

AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN

Minutes of the Interim Committee for Australian Church Women
held in the Australian Council of Churches Meeting Room on
June 5, 1963 at 10am.

OPENING: Opening prayers were led by Deaconess Andrews.

PRESENT: Mrs M. Wyllie (chairman), Deaconess Andrews, Mrs. F. McKay, Mrs. J.F. Dey, Mrs. Doratis, Mrs. Lilley, the Revs. B. H. Parker and H.L. Perkins. *Mr McPhee*

APOLOGIES: Mrs. S. M. Barrett and Mrs. L. M. Williams.

CORRESPONDENCE: Mrs. J. Coates - "The Methodist Women's Federation warmly supports the idea of cooperation with Australian Church Women, endorses its general aims and looks forward to hearing further details."

From Mrs P. Firth (Congregational Women's Fellowship of N.S.W.) indicating that A.C.W. had been thoroughly discussed at a Council meeting, and had been generally approved. The name Australian Christ-ian Women was suggested.

REPORTS:

(1) STUDY MATERIAL. Mrs Wyllie reported that the final draft was now being written by Mrs. McCaughey and should be available by mid-June.

(2) Report of sub-committee on ways and means of establishing local groups:

- (a) Through ministers' fraternals
- (b) Through ministers' wives
- (c) Through Methodist ministers' wives
- (d) Investigate ACC mailing list
- (e) Promote cooperation with men in study and service projects.

Considerable discussion followed. The Rev. H. Perkins pointed out that ministers' fraternals did not exist in all country towns or areas. He did not consider it advisable to make the initial approach through any one denomination. This project could be considered as belonging to the Department of Promotion of the ACC.

It was resolved that Deaconess Andrews and Mrs. Lilley consult with the Rev. Harcourt Norton to seek his cooperation. It was reported that he is compiling a map with places pin-pointed where the ACC has established an inter-church council or has good contacts. These places could be used in pilot scheme to establish local groups of Australian Church Women.

(e). The Rev. B.H. Parker commented on (e) above and reminded the group that women's groups do not usually have much success in promoting a combined study or service project. It was agreed that it should be the aim of every combined women's group to foster the formation of a local inter-church group including men and women; this group could more easily promote study and service projects.

(3) Community Day.

Mrs. Lilley reported that she had received material from United Church Women of America suitable for use on Community Day. Permission had been granted by U.C.W. to use this. Mrs Verco was to be the speaker in Sydney. The arrangements' committee would meet again on June 5, 2pm.

It was suggested that a poster be circulated advertising Community Day.

(4) Plans for July 10. Meeting.

It was reported that Mrs. McKay would chair the morning meeting and Mrs. McPhee the afternoon meeting. Speakers were still

required for the session "Ecumenical Cooperation among women in local areas". It was resolved to review the invitation list and if possible to make additions. Six members of the Sydney YWCA were to be included in the list as hostesses for the meeting. Following a discussion on the possibility of inviting representatives from Wollongong, Newcastle, Canberra, Gosford, etc., it was resolved to limit the July 10 meeting to 60 women and to investigate the possibility of organizing similar meetings in country areas at a future date.

It was also reported that Mrs. Briggs, Mrs. Maynard Davies and Rev. L. Livingstone had agreed to speak at the July 10 meeting.

(5) INTER STATE VISITS BY MRS. WYLLIE. Presented by Mrs. Wyllie:

i. Australian Methodist Women's Federation on May 22 at business session at Kent Town Hall, Adelaide. I was given two opportunities to speak and take part in discussion. Mrs. Barrett of the Interim Committee was also there. Many questions were asked, many of them centred on the advisability of another women's group. The Federation passed a Resolution approving the formation of Australian Church Women.

