mrs Norah Hudson*. *Major Kaye Viney* had represented the Northern Territory Unit at the 2005 Conference in Sydney and it was lovely to have these extra ladies come from there after many years of absence.

This Conference was organised by the National Executive based in Victoria, who have been our capable Executive for the last two years since taking over from NSW. The NSW Unit ladies present who had been part of the previous National Executive were very happy to be able to sit and enjoy the company of everyone without the stress of making sure everything was planned and in place.

In a beautiful rural setting, the Geelong Conference Centre, run by The Salvation Army, became our home for 5 days. Although slightly chilly outside, a lovely warm welcome was ours when we all finally arrived and settled in and our first night time activity set the theme for our conference, "Sharing the Loaf."

Early in the Conference we were privileged to remember those of our members who have gone to their eternal reward since last conference including some from NSW Unit: *Olga Badger*, *Rosalyn Bemrose*, *Olive Beverley*, *Heather Stevens*, *Jean Todd* and *Marjory Verco*.

Dr Merryl Blair opened the Scriptures to us on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday and *Dr Jill Tabert* was our guest speaker at the Ecumenical Service on Tuesday afternoon, held at the Conference Centre.

Tuesday evening we were privileged to listen as *Shu-Wen*, International Secretary of Asian Church Women's Conference, spoke to us of some of the work that she does on behalf of ACWC.

Wednesday arrived cool and wet but after lunch we climbed on to the buses and had a scenic tour along the Ocean Road and a quick cup of coffee in Queenscliffe. This looked to be a lovely, quaint village and I would like some day to have the opportunity to visit it again to appreciate all that it has to offer.

Edith Ridge, a Life Member of the NSW Unit since 1999 was elected by this Unit to be made a National Life Member and I am sure that all of us wholeheartedly agreed with this nomination. Edith has spent many years attending, promoting and generally living out her Christian faith as a member of our Unit and we all say congratulations on this well-earned

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award. Since 1985 Edith has been the National Archivist and in this role has kept the records of ACW Australia up-to-date and it is only in years to come that the real value of this responsibility will be recognised.

A number of ladies were nominated for entry into the Honouring Church Women Book, including a number from NSW Unit.

Reports from all the Units, National Denominational Representatives and Special Interest Groups were duly received and tabled and the business of the conference ran smoothly throughout the 5 days.

Thursday night Conference Dinner was enjoyed by all and included the Induction of the new ACT National Executive for 2008/2009.

Friday after finishing off the last the of business and the Closing Ceremony, we took our leave of this beautiful setting and agreed that this Conference had been well run, and enjoyed by all.

We congratulate *Major Elaine Johnson* and the Victorian Unit for their hosting of the National Executive for 2005-2007 and realise that it has not been an easy time for them with sickness and family health problems and the sad loss of *Margaret Watson AM* who passed away early in their term in office. Margaret had taken on the role of National Treasurer but *Iris Bray* capably picked up the reins for the remaining time. As the ACT Unit enter into their term of office as National Executive I am sure that all of us will continue to uphold them in prayer as they endeavour by God's grace and power to lead us on the for next two years.

Nancy McLaren, Publicity Convener

SPECIAL DAYS:

After the August Council Meeting, the parcels for the Orders of Service for the World Community Day 2007 were prepared and posted.

The Service for this day was arranged by the NSW Unit, the theme being "*Enough for Each Day.*" This is the last service to be held under the overall theme of *Sharing the Loaf* which was arranged by the National Executive from Victoria.

At the recent National Conference, at which the new National Executive from ACT was welcomed, the over-riding theme for the Special Days for 2008/09 will be *Faith in the Future*. Thank you for your ongoing prayerful support.

Pamela Freeman, Special Days Convener

FELLOWSHIP OF THE LEAST COIN:

A blessed and happy Christmas to all our readers and to all those who have been so generous with Fellowship of the Least Coin offerings. Thank you for your continued support and prayers for this simple movement. May God continue to bless the Fellowship of the Least Coin and challenge us to strengthen our faith in the power of prayer, and keep on doing whatever we can for healing, justice and peace in our world.

I would like to detail one of the Grants given to a project in Australia which I mentioned briefly in the last Newsette.

The project: *Rainbows* from the Launceston City Mission, in Tasmania. The aim of the project: To assist children in expressing their feelings, working through grief, and discovering coping tools following a death in the family or significant loss.

