

# Australian Church Women

## WOMEN AT WORK



SEIK: To unite Australian women in their allegiance  
to their Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.  
To help Christian women to take more effective  
place in the total life and mission of the Church.

September/October 1981

### A MESSAGE FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT

My dear friends of A.C.W.,

Your new committee is about to take up the reins, handed to us so efficiently and helpfully by the Tasmania-backed committee. What a wonderful group of people they are. They have done their work so capably while in office, and they have been so thoughtful in the handing over to the incoming committee, giving us so much valuable and helpful background information, to enable us to get on with the job smoothly and easily. Thank you Tasmania.

We hope, very much, to serve you well in these next two years, we feel rather daunted as we begin knowing something of the task ahead of us, we shall be upheld by your prayers and strengthened by God for our task.

What a good thing that we have the inspiration of the National Committee Meeting to launch us on our way. I know that all who attended this meeting in Hobart found it wonderfully stimulating, both spiritually and intellectually, and of course the warm Christian fellowship we all experienced was wonderful.

What a joy to have our two Winifred Kiek scholars, Dien and Malini, with us, and our Travelling Fellow, Rathie Selvaratnam.

The first hymn of the opening service in Hobart expresses perfectly the spirit in which we enter our two-year term:

In faith and hope and love  
With joyful trust we move  
Towards the Father's home above.

1. Christ, our star, our map, our road  
To the Father's high abode.
2. Christ, our bread along the way;  
Christ, our rescue when we stray.
3. Christ, our shelter, Christ our friend,  
Our beginning and our end.
4. Christ, our hope and our reward;  
Our redeemer and our Lord.

Elizabeth Alfred.      Deaconess  
PRESIDENT.

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WORLD COMMUNITY DAY, 1981 "PRAYER, PARTNERSHIP  
AND PEACE".

This service was prepared by the Catholic Women of Tasmania. It is hoped this service will bring blessings and will challenge women to pray and strive for peace. The project chosen, "Korean Atomic Bomb Victims from World War 2," should also strengthen us in our quest for peace.

The National Meeting of Australian Church Women for 1981 has come and gone, but what a wonderful time it was for those of us who had the privilege of attending. From the very first moment of our opening worship service, to the final handing-over ceremony, every moment we were conscious of the presence of the "Spirit of God upon us." In this Presence we were able to receive Spiritual uplift, have wonderful fellowship with each other and perform our business very amicably.

Here are a few excerpts from reports given at the council meeting of A.C.W. (Vic. Unit) following this National Meeting.

Rev. Chris Mostert stirred our minds at the opening worship session, to think about the words of Isaiah, who, because he felt compelled to speak to the exiled people with great words of hope, their God had not forsaken them. He would redeem them, and the Presence of the Spirit who is the very origin of their faith, would govern and direct their future paths.

We, who are living in that same world, so many years after are privileged to see the fulfilment of that promise in the advent of the redeeming Lord and the gift of the Holy Spirit in all His comfort and power.

The Spirit drives the Church into mission, this is God's will for us and we need to remember that without a mission, we are not His church. Aust. Church Women, I believe has a real part in that mission.

Prayer, Praise and Partnership were very evident in all our worship sessions. Praise was highlighted by gifted musicians, it was also translated into body movement by a group called the Story-tellers.

Honar Yearsley, an Anglican lay reader, in her Bible Study used verse 3 of Isaiah 61 to highlight the imagery of prose that runs through the Scripture -

1. To give beauty for ashes
2. The oil of joy for mourning
3. The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness
4. The trees of righteousness
5. The planting of the Lord that He might be glorified.

The third day, Athlea Sansom used Romans 8 - the first 8 verses as the basis of our group discussion.

To summarize the studies - the Spirit who came upon Isaiah and Jesus, anointed them to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim the release of captives and the recovery of sight to the blind and to bring liberty to the oppressed.

The Church betrays her Lord and ignores her driving spirit if she neglects this commission; if she is not concerned with the poor, the oppressed and powerless, the exploited "pushed around" people of our society.

Driven by the Spirit have we, as the Australian Church Women, anything to say which will have the capacity to sound as "Good News?"