ii. United Church Women's Association of Adelaide on May 23. I attended a lunch hour meeting to which Mrs. Barrett, Mrs. J. Coates, Mrs. Thornley of New Zealand and Mrs. Wyllie were invited to meet the executive of the UCWA. There were about 12 women present, Mrs. Cox chaired the meeting. Baptist, Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational women were represented. Mrs. Kiek was present, and Mrs. Ida Hayman, Federal President of the Congregational Women's Fellowship. There were many questions asked. In Adelaide there is a very happy inter-denominational fellowship among the women of the UCWA and some members of the group felt there would be little value in linking with ACW. The two Methodist representatives again stated their reluctance to join another women's group. There is little women's inter-church activity in outer suburban areas or in country areas or if there is it is not linked with the UCWA. There was a lively discussion on the name ACW. Some members of the group would prefer a name that omitted and reference to the word "woman".

iii. Women's Inter-Church Council of Victoria on May 28.

This was a meeting of the Executive of the WICC called for the purpose of discussing ACW. There were 10 people present including representatives of the Congregational, Presbyterian, Salvation Army, Baptist, Methodist and Anglican churches. Included in this number were Mrs. T. Coates and Miss Barker. 1 3/4 hours were spent in conference.

Explanations were given:

- (a) on the reasons why ACW was initiated in Sydney
- (b) that the cooperation of existing inter-church groups including the V. WICC was being sought.
- (c) that there was no intention of domination by an unrepresentative group in Sydney
- (d) that a constitution was not to be drawn up hastily
- (e) that ACW would be the link with the Department of Cooperation of Men and Women in Church, Family and Society of the WCC.
- (f) that the formation of local groups as has been done in many parts of Victoria was most important
- (g) that the inclusion of Orthodox groups was important
- (h) that the problem of finance was yet to be solved
- (i) that the appointment of a committee in Victoria for the preparation of study material was an appointment of specialists rather than representatives of denominations

(j) that criticism, discussion and suggestions are eagerly wanted.

(k) that the women of the Baptist Church would be warmly welcomed

Suggestion that in the near future representatives of WICC's meet with the Interim Committee was made at the end of the meeting.

REPORTS (continued)

iv. A meeting with Mrs. Christie Johnston, President of the Presbyterian Women's Association of Australia with Mrs. McKay and Mrs. Wyllie on May 29.

It was a very happy conversation. Mrs. Johnston is interested and anxious to cooperate. Tasmania would like a visit in the future. Mrs. McKay would be available for such a visit in March 1964.

v. Telephone conversation with Mrs. M. Read, Queensland WICC Council. She was concerned about finance, since the WICC in Queensland is financed by the churches directly. They would be glad to have a speaker in July. Mrs. McKay would be in Brisbane during July.

OTHER REPORTS:

Mrs. McPhee reported that Australian Church Women was discussed at the Federal Conference of the YWCA held recently in Canberra. The Federal YWCA is sympathetic and anxious to be kept informed of all that is being done by Australian Church Women.

MEMBERSHIP: The General Secretary, the Rev. H.L. Perkins, pointed out that the membership of ACW is governed by the basis of membership of the ACC: "is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit."

RELATIONSHIPS: The question of the following relationships was discussed at length and it was resolved that Mrs. Wyllie, Mrs. Lilley and the Rev. H.L. Perkins investigate, prepare a statement and report to the next meeting.

- . relationship of State Women's Inter-Church Councils and Australian Church Women
- . relationship between State WICC and local inter-church groups in the state
- . relationship between the WICC and State Councils/Committees of the ACC (including keeping in touch with the State Secretaries of the ACC).
- . relationship between Women's World Day of Prayer committees and Australian Church Women.
- . relationship between State and Federal denominational groups and Australian Church Women.

Further resolved that minutes covering the discussion in addition to resolution should be circulated to committee members, and that a statement in shortened form should be circulated to interested individuals and groups throughout Australia as an information sheet.

CLOSING: The meeting closed with prayer.

CONFIRMED: Mabel Wyllie

DATE: 3/7/63