

* * INFORMATION PAGE * *

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NEWSETTE

AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN -- NSW UNIT

ACW 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 Janet Harrison Tel: 9744.8626

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

My Dear Friends,

At the forthcoming ACW National Conference to be held in September in Adelaide, a Seminar is being planned on the subject 'The Future of Australian Church Women.' State and Territory Units have been asked to prepare and submit a paper for discussion during the Conference.

For the NSW paper we have included responses from the recent questionnaire which council members were invited to complete. Also, as we looked back over more than 60 years, we are aware that many changes have taken place in our world, particularly concerning younger women. There are more demands and pressures, resulting in less time for the ever-increasing outside work and home activities calling on their time and talents.

Things do change over the years - but have they? Recently I was invited to a kitchen tea - can't recall the last time I went to one, so long ago. To

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my surprise and delight, nothing had changed! We ate well, deliciously well, talked a lot and laughed. The games we played were so familiar. It was an enjoyable afternoon with mothers and daughters, young friends and 'oldies' like me doing the same old things together and enjoying it. I do hope though that the bride, Louise, wears a traditional wedding gown and not the newspaper one we all had a part in making for her to wear!

While some things do change, others remain unchanged. Malachi 3:6 tells us "I the Lord do not change....." In a changing world....."we have put our hope in the living God....." (1 Timothy 4:10) - an unchanging and unchangeable God. We though, may need at times to be prepared for change, or be willing to consider it, and obedient when we know we should. I close with the words of the Serenity Prayer - still available in Christian bookshops: "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference."

With my love, Jan Harrison

ANNUAL SERVICE of DEDICATION & COMMITMENT:

On 21st May, a perfect autumn day, 100 members and friends of Australian Church Women gathered at the beautiful St Thomas' Anglican Church, Enfield, for the Annual Service of Dedication and Commitment. Prior to leading the Service, our gracious President, Jan Harrison, welcomed the guest speaker, our year 2000 Winifred Kiek Scholar, Sue Nitrai, along with special guests and St Thomas' organist Adrian Jackson. Special thanks were extended to the Rector, Rev Trevor Goodman-Jones and the parish council for the use of the church and hall.

Bright singing of hymns and the Unit's theme song 'In Christ We Are One' added to the joyful worship and the soulful nature of the music chosen by Adrian for his organ recital brought us all a wonderful feeling of peace. Thoughtful prayers and well-chosen passages from Scripture created within us strong feelings of praise and thanksgiving to Almighty God as we were reminded of the loving sacrifice Jesus made for us. President-elect, Jean Porteous and some Council members participated in the Service and as the President introduced the Executive she presented badges to new Secretary, Isabel Hewitt and new Membership Convener, Daphne Peterson.

Edith Ridge, retiring WKS Convener conducted a penetrating interview with Sue Nitrai, giving us splendid insight into Sue's study and work in Canberra, at St Mark's Theological College and at St Andrew's Presbyterian Church. Sue later addressed the gathering, giving a thought-

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provoking and challenging message.

At the conclusion of the Service, floral presentations were made to retiring Executive members, Edith Ridge (WKS) and Heather Reid (Social Issues) who have been very faithful and competent in their service for the Lord within the NSW Unit and we are grateful for their contribution and friendship.

A happy time of fellowship was enjoyed over luncheon, when old friendships were revived and new ones formed.

Peg Blake, Publicity Convener

SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT DAY:

The 50 members and friends who gathered on July 15 for this day shared and enjoyed a truly blessed day of reflection and enrichment.

The theme for the morning sessions, led by *Sister Colleen O'Sullivan* was "Images of God." Playing the song "Music of the Night", Colleen said that images, or symbols, all say something to us - about life, about God. The symbol that means most to us is the image of God that we carry in our heart. There are many "images" of God - Shepherd, Water, Rock, Consuming Fire, Father - these help us, but they are not God - he cannot be confined - our images of God are like "lenses" through which we catch glimpses of God. Jesus is the "lens" through which God sees us.

