

**** INFORMATION PAGE ****

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CONTRIBUTIONS to Newsette are requested from readers and should be sent to the **EDITOR:**

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NEWSETTE

AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN -- NSW UNIT

A C W 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: 4227.6919 or 9744.8626

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

My Dear Friends,

The Games of the XXVII Olympiad are all but over as I write to you. I don't know about you, but I have enjoyed watching them on TV and was fortunate to attend some events.

I am sure we were all touched or excited by some very special moments and impressed by the planning and organisation of the Games. The goodwill exhibited by those attending was of gold medal quality. The crowd control and helpfulness of the people in charge was a credit to all - and who will ever forget the volunteers - so cheerful and obliging. Many Olympic medalists will return home with "bright hopes for the future" - endorsements, fame and undreamