

## NATIONAL EXECUTIVE - 1997-1999

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**AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMAN**

**ACW NEWS**

*We aim to promote co-operation and understanding between men and women in church, family and society.*

PO Box 113 Arana Hills QLD 4054

January / February 1998

### **National President's letter:**

Dear Members,

New Year Greetings!

Have you got used to writing 1998 yet?

I have ambivalent feelings at this time of the year. Whilst I look forward to the year ahead, I still cling a little to the year past. I love the Christmas season.

I love the feeling of expectation that commences with the reading of Luke 2...'In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree...' the secrecy in buying gifts; the decorating of the Christmas tree; the smell of mince pies and the Christmas cake cooking; the sending and receiving of Christmas cards. I love the hot days, the blue skies and the balmy nights we experience close to Moreton Bay and the brilliance of the red poincianna trees in full bloom against the blue sky - the family get-to-gethers and the special church services and the wide-eyed delight of the young children and the singing of carols. It all gives me an immense feeling of joy and thankfulness for the God Who so long ago planned the event which we celebrate.

This year was even more special for me in light of the health problems of the year past. They are now behind me. I'm sure my husband made a special effort to see that this Christmas was a special one.

Now we have a brand new year facing us. We don't know what is in store for us - that's probably just as well.

Because we believe that God walks beside us and hears our prayers, we can welcome 1998 and be ready to face its challenges and receive the blessings it brings.

We must live one day at a time - even though some days are hard and the road may be uphill and rough. We can keep going and have confidence in the One in Whom we have placed our trust.

Oswald Chambers wrote, 'Remember that wherever you are, you were put there by God. By the reaction of your life to the circumstances about you, you will fulfil God's purpose as long as you keep in the light as God is in the light.' - A good thought for a New Year's resolution.

As a national group we pray for wisdom and understanding for our leaders as they deal with matters affecting the country - Wik, the Constitutional Convention, unemployment, racial intolerance, the economic difficulties being experienced to our north, and the myriad problems which shall raise their heads as the year progresses.

As representatives of thousands of Christian women throughout Australia we must give the lead and show that through prayer and quiet encouragement much can be achieved to bring about goodwill and a bond of harmony between those whose attitudes and points of view cause discord to the detriment of all. The influence of Christian women can never be underestimated.

To those who have suffered in the recent bushfires, we extend not only practical help, but prayers for both them and their families and friends as they face an uncertain future.

We are presently concerned for Ailsa Skippen, Convenor, W.K.S., who is facing possible surgery on 13 January. She has not been well since National Conference in September. Please pray for her and others who at this time may need God's special touch. Thank you too, for the Christmas greetings sent to me personally and to the National Executive and members of the Queensland Unit. We do appreciate your thoughts and support in this great work for our Lord.

May the sentiments of the 'Irish Blessing' be yours throughout this year

May the road rise to meet you,  
May the wind be always at your back,  
May the sun shine warm on your face  
And the rain fall soft upon your head.  
And until we meet again,  
May God hold you in the palm of His hand.

**\*\*Faith is the daring of the soul to go farther than it can see.\*\***



W.N. Clarke

Aileen Mortensen

**Update** Ailsa is home results are better than expected. An answer to prayer. ...ED

## LIFE MEMBERS

At the Conference in Canberra three ladies were honoured with Life Membership. They were Mrs. Shirley Brooks (Tas.); Mrs. Ailsa Skippen (Qld.); and Mrs. Vera Wilson (WA.). These ladies join Marjorie Verco (NSW.), Ruth Burmester (ACT), Dorothy Wright (SA), Olive Ackland (Vic.).

## PAST PRESIDENTS

Another feature of Conference was the presence of four P. Presidents - Rev. Lee Edwards (87-89) W.A.; Mrs. Marie McCann (89-91) N.S.W.; Mrs. Shirley Brooks (91-93) Tas.; Mrs. Eunice Reidy (93-95) Vic.