God as the Potter is continually forming, shaping and re-shaping. Each one of us must ask, "What is the Potter using at the present time in my life to re-shape me?" Husband, family, sorrow, friends, ageing, loneliness may all be his tools to develop me to what he wants me to be. A time of silent reflection led to the song "Fashioned and Formed, Fragile and Formed, yet Easily Broken." and this concluded the first session.

In Session 2, Colleen focused on 'Spirituality' - we are all spiritual beings - our spirituality draws all of us towards God.

We are clay - but we are not *just* clay, anymore than God is *just* a Potter. He has given us a will, intelligence - we need to recognise where God is shaping us - we have to be prepared to listen - perhaps in periods of silence, to give God 'space' to speak to us or show us where He wishes to change us. Someone has described one 'image' of God as "the fellow-sufferer who understands." God is *love, grace* - never *evil* - illness, death, loss, are not done by God - we must seek what He will teach us through or from them. Our images of God often stem from our

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childhood - an old man up in heaven, a stern judge. God's true name is mystery and we are all seeking to penetrate that mystery, and it will take a lifetime and an eternity to do it.

Colleen spoke of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who from his cell said "A polyphony of images allows God to be God" and of Ignatius of Loyola and the changes of his perception of God through despair, penance, illness to joy and consolation. Jesus is the ultimate image of God - if the great unknowable God seems too big - look at Jesus, who came to show God to us.

The final session after lunch was led by *Sister Marie Craddock*, who framed her reflections around a Fable and a Parable. The Fable 'The Fox And The Rose' was from the book *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupery, which is too long to try to detail here. The points from the readings were: 'Watch With Me'; 'Stand With Me'; Jesus, Remember Me.'

The Parable, 'The Mite And The Temple' was a paraphrased version, by Marie herself, of the story of the Widow's Mite in Mark Chapter 14. It spoke of the Temple, to which the widow was willing to give her all, as the sign; what it represents is the Christ, the Presence of God. The widow believed that her all - her mite - was not too much to give to what the Temple stood for - where her treasure was, there was her heart. It seems sad that she did not realise that the 'real thing' was across the courtyard looking at her.

The Parable study concluded with a poem which goes like this:

Jesus, Son of God, You are the Temple,
the treasury of our mite-gifts to You.
Give us the faith-born discernment to move
from signs to You, the signified.
Give us the courage to recognise new shrines,
new 'temples' of your presence,
and to worship You in spirit and in truth.
Make us 'widows' who can see through to You
as we walk in ministering love
to the Cross-won riches of your heart.

The session concluded with a prayer and blessing after which we just quietly dispersed.

Reported by Beryl McLaughlin, Newsette Editor._

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WINIFRED KIEK SCHOLARSHIP:

Dorothy Ferrier (National WKS Convener) has been speaking to the Roroni Women's Fellowship in Honiara, who sponsored our 2001 Scholar, Celestial Lusi, and they report that Celestial is very excited about her studies in Papua New Guinea. She will graduate in early December and will then return home. She is looking forward to taking up her ministry with the Solomon Islands women. Dorothy is to receive a report from Celestial in the near future. She asks that we continue to remember Celestial and the Solomon Islands people in our prayers.

The WKS trustees are in the process of selecting the 2002 scholar, and ask that we support them in prayer.

Nighat Gulzar (1994 Scholar from Pakistan) is at present living in USA and she and her husband Asif are particularly enjoying the freedom to worship. She sends her greetings to ACW members.

Mina Whybourne, WKS Convener

ACW SPECIAL DAYS:

Fellowship Day is held around Australia each year in July, and from the offertories at these Services comes the finance to support the Winifred Kiek Scholarship.

The Service for this year's Fellowship Day, observed in a number of city and country centres, was for the first time written by the Northern Territory Unit. The Theme "In Jesus - Life, Hope, Liberty" was ably illustrated by the use of the symbols of water - Life, a budding branch - Hope, and a broken chain - Liberty.

The second 'Special Day' for the year will be *World Community Day* in October, from which half the offertories go towards ACW's quota as one of the 17 countries affiliated with Asian Church Women's Conference, and the other half is devoted to a Special Project, this year's designated project being the Talitha Kumi Welfare Centre in Pakistan.

ASIAN CHURCH WOMEN'S CONFERENCE:

At the time of the ACW National Conference in Adelaide in September it is hoped that some overseas visitors will stop over in Sydney and be able to attend our Council Meeting on September 17. If this eventuates, it will take the place of the ACW Pleasant Sunday Afternoon Program we have arranged in recent years as our ACWC Service.

6.

FELLOWSHIP OF THE LEAST COIN:

In the last issue of Newsette a list was given of the individual FLC Grants given in the year 2001. The amount of each grant was not included, but a summary of the Regional amounts, and the total budget for this year is now available and is set out hereunder for your information. You will remember that Australia received three grants, and these amounts are included in the figure for Asia.

SUMMARY OF PROJECT GRANTS FOR 2001:

<u>REGION</u>	<u>AMOUNT in \$US</u>
Africa	30,500
Asia	48,000
Canada	5,650
Caribbean	9,500
Europe	6,350
Latin America	8,000
Middle East	16,000
Pacific	7,000
CWU, USA	7,500
Women's Desk, WCC	5,000
WDPIC	<u>6,500</u>
Total	<u>150,000</u>

BLOCK GRANTS FOR 2001

All Africa Conference of Churches	10,000
Asian Church Women's Conference	20,000
Christian Conference of Asia	10,000
Caribbean Conference of Churches	10,000
Ecumenical Forum of European Christian Women	10,000
Latin American Council of Churches	10,000
Middle East Council of Churches	10,000
Pacific Conference of Churches	10,000
Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada	5,000
World Council of Churches Women's Program	10,000
World Day of Prayer International Committee	<u>10,000</u>
Total	<u>120,000</u>

BUDGET for the Year 2001

Project Grants	150,000
Block Grants	120,000
Emergency Grants	10,000
Program & Administration	91,000
Contingency	<u>2,000</u>
Total	<u>373,000</u>

As we note that a total of \$US373,000 has been given in Least Coins this year, we can only give thanks and praise to God that we have been part of this prayer fellowship.

Readers will remember that one of the grants to Australia applied for by The Girls' Brigade was for a motorised canoe to be shared by the

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Women's Fellowship and Girls' Brigade in the Western Solomon Islands Province, where travel between the many islands is very difficult. An interesting footnote to this grant has come from Julie Brackenreg, the Girls' Brigade Director for Asia-Pacific Region, who writes "I met the Women's Fellowship President from Cuzo, who told me that **THE CANOE** has been purchased; the church "topped up" the FLC grant to allow for a 40hp engine to be bought - very upmarket and fast! I am writing this from Kolombangara, which is one of the islands the canoe will be used on. I hope to be riding in the canoe in July."

Copies of Circle of Prayer Volume 15 are still available for \$2 each or \$3 posted. FLC Teaspoons also available at \$4.50 each.

Shirley Wells, FLC Convener

FOCUS ON ANOTHER FLC GRANT:

Another of the current FLC Grants applied for and received by Australia was for "Facilitating Faith Community Nursing" and we have information about how this has been made use of.

A series of free 2-hour Promotional Seminars under the title "What Is Faith Community Nursing?" - funded by the FLC Grant - has been held in Western Australia and South Australia, to introduce Christian 'Faith Communities' - congregations, church-based agencies, church schools, church aged-care facilities and any other interested people - to the concept of faith community nursing, and health and healing ministry.

(From Australian Faith Community Nurses Association Newsletter)

PRISON FELLOWSHIP - CAMP BREAKAWAY:

In the Easter holidays 29 excited and enthusiastic campers spent four days away at Galston Gorge. - all the children of prison inmates. Some of them had returned for their second Camp Breakaway, having experienced a great camp last year. Once again this year they enjoyed the fun of the camp site activities, with swimming, abseiling, archery being popular. Not only did the campers meet the challenges of abseiling - they also had the opportunity to meet God throughout the camp. The talks were based on Luke's Gospel with the theme of 'forgiveness.'

The camp team was unified in their commitment and well-trained to help the children have a great time as well as to gently yet purposefully point them to Jesus and to following his ways in life. All went home with the encouragement to continue to learn and follow God. Team members

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have committed themselves to following up each child and their families. Pray that churches who are contacted will follow up and minister to these children and their families`

Having the prayer backing of many supporters and people who were able to sponsor campers and the bus meant that the camp was fully sponsored, for which we praise God. Campers responded with comments like: "I thought I was coming to an ordinary camp but I met Jesus here." and "I am going to do a project on Jesus when I get home so I can tell my school."

(From Prison Fellowship NSW News)

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN NSW - STUDENTS AWARD:

In 1996, as part of its Centenary Celebrations, NCW NSW inaugurated its Australia Day Awards, for gifted University or College students who may have difficulty - maybe physical or financial - in being able to complete their studies, and at that time, Australian Church Women NSW sponsored half a \$1000 award, with Microsoft contributing the other half in the form of computer software.

The awardee of that scholarship was *Fiona Collins*, who was graduating in religious studies with special emphasis and interest in Indonesia. We met Fiona when she came to address a Council meeting, and later supported and followed her progress in her epic bike-ride around Australia to raise money for food centres among people suffering extreme poverty in that country.

The current issue of NCW NSW News gives an interesting update about Fiona - she has been awarded a Certificate as an Interpreter of Indonesian and was chosen to assist in that capacity during the recent visit to Australia of President Wahid of Indonesia.

Another Recipient of the Award is playing violin in Berlin, Amsterdam and France and will use a Big Brother Scholarship to study with several famous teachers in London; another, with her husband and little son are in Mexico, studying Contemporary Mexican Literature, Spanish and Social Anthropology, also doing a breast-feeding project for UTS in Sydney.

Our State Council has recently ratified the Executive's recommendation that, as one of NCW's affiliated organisations, we offer to again sponsor a half scholarship (\$500) this year, to assist another worthy student in her studies. The Awards are presented at NCW's Australia Day Luncheon in January.

9.

A PWA EVENT HIGHLIGHTING MERCY MINISTRIES:

Jenny Fairbain spoke of the life-changing and life-saving work of Mercy Ministries, for which she now works full-time, her assistant being Jenny Collison.

Two years ago Jenny had come to an all-time low in her battle against drugs, alcohol and anorexia. She had nowhere to turn, but friends who had heard of Mercy Ministries in America encouraged her to write to them. She was accepted and was there for thirteen months, being loved and nurtured back to health and life. Jenny had not known that she had a choice between life and death; when desperate she needed someone to say they have been there and to help her. She had lost everything, but God had another plan. Jenny admitted that it wasn't easy to become fully dependent on the Lord. She did not know God, did not need God, but called out to God one night - deep down she did not want to die. It was hard work to overcome her drug habit and eating disorder, but because of the loving environment, care and counselling she eventually found freedom and chose life. Her life has been turned around.

Meanwhile, Mark and Darlene Zschech from The Hills Christian Life Centre in Castle Hill had felt a need to help young girls in Australia. Whilst on a trip to America, they visited Mercy Ministries and were introduced to their work with troubled girls, then returned to Australia to carry out their dream. Jenny became a Christian, and back in Australia decided to become a full-time worker for the new Australian Mercy Ministries here. Many counsellors have been through similar circumstances and are able to relate to the girls from their own experience.

Counsellors, nutritionists, psychologists are all professionally trained and qualified; other support workers receive in-house training. On completion of the program, the girls have follow-up and transitional help. Worship, classes, recreation, housework are part of the day, and they are taught life skills, how to budget and handle finance etc. They are encouraged to go back to their families, or find work. Mercy Ministries is non-denominational.

The Sydney Connection. In 1999, a ten-bedroom house at Glenhaven, in The Hills District, was purchased, and after much discussion with Baulkham Hills Shire Council, and residents of the area, they were given permission in 2000 to go ahead. Mercy Ministries deals with every aspect of a girl's life, spiritual, mental, physical. The difference between Mercy Ministries and the hospital, is God. There is no Government aid - finance comes from private donors, fund-raising and companies.