I think we can accept this challenge with the triumphant note of the final chorus:

"HALLELUJAH - HE IS KING - HE IS LORD"

Asian Church Women's Conference Delegation  
ELECTED AT HOBART

Present Representative: Mrs. Rachel Cocke from Tasmania retires after the Assembly in November, 1982.

New delegates elected were:

Mrs. Olive Ackland, Victoria - Australian representative (U.C.A.)

Mrs. Lynette Green, Tasmania - Delegate (Salvation Army)

Mrs. Di Johnson, Northern Territory - observer (Anglican)

Mrs. Marie McCann, N.S.W. - observer (Catholic)

AUSTRALIA'S PRAYER PARTNER

As a result of person to person prayer partnership at an Asian Church Women's Conference in the seventies, the National Committee of Australian Church Women endorsed the idea of a country to country prayer partnership.

To make a more meaningful approach to our praying, the National Working Committee is allotting each Unit with a particular month on which to focus our Burmese friends.

Kindly ensure that as many of the Branches and Units are involved in this Ecumenical Outreach of prayer.



CHOGM

As Secretary of A.C.W. (Victorian Unit) Miss Dorothy Fry has received an invitation from the Prime Minister, Mr. Malcolm Fraser, to attend the performance of the ballet, "The Three Musketeers" in the Palais Theatre, St. Kilda, as part of CHOGM (Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting). We are thrilled to know that A.C.W. has been included in this important occasion. Congratulations Dorothy!

THEMES FOR SPECIAL DAYS FOR 1982

Fellowship Day

"Co-Workers in Christ for Renewal"

World Community Day

"Women Dare, Women Care, and Women Act".

At the National Committee Meeting in Hobart the Victorian Unit conducted the final night's devotion and their president, Mrs. Doreen Gordon, gave the following message:

"THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME".

On a previous trip to Tasmania I had been delighted with the vast lavender fields, and fragrance that was produced from its blooms. Theme - In my minds eye I saw through a mauve haze the lingering, haunting, refreshing fragrance given off by the lavender as symbolic of the Spirit of the Lord upon his people.

... My mind turned to Mary of Bethany who broke her alabaster box and poured her pound of spikenard, upon the Master's head and feet, so that its fragrance filled not only all the room but all the ages since.

I set myself to find out all I could about lavender. I discovered 20 species, evergreen, grew in different types of soils. Although rather nondescript in form and appearance yet it has survived the centuries and claims our attention today because of a unique quality - its pervading perfume. (fragrance).

The true value and beauty of the bloom is only fully apparent AFTER submission to cutting, crushing, distilling and blending under the expertise of a master blender.

**MY GREATEST DISCOVERY.** One form of lavender is used for distillation of an essential oil which is known as the oil of spike. There is every possibility that this oil of spike was used in the ointment Mary used with such lavish abandon to anoint Jesus.

#### **"TO WHAT PURPOSE?"**

Three of the Four Evangelists record Jesus anointing at the feast of Simon the leper only a few days before His death (Matt. 26; Mark 14; John 12). Only John, however, discloses that it was Mary of Bethany who broke her alabaster box and poured her pound of spikenard, very precious, upon the Master's head and feet, so that its fragrance filled not only all the room but all the ages since.

Somehow Jesus' teaching about His coming death had penetrated Mary's tender heart more deeply than the hearts of His other friends. She brought the costliest thing she had, and with it her total devotion, even her very life itself, to anoint Him beforehand for His burial. Mary was not among those other women who prepared spices later to embalm the Saviour's dead body; her perceptive love had already poured itself out in fragrant incense upon Him while He was yet with her.

And for her insight and self-giving she was sharply criticized.

All three Gospels recount the disciples' cry of indignation; "To what purpose is this waste?"

"To what purpose?" has ever been asked of those who abandon themselves to Christ. It must have been the thought uppermost in the minds of the desolated disciples at Calvary. It must have existed in the minds of millions who have watched Love's sacrificial giving by the myriad Martyrs, known and unknown, who have poured themselves out for God in the centuries since, with this thought Satan must have tried to tempt the widows of the five young men who died by Auca spears in recent times. "To what purpose is this waste?"

But Jesus rebuked the disciples and accepted Mary's sacrifice as an act of priceless worship; and so He accepts sacrifice today.

For what men see as loss, God sees as eternal gain.

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