Children are profoundly affected by family changes, example: separation, divorce or death of a family member or pet. The reaction to loss is as great as that experienced by adults, yet children often do not have the vocabulary needed to express themselves.

Rainbows gives such children a place, space and opportunity to explore and express their feelings, work through their grief, develop some coping tools and begin the healing process in a safe and confidential environment.

The program is conducted in schools by trained facilitators and consists of 12 weekly sessions. The Mission has been offering the service locally since 1994. One of the responses recorded from a child was "I like talking about my fears. It helped me remember all the special things about my Dad".

There was a very positive feedback from the parents and carers of the children when a major catastrophe had happened in their child's life.

I am sure you find this of interest. Thank you for your continued support.

Janet Lang, FLC Convener

WINIFRED KIEK SCHOLARSHIP:

With the recent National Conference just held, came the new National WKS Convener in Canberra, *Mrs Constance Aronson*. I had an introductory letter from her and we have also had a nice talk on the phone. She would appreciate our prayers, as will all the new Executive settling into their new roles.

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Constance gave me news of the death of the husband of *Lalomilo Lima*, who was the WK Scholar in 1972. Lalomilo, now in Brisbane, is a minister at Inala Uniting Church.

Thanks have been given to outgoing National WKS Convener, *Una Birchnell*, who will continue on as Victoria Unit WKS Convener. She had sent me reports from our 2007 Scholars, *Cathy Paraka* (PNG) and *Leinamau* (Vanuatu).

Leinamau found the counselling course helpful, but very challenging. While on Field Placement at Springwood Uniting Church, she had some very positive introductions e.g. CWC Regional Committee - translated some KYB studies, attended their Retreat; time with Fusion Youth Ministry, and more involvement with Scripture Union. Before going back to Vanuatu for a week recently, she was taken to Canberra for the Floriade with some of her many "new friends." The College took her and fellow students to the city, Zoo etc. - getting lost and times all wrong was all "so funny!" In her emails we have seen her confidence blossom and her 'ozzie' sense of humour grow. Now it's back for last term at College - Peace Building Course - then late November, Empowering Women in Ministry. December 15 will be her commissioning, then on 16th she will return home. She will be at the ACWC Sunday Afternoon Concert on October 21 at Hurstville and will give a short talk. Thank you for your prayers and encouragement for me this year in my connections with Leinamau - God has been faithful in his provision.

Cathy Paraka (PNG) has been at the Asia Pacific Theological Seminary in the Philippines and she has expressed appreciation for her Scholarship. Her courses included Perspectives in World Mission, Research and English. Her desire is to see her church involved in world mission as Christ commissioned us (*Matthew 18:19-20*). Her Islam Studies have been beneficial, as Islam is new in PNG, with a mosque recently built in the capital city. She says no one has a vision to reach that religion, when in fact they share the border with the second largest Muslim nation in the world, Indonesia. She now feels more equipped to approach Muslims and in discipling converts. Cathy's outside class experiences involved Prison Ministry visiting and school canteen rosters. In the beginning there was a bit of a mix-up in what she was to study but she is thankful to God that he knew what she and her church needed and he sorted it out - the ministry to Muslims and to women and she has had opportunities already, particularly a big women's gathering. We thank God for allowing us to partner in all this.

2008 Scholar - more details to come, but her name is *Imelda Aquino* from The Philippines, who will be a candidate for a Masters of Divinity

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(Missions) at the Asia Pacific Theological Seminary, where Cathy Paraka has been this year. After the training with the Scholarship, she hopes to work in Dubai with Muslim women, where she has been doing field work. Please pray for a smooth path as she looks forward to this time of study and equipping.

Praise be to God for these opportunities he gives us to share. Christmas cards will be sent off to those we are still in contact with.

Judith Cayzer, WKS Convener

SOCIAL ISSUES:

Slavery thrives in Australia 200 years after the abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade Act. This abolition was achieved by William Wilberforce over a period of 20 years of effort. The United Nations has characterised human trafficking as the third most lucrative trans-national crime after drugs and arms struggling. Australia is not immune to the problems of trafficking and slavery according to *Jennifer Burn*, Director of the Anti-Slavery Project and Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Law at the University of Technology, Sydney.