## ASIAN CHURCH WOMENS CONFERENCE

The New South Wales Unit of Australian Church Women held the annual service for the Asian Church Women's Conference on Monday 17th November, 1997 in the Lakemba Uniting Church. The service was prepared according to the suggested theme, using material presented by the women of the Philippines -

### GOD CALLS THE CHURCH TO BE BEARERS OF HOPE.

The service was conducted in English, whilst the hymns and scriptures were sung and read in Korean, Chinese, and Vietnamese. Participation by men and women of these nationalities added colour and contrast to the service. The guest preacher, Rev. John Ting, of Crown Street Presbyterian Church gave a challenging and inspiring message. He said that people should be able to look to the church and expect to receive care and compassion. His relating of real life encounters with the drug addict, the prisoner, the leper, the people on the margins, and their response to the gospel, touched the hearts of everyone present. He said that all people have dignity and worth before God, and it is the Christian's duty to love and to care for those without hope. Hope allows the human soul to experience freedom and to know that in our increasingly hard world the church has active compassion and is an instrument of hope for the hopeless. He challenged all present to give integrity and credibility to the message of the church by 'practicing what we preach.' The quote was made - 'When all has been said and done, there is usually more said than done!'

Musical contributions to the service were presented by a group of singers of the Women's Place Choir from the Lakemba Uniting Church. Their presentation was somehow enhanced by the fact that they were dressed in traditional Korean costume, so not only their music but also their appearance added to the service.

Over a hundred people attended the service and afterwards enjoyed a fellowship lunch. This was also the final council meeting for 1997 for the NSW Unit, and gave the opportunity to bring to a conclusion a great year of activity and blessing. This day also brought to a conclusion the sale of calendars, the money raised from

these sales being for the annual pledge of \$500 to the Asian Church Women's Conference Endowment Fund.

## W.K.S. NEWS

Christmas Greetings were sent to fifteen W.K.S. Scholars. Greetings have been received from Rev. Mary Au, Hong Kong; Nighat Gulzar and husband Asif, Pakistan; and Rachel Sobana, India, with the news that she is on three months Maternity leave from the Nagercoil Hospital, as she had a baby daughter (Name not known) on the 24th October, 1997. Lieut. Joanne Harries is now well enough to continue her studies in 1998, and we praise the Lord for her improved health.

**Ailsa Skippen. National Convenor**

## CONGRATULATIONS

I am sure we all join in congratulating Major Joan Tong on her appointment as President of NSW Ecumenical Council. Joan has been involved in ecumenical affairs since her appointment to Australian Church Women as a Salvation Army Representative eight years ago. She has represented the council as an observer to what was then the Australian Council of Churches, and for the past three years as a Salvation Army representative to the Ecumenical Council as a vice-president of this council during 1996/97. It is a great privilege to serve in this capacity and Joan will bring the interests of both her denomination and Australian Church Women. Other new Office Bearers appointed were: Vice Presidents Mandy Tibbey & Bishop Peter Ingham, Treasurer Major David Tong (Joan's husband) and representatives of member churches.

*"Not only in your Going..*

*but also in your Being.. preach the Gospel"*

## Australian Capital Territory Unit

Greetings and good wishes to all ACW members throughout Australia!

Last Unit Meeting for 1997 on 28 November was well attended, and was followed by an informal "BYO" luncheon.

Members adopted the recommendation of the Unit Executive that:- "beginning with the Annual General Meeting on Friday 27 February 1998, General meetings will be held on the fourth Friday in every second month."

Highlight of the meeting was the interesting talk given by Ann Downing (Canberra and Goulburn Diocesan President) on the history and activities of Mothers Union, with special reference to the Diocese.

Members of the 1995 - 1997 ACW National Executive gathered at the home of Evonne Sullivan on 15 December for a most enjoyable "wind up" luncheon. They took the opportunity to read the many complimentary cards and letters received since the National Conference.

We hope that 1998 may bring increased Ecumenical activity in all ACW Units, and be a fruitful year for National Executive.

Betty Farrell (President)

*Thank You, Father, for redeeming me  
Through the gift of Your Precious Son.  
Thank You, Father, for loving me,  
And the New Life that I've begun.*

© Diane Farrell

## SOUTH AUSTRALIAN UNIT, AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN

### SA Executive Members 1998

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