

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.

SEPTEMBER, 1973

A greeting from the President:

'Put your hand into the hand of God' ...

And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year, 'Give me light that I may tread safely into the unknown'. and he replied, 'Put your hand into the hand of God, and that shall be better than light and safer than a known way'. Familiar words indeed.

A very new President, but just one of a team who would now be responsible for, and to, Australian Church Women for these next two years, I was winging my way home to the reality of this responsibility. So many decisions would be ours in this time, so much would need to be done to implement the directions of the Perth meeting. I guess one would be less than human not to have doubts or feelings of trepidation. Did I not trust God who created all things, and Who loves me?

Surely the commanding (or pleading) theme of the N.C.W. "BREAK DOWN THE WALLS" had been a revelation! So many walls between us in this world of personal and human origin! Discovery that non-action condones the erection of personal, political, racial and religious walls. For me to do nothing compounded the plight of the poor, the lonely, the refugee, the victims of violence.

Give Him your hand, give Him your heart and He will indeed enable you to break down the walls, not just now, but forever. May the love and peace of God bind us to Him and each other.

Win Dougherty.

A greeting from the Editor:

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In undertaking the editing of "Women at Work", I hope to justify the confidence that has been placed in me and maintain the interest and diversity which have distinguished it as each editor has added her special talent.

At the N.C.W. in Perth, discussion revealed a desire to have "Women at Work" become more varied and representative of all State Units, this to be achieved by each Unit contributing items of interest, anything they have done which proved to be original and beneficial and might be adopted or adapted by other Units; and the results of any studies undertaken might be briefly outlined and sent in. It was felt that it might be put to better use by a wider circulation, especially to local fellowships and then to women in church groups; perhaps a copy might be sent to a parish magazine and a selected article used.

In Perth, it was a delight to watch the warm greetings between those attending another National Committee Meeting, and the first encounter between others quickly blossom into deep relationships.

And now, as I take up my task, I put my trust in Him who has never failed me, but turn to Him 'who by the power at work within us is able to do far more abundantly than all we ask or think', and who now I hope, will bless the efforts and encourage with success the willingness with which I take up this task.

Joan Curtin.

NATIONAL COMMITTEE MEETING PERTH

About seventy women from all over Australia attended the biennial National Committee Meeting of Australian Church Women, held in Perth from 27th to 29th July, 1977. The opening Worship Service was prepared by the National President of A.C.W., Rev. Dorothy Wacker of Adelaide, on the theme "BREAK DOWN THE WALLS", and this concept was developed and expanded through all the policy making groups, daily Bible Studies, and by the panels of speakers at evening sessions. The necessity to look through the walls and find the neighbour was exemplified in the address given by Mrs. Maisie McKenzie from the Northern Territory. Taking the miracle of Jesus curing the leper, the ostracism, abandonment and rejection suffered were seen as walls which cut this poor man off from any relationship with his fellow-men, any entering into community with them. But Jesus' love broke through the walls and restored him to health, new life and liberation. Having breached the walls, the responsibility now was to share the

faith we professed by examining WHAT we shared, HOW we shared and WHETHER we shared. The final effort was to JUMP over the walls, and having dispelled separation and alienation, to fulfil their destiny as Christians, to RENEW THE EARTH and promote peace, reconciliation and brotherhood.

Two interesting observers at the Conference were Mrs. Rathie Selvaratnam of Sri Lanka, now living in Rockhampton, where her husband works in the Anglican diocese, and Sister Elizabeth Paul, ordained minister from the Church of South India who had come to Australia for the inauguration of the Uniting Church. At the Ecumenical Service which took place in St. Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne on Sunday, 26th June to celebrate this event, Sister Paul delivered the sermon. Opportunity was taken to invite her Perth where she spoke of the position of Christians who numbered 2½% of India's population of eight hundred million and of the steps taken to achieve unity.

At the final ceremony on Friday, the retiring Working Committee handed over responsibility to the new Working Committee which now comes to Sydney. Seven members of the new Working Committee were present, and the closing address was given by the new National President, Mrs. Win Dougherty, who said the planning had ended and implementation must follow. Theirs now the responsibility of bringing to fruition the resolutions passed, and give reality to the new directions proposed, thereby ensuring the realisation of the aims for which Australian Church Women was founded, unity among Christian women of all denominations 'to worship, study and serve together across all boundaries', and so enter into the freedom of the sons of God.