In the late 1990's our Australian Government began developing a domestic response to trafficking and slavery primarily in the sex industry. In 1999 and 2005 the Australian Government updated its criminal code to include criminal statutes that address the trafficking and enslavement of people. Funding has been allocated to implement the National Action Plan to eradicate Trafficking in Persons. A small amount of that funding has been allocated to support services for victims in Australia.

Only 2 traffickers have been convicted; fewer than 100 victims have been identified, mainly in the sex industry; only 2 victims have received trafficking witness protection visas within a period of 3 years.

The Anti-Slavery project was established in 2005 and is at the forefront of promoting a human rights response to human trafficking and slavery in Australia through law reform and policy advocacy, research, community education, training, collaboration with government and non-government agencies and victim assistance. Information from the experience of victims helps the Anti-Slavery Project determine effective action.

Trafficked and enslaved persons are men, women and children working in a variety of sectors: sex work, agriculture, construction, domestic work, restaurants, health care and other industries. Most often they are from vulnerable communities where opportunities for work or education are

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lacking and they are deceived into accepting offers of good jobs in another place. Upon arrival at their destination the nature and conditions of what they were promised disappear, passports are taken and threats (often against family members at home) or actual violence are used to make them comply with traffickers/employers' wishes. Many are also placed into a system of spiralling debt for the cost of their transportation. This debt usually increases over time so victims are unable to pay it off.

A locally produced movie (filmed in Melbourne) called "The Jammed" tells the story of five women imported into Australia and forced to work as prostitutes. It portrays dramatically the physical and psychological conditions these women endure. The movie also shows the efforts of an insurance clerk who is at first reluctant to help but grows in compassion for one of the women with whom she unwittingly becomes involved when picking up somebody at the airport. She faces great danger and difficulties in her efforts to help the woman. This movie should be available on DVD in 2008.

As followers of Jesus who said that he came to "proclaim liberty to the captives" this issue of human trafficking must challenge us.

(Information from the Anti-Slavery Project release).

Sister Joan Bird fmm, Social Issues Convener

NSW ECUMENICAL COUNCIL:

I was disappointed to not be able to attend the NSW Ecumenical Council half-yearly gathering scheduled for October 26-27 in Canberra.

On Friday 26th there was a day seminar examining women's empowerment and transformation through action. The keynote speaker was *Donna Mulhearn*. In the evening there was an informal dinner.

On Saturday 27th, the gathering was held at the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture with the theme "Called to be One Church." During this time the following questions were raised for consideration:

*Where are we headed as Christians today?

*What are the common challenges we face?

*How can we move forward together with a common voice?

Called To Be One Church is the agreed text of the churches which emerged from the World Council of Churches Assembly in Porto Alegre in Brazil in February 2006.

In the face of doubts about the future of the ecumenical movement, caused

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by global political and religious developments, post-modern thinking on the value of plurality and difference and by the slow emergence of ecumenical agreements, *Called To Be One Church* is a sign of hope and of renewed ecumenical commitment.

Watch future issues of Newsette for information about plans to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity; next year's Pacific peacemaking focus in the Decade to Overcome Violence; and the ecumenical involvement in World Youth Day and other events. Thank you for your prayerful support.

Pamela Freeman, ACW Representative to NSW Ecumenical Council

PAN PACIFIC & S.E.ASIA WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION:

At the Winter Luncheon the speaker was *Monica Duckworth JP* of the NSW Women Justices' Association which was formed in 1923 following the passing of the Women's Legal Status Act of 1918. A publicly accessible register of Justices of the Peace is available on the Internet.

From its beginnings the Association undertook many reforms, some of which were:

* Improve educational standards; photographs of accused persons; pension rights for widows of railway workmen; death duties paid by widows; pensions for carers; concept of 6 women and 6 men to constitute a jury; the Family Law Act; hygienic wrapping of food etc.

Today, the aims continue along similar lines. Some of them are:

* To promote and maintain the Status of NSW Women Justices of the Peace; to secure amendments to the law to widen the powers of Women Justices and improve the legal status of women and children; to co-operate with other associations in order to promote the aims of the association; to initiate legislation or secure changes in the practice of the law in the interest of the general community; to promote the education of members by lectures and correspondence with Women Justices of other Australian States; to promote and support acceptable standards in family life.

At another recent meeting, the President, *Mrs Joan Egan* interviewed *Mrs Pamela Baxter*, an educationalist who trained in NSW and taught in NSW, the ACT and the N.T.