(From Presbyterian Women's Association Magazine S.P.A.N.)

10.

CHISHOLM COTTAGE:

This cottage is wholly owned and operated by Catholic Women's League in the Diocese of Parramatta. While the initial purpose was to provide assistance to people requiring hospital care this was later broadened to include others needing similar assistance.

CWL members run the Cottage on a day to day voluntary basis, performing all necessary duties. Chisholm Cottage aims to provide a relaxed, supportive and homelike atmosphere for guests, and members are happy to assist with local knowledge where possible. Low-cost accommodation is offered for those with a short-term need. Guests may include:

- ..those with a family member consulting one of the nearby hospital complexes;
- ..those attending outpatients clinics or other medical facilities;
- ..those requiring emergency accommodation for reasons other than medical.

For information, contact Chisholm Cottage on (02) 9633.4228.

AID CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE:

Yurani Cordoba Rojas from Colombia looked out at a crowd of Sydney high school students and tried to explain what poverty means. Through an interpreter, the brave 15 year old spoke confidently and articulately and her audience of some 150 Abbotsleigh senior students was captivated.

Yurani told about her home in Cali, a city crowded with refugees from the 20-year war with insurgents and drug gangs. She told about her father, who became a cobbler after he received a grant from World Vision, freeing her to attend school rather than work in her mother's home nursery. She told them about the school, staffed with teachers paid by World Vision, and the American family that sponsored her and how one day she would like to meet them. "I like my school - it's big, but not like yours - it doesn't have the resources you have. I'd like to study after school so I can have a career as a social worker" she said.

Yurani explained how at 11 she joined the Children's Peace Movement, a Colombian group of a million members which has been nominated three times for the Nobel Peace Prize. Now four years later, she is a district leader and was active in its successful campaign to have Colombia prohibit the use of child soldiers. An Abbotsleigh student commented that as World Vision sponsors, it was great to actually meet someone who has been helped.

(Item from Sydney Morning Herald)

11.

WOMEN-ONLY VILLAGE in ETHIOPIA:

A 'women-only' village is being built near Addis Ababa, as a safe haven for 100 women who have incurable cases of fistula. A 'fistula' is a condition caused by prolonged labour and affects thousands of young women in Ethiopia and some other parts of Africa, particularly in cultures where girls are given in marriage before they reach a mature child bearing age.

Dr Mulu Muleta, speaking at a function for Anglican women in Sydney said "Sometimes young girls may spend over a week in labour, particularly in rural area. The result of the fistula condition is that women constantly leak urine and are rejected by their husbands and even by their families. Dr Muleta performs fistula operations at the hospital founded by Sydney doctors Reginald & Catherine Hamlin in 1959.

Around 93% of the women are cured by an operation. Others have to undergo a second or even third operation before they are cured. But there is a small percentage who are incurable, such as Ajabush, who is now 25, but at 14 she experienced a long, difficult labour, had a dead baby and was left with a fistula, also severe nerve damage and problems with both legs. For 9 years she was left lying on a board in a small dark room, leaking urine and stool. Other than her siblings bringing her food, she had no contact with people. Although her rectal defect has been repaired, her bladder was not and she has to wear a bag. Dr Muleta said the real solution to the fistula condition is to avoid early marriage. "It will take generations to change" she said, "We constantly see older sisters who have been cured bringing in younger sisters with the same problem; families don't learn from experience."

The village will have 10 houses each housing 10 women. There will be a community meeting and training hall where women will make craft items to sell. They will also work on agricultural plots within the village grounds. It is hoped that by building community among them, and through selling their craft and agricultural products, the women will be able to regain their dignity.

(From Sydney Anglican 'Southern Cross')

REVIVAL in CHURCH LIFE in IRAQ:

The Patriarch of Iraq's largest Christian denomination has spoken about the high demand in the country for Scriptures. "I am very encouraged that so many lay people and especially young people are showing great interest in the Scriptures. We are experiencing a real revival in church life, due largely to the reading and study of the Bible."

(From Bible Society Bible-A-Month Partners News)