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The final Bible Study given at the National Committee Meeting in Perth on Friday morning made a deep impression, and many enquiries were received for a copy.

The study was given by the Rev. S. McCollum who based it on Chapter 17 of St. John's gospel, where Christ speaks intimately to his Apostles; Mr. McCollum chose four points for emphasis - the holiness, unity and mission required of his followers and finally, the Church's triumph. Copies are now available and are being sent to all State Units for copying and distribution.

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WINIFRED KIEK SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS.

At the National Committee Meeting, two women were chosen to receive these Scholarships.

The first scholar, Miss Tapati Das, is a 27-year old Christian woman from Bangladesh, the daughter of a Baptist Minister. This scholarship will enable Tapati to have a 4-months observation tour of some Y.W.C.A. handicrafts projects. The 'Y' hopes to arrange an itinerary and study programme for one month each in the Philippines, Taipei, Hong Kong and India.

The second scholar chosen is Sister Barkat Dass of Karachi, who is an active member of the Church of Pakistan, a recent union of Anglican, Scottish, Presbyterian, Methodist and Lutheran Churches. Sister Dass, aged 35, is Principal of the Nursing School at the Holy Family Hospital. In Australia, she looks forward to gaining further training and experience in midwifery, as well as a course in Bible/Theological training.

These two women are considered worthy scholarship holders, and we wish them well as they train to equip themselves to better serve their own peoples.

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Items of interest from the Northern Territory.

A 'Boutique' established by the Uniting Church has gradually fulfilled a need and become a place of meeting and encounter where advice is sought and women come for counselling and encouragement, to discuss problems, sometimes just to think aloud and be able to clarify their own thoughts with a sympathetic listener.

This same church group is sponsoring a scholar through an Agricultural College in Indonesia at the small cost of \$60.00 a year.

This sparked off the idea that perhaps if the needs of the unsuccessful Winifred Kiek scholars were made known, something similar might be undertaken by other church groups. It is all important in ecumenical activity to have a common task, where results can be achieved together and satisfaction gained from a mutual objective.

When it is realised that there are forty-seven ethnic groups in Darwin, and Australians are in the minority,

one begins to realise the vast opportunities there are for activities that will ensure harmony and co-operation among such a wide variety of people. It was noted that church groups are the most advanced in their organisation of resources after the disastrous cyclone.

A major obstacle in bringing people together for conferences is the vast distances that divide the centres and the expense of travel to Darwin.

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THE ASIAN SCENE.

Mrs. Fran Bailey spoke to the National Committee Meeting on the last afternoon and expressed appreciation that the Perth Working Committee had been such an effective channel for the news from Asia and hoped that the Executive of the Asian Christian Women's Conference would be invited to Australia at some future date for their meeting.

During her recent visit to Burma, she had been deeply moved by her experiences of the suffering and hope which distinguish the Christian presence in Asia. She described it as a "seed of hope in the sea of suffering". The shortages of food and many of the basic necessities of life were causes of great hardship for the people. The black market flourishes in medicine, yet the hospitals are empty because there are no drugs. There is an urgent need for powdered milk because the children are sick. Paper is in drastic short supply. The people can tell you what their needs are, but it is so hard to meet them. How can we be that 'seed of hope in the sea of suffering'? We could send greetings to the Burma Women's Fellowship and express our love and give assurance of prayers. Such support would give encouragement and help to dispel their isolation. We could pray that in the design of God, their material needs would be met and they would be enriched by spiritual blessings.

The quadrennial meeting of Asian Christian Women's Conference will take place in October, 1978, in Tokyo.

There will be an Executive meeting in September, 1977.

The Asian Scene (cont.)

The Christian Conference of Asia, Sixth Assembly, held in Penang in June, 1977, focussed on the theme, "Jesus Christ in Asian Suffering and Hope". Concern for Human Rights, the place of women in the church and the need for greater participation of people in decisions affecting their lives, were the major issues that emerged. Not unexpectedly, the testimonies of the women given at the Assembly were pictures of struggle and triumph, suffering and hope,

Bangladesh: From among 'the most unfortunate women in the world' Joysree Baroi related the experiences of being a girl-child there. For the vast majority who are illiterate, women have a devastating 'place' - walking behind the husband, taking meals after him and being known as her child's mother, not by her own name. The 1971 war of independence had forced women out to seek jobs. While change is taking place slowly, women's organisations were doing little to mobilise public opinion against discriminating laws, to ban polygamy, and to protect women from abuse by their husbands.

