

Newsletter

NEW SOUTH WALES WOMEN'S INTER-CHURCH COUNCIL (State Unit of Australian Church Women)

No. 6

May, 1969

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BRANCHES' DAY 1969

What an inspiring start to our year! If only we could capture the spirit of unity at that meeting, send samples far and wide and store some for use when we feel that we are not being as effective as we should be.

Our President, Mrs. Joyce Gilbert, chaired an abbreviated ordinary Council meeting and then handed over to the Convener of the Promotion Committee, Mrs. Marjory Verco, who outlined the purpose of Branches' Day. She explained that we would not go over the history and relationships of the N.S.W. Women's Inter-Church Council as we did last year, because these are available in our little brochure. Instead we would concentrate on our local Branches or Fellowships where the real work is being done.

Mrs. N. W. Lickiss, the foundation President of the Lane Cove/Longueville Women's Inter-Church Fellowship, had cut short her holidays to enable her to accept our invitation to address our meeting. In introducing her, Mrs. Verco asked Mrs. Lickiss to tell of the beginnings of this Branch and the steps taken to establish it.

Speaking first about the world-wide interest in Christian Unity and the working together, at all levels, of folk from the different denominations, Mrs. Lickiss said that it seemed the natural thing to do, when the lady who had arranged the Women's World Day of Prayer services in the area moved away and it was necessary to find somebody else, to suggest that the task be

undertaken by a small committee of representatives from the Churches concerned.

This was arranged and as the committee met, the desire for working together increased. It was decided to ask each Church in the area to appoint two representatives to meet immediately after the World Day of Prayer service in 1968 to discuss the possibility of forming a Fellowship. There was a full response. The idea was warmly supported, the Fellowship was formed and officebearers were appointed.

The first task given to the executive was the drawing up of a constitution - to express in words something of the sentiment of the present; to determine details of representation, financial arrangements, etc. to ensure smooth running and avoid misunderstandings; and to set guide-lines for those who will follow in the future.

The Constitution which was subsequently adopted, has the same aim as Australian Church Women (our national body) and it sets out its relationship with the N.S.W. Women's Inter-Church Council and the N.S.W. Women's World Day of Prayer Committee. (Copies are available from Mrs. A.G. Ralph, 22 Skenes Ave. Eastwood 2122, 85 6507, for the guidance of similar groups.)

It was decided to observe Fellowship Day in July. The Church of Christ ladies, who are experienced in organising discussion groups, made the necessary arrangements so well that the details have been recorded for future use. (Copies are also available from Mrs. Ralph.) All the Churches played their part in publicity, etc. and 150 women gathered to share a wonderful day and were inspired by the lively discussion. Many were asking when the next such meeting would be held and some were disappointed that it had been previously decided to hasten slowly and hold only the one big day for the first year.

In October, at a less formal gathering, the Secretary, Mrs. Lean, spoke about her trip to England to attend the Mothers' Union meetings held in conjunction with the Lambeth Conference. Mrs. Lickiss incorporated parts of the World Community Day order of service in the programme and introduced the Fellowship of the Least Coin to those not already participating.

Requests that the Fellowship organise Bible study groups, etc.

were not taken up. Instead individuals were encouraged to do whatever they were able to foster the fellowship and co-operation. House groups have been popular and they have wonderfully nurtured the spirit of unity in the Fellowship.

Several members of the Lane Cove/Longueville W.I.C. Fellowship were present at Branches' Day and Mrs. Lickiss asked two of them to support her remarks. Mrs. McAlister, who acted as Secretary during Mrs. Lean's absence overseas, read some extracts from her Annual Report. These summarised and confirmed all that Mrs. Lickiss had told us.

Then Mrs. Joan Curtin told how she and some other women from her Church (Roman Catholic) had been moved by their attendance at a previous World Day of Prayer service. They longed for further such contact and it was a foregone conclusion for them to accept the invitation to the inaugural meeting. Mrs. Curtin, who regularly opens her home and arranges for speakers to address her neighbours and friends, spoke from her heart and touched the hearts of all who heard her. She spoke of Christians as a family - a separated family with inherited attitudes and prejudices and the joy of a family re-united, quoting Peter "hold fast to your love of one another."

Two of the questions raised by Branches were:

"How can we increase attendances at Special Days?" and

"How can we persuade women's groups with busy programmes to fit in yet another activity - i/church work and Special Days?"

In the discussion, the following points were made. Enthusiastic members can do more by personal contact than any other form of publicity, although all means available should be used to prepare the way and support the personal approach. It may be possible for a women's group to forgo their own monthly meeting or function to attend, en masse, a Special Day. If your group is "too busy", perhaps they should evaluate their various activities. Maybe it is for you to point the way and suggest they sacrifice something of their own - change the function instead of adding another date.

It was good to meet and mix with the folk from Local Branches and all present were most grateful to Mrs. Lickiss and the others for the inspiration and challenge they left with us.

OUR PRESIDENTS

On Friday, 23rd May 1969, our retiring President, Mrs. Joyce Gilbert (Baptist) will install our new President, Head Deaconess Mary Andrews (Anglican) at the Annual Rally to be held at St. Phillip's, Church Hill (York & Jamison Sts. Sydney) at 10.30 am. Please come - all are welcome. We are also pleased to report that the Churches of Christ have nominated Mrs. Stanhope to be our President for 1970/71.

SPECIAL DAYS

You are reminded of the dates & themes for this year's S.D.s:-

Fellowship Day Fri. 25/7/69 "Who is My Neighbour?"
World Community Day Fri. 24/10/69 "Let There Be Bread"

Do try to arrange an observance in your district (on another date if the set one is inconvenient). If there is no Local Branch and you are unable to get the other Churches to share in the organisation, how about making the arrangements for your own group and invite the folk from the other Churches to attend? Write now for your order-of-service sheets to: Mrs. F.I. Down, 177 Copeland Rd. Beecroft 2119. Send no money with your order, the costs (2c per sheet) are deducted by our State Treasurer from the offerings received. Fellowship Day material is ready now.

We would be glad to know now your requirements for W. Community Day. It is important that our estimate of our requirements is neither too low nor too high but we can only make a wild, hopeful guess if you don't let us know early.

"WYBALENA"

The Council has the responsibility of deciding how the \$30,000 "Wybalena" proceeds shall be applied and it is expected that the decision will be made at the meeting on 27th June, 1969. The two projects being considered are the John Dunmore Lang Presbyterian Women's College to be built at Macquarie University and a proposed new Hostel of the Y.W.C.A.