In 1997 she was approached to assist in a project "A Decade Of Lessons Learned" to provide programs for Peace Education in School in developing countries. She told us about projects started in 1997 in Kenya.

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By 1999 the project had spread to all East Africa countries. Then it started in West Africa countries and finally in Asia.

Each program is developed for the particular school – some children have parental support, others no support at all and it is necessary to teach ethics and morals. Most programs cover 36 hours over 2 weeks, but community and scholars have participated with enthusiasm. Special teachers' seminars have been held and proved very acceptable.

It was sobering to learn that in many of the countries of Africa where these schools are being started, there has been war and horrific things done. In places like Rwanda where there is "blood on everyone's hands" and Sierra Leone where children were kidnapped to become child soldiers, drugged, abused and sent back to their own villages to kill their own people – a way of ensuring blinding loyalty by these children – the programs are working, often with refugees and nationals of the country working in the team. It can be very dangerous work, but in spite of the difficulties, the members of the team keep before them these tenets of *Dignity – Respect – Inclusion*. "As human beings we are more similar than we are different."

Edith Ridge, ACW Representative to PPSEAWA

NUNGALINYA COLLEGE, DARWIN:

There has been a great deal in the media recently about the Federal Governments actions concerning aboriginal communities, violence and child abuse, so information from Nungalinga's recent Newsletter is very relevant.

Sister Mary Slattery, the Acting Principal, writes:

"There has been much publicity in the national press about the great need outlined in the "Little Children Are Sacred" Report. Nungalinga's students nominated to contribute to that enquiry and are concerned that their recommendations have not been embraced. Some of our programs about what we have been doing to address these needs are on our website under What's On at www.nungalinga.edu.au

*One of our School of Family & Community Services projects is the **Parenting Support Program**, which has been in place since 2006, and directly addresses the issues in the report. The **Creating Indigenous Futures** program is also reaching out and re-engaging young people into education and employment, while the School of FACS delivers literacy to students from remote communities. These very practical programs are underpinned by some recent research on **Breaking the Cycle**, which talks about changing parenting skills and gaining education instead of spending huge health budgets to change outcomes for indigenous Australians."*

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CAMP WerX - Previously CAMP BREAKAWAY:

ACW NSW last Easter sponsored a child to go to this Camp, run by Prison Fellowship for children who have a parent in prison, so readers will be interested to know there are bigger days ahead.

Tim and Louise Phillips have been leading the camp since its inception. They say they have spent time with some of the 'naughtiest' kids around. They've had to do more disciplining than an average parent would do in two lifetimes, and have had to sacrifice money, time and energy for the privilege. But far from packing their bags and taking an early retirement, they are actually planning to up the ante!

Louise says "The best experiences have been watching young lives change. Knowing that what we're doing is capturing them and their hearts has been the highlight." Conversations between leaders and kids – campers approaching leaders to talk or pray – kids being happy to 'open up' – are just some of the ways she has seen the camp succeed.

The existing camp runs for primary and junior high school children at Mangrove Mountain, but Tim and Louise are in the process of expanding it dramatically. One of their major goals is for kids who leave the camp displaying a Christian commitment to be trained, with the intention they be brought back to camp after their 18th birthday, believing a Christian leader sharing a similar background to the kids would be a great asset on camp – they would know the troubles many of the kids face and be able to sympathise on a far deeper level.

Tim and Louise also hope to have a shorter weekend camp up and running shortly – **eXcape WerX** – a reunion weekend for kids who have graduated from one of the last three camps – it will allow camp friends to reconnect with each other and their leaders, while giving Tim and Louise a platform to speak to kids they deem potential leaders. This reunion camp will take place in a house with about 10 or 12 campers. "We will target those who are nagging us to death to come, and a few others in whom we've seen potential leadership." A separate reunion was held in October for kids from this year's Camp WerX – a ferry ride and day out with at Manly.

As well as all this Tim and Louise have other plans – to run bootcamps throughout the year, a family day out – and eventually to own a campsite where they can run more camps of this nature. On top of this they intend to start a number of camps across NSW, to make a real impact in breaking the cycle of crime.

(From Prison Fellowship Newsletter 'Unbound')

(Tim Phillips is the nephew of Newsette Editor – he and Louise would value your prayers for them and their team in all of these hopes and plans)