Japan: Sekiya Ayako told of her bitterness about the responsibility she felt in World War II. She has worked through her bitterness, and believes she has social responsibilities from God. Foremost among these is her decision to take a stand against nuclear proliferation. It was deeply important for people outside Japan to understand the reality of the nuclear threat.

Indonesia: Henrietta Katoppo, a writer on the problems faced by women in Asia, is presently completing a thesis on the position of women in Indonesia. On family life, she said mobility had changed the pattern of life but the basic attitudes had not altered. All over the world, there is a growing awareness that women's liberation is human liberation in so far as it is concerned with the liberation of all people to become full participants in human society.

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BOOK REVIEW.

"Women: Faith and Fêtes." Edited by Sabine Willis.

This is a collection of essays in the history of women and the Church in Australia. It shows how a number of extraordinary women answered the challenges of their own and times. Ten writers look into the past to present historical insights and personal experiences which will help Australians understand our culture and ourselves.

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What is the relationship between faith and fates, between lamington drives and inspiration? How have Australian women fulfilled and transcended the limited role allowed them by church and society? H/Deaconess Mary Andrews, life member of Australian Church Women, is included and this gives added interest for us. Available from all booksellers and the Australian Council of Churches.

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PERSONAL PARS.

At the NSW Local Government Conference held in Port Macquarie in August, 1977 Dame Monica Gallagher, President of the Catholic Women's League, was the first woman to give an address to such a gathering. Her subject was "Women in the Community". Dame Monica was honoured in the 1976 Queen's Birthday Honours for her outstanding work for women.

Mrs. M. Jacobs, wife of the Aboriginal Pastor with the Aboriginal Evangelical Fellowship, spoke at the National Committee Meeting of the activities and enthusiasm of the members at camps held from time to time when attendance would be about one thousand. It is good to hear what the encounter with Christ can accomplish in the lives of young aborigines, when we are constantly told of all that is adverse in their behaviour.

In one of the Policy Making Groups, Mrs. Maisie McKenzie revealed that she had written on "Women in Isolation" which had appeared only once in a magazine, but had needed months of careful research. Many thoughtful articles are written and addresses given which reach only one audience. And what of the theses written by women engaged in university courses? These would all be invaluable if given a wider circulation and members of state units, local fellowships and women's groups would be greatly enriched. Encouragement should be given to have these efforts published and distributed.

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WORKING COMMITTEE PERSONNEL.

PRESIDENT: Mrs. R. B. Dougherty.
VICE-PRESIDENTS: Head Deaconess Mary Andrews
 Mrs. J. West.
HON. SECRETARY: Miss Doris Mitchell.
HON. TREASURER: Brigadier Gwen Cork.
COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Mrs. P. Davis (Winifred Kiek Scholarship)
 Mrs. R. Stanhope (Fellowship of the Least Coin)
 Mrs. B. Stevens (Special Days)
 Mrs. E. Curtin ("Women at Work")
 Mrs. (Lt.Col) E.K. Baker (Liaison, NSW Unit)
CO-OPTED MEMBERS: Mrs. D. G. Badger.
 Mrs. A. G. Ralph (Asst. Secretary)

From the Secretary's Desk

I take this opportunity to send warm greetings to colleagues in the State Units and to all those associated with us in the work of A.C.W.

We members of the new Working Committee, just embarking on our assignment, are most appreciative of the kindness shown us by A.C.C in not only arranging for us to meet in their Board Room but in placing at our disposal a small office on the lower ground floor of their building. Our official address for mail will be :-

AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN,
 P.O. Box C-199,
 CLARENCE STREET. NSW. 2000

Please address correspondence to the appropriate office-bearer or convenor at the above address.

Secretaries of State Units will find enclosed with their copies of Minutes this month two documents :-

- 1) A copy of the Bible Study presented at the N.C.M. by the Rev. Sam McCollum which you will be able to share with your members;
- 2) Information regarding the study themes in the "Areas of Concern" discussed at the N.C.M. (see Minutes p.5). Please advise if possible, by November, as to which section your Unit hopes to concentrate on. Suggestions are given regarding resource material; if you can add to these, please let me know, so that others may benefit by your experience and research.

Doris M. Mitchell.
 Hon. Secretary. (Tel. (02) 328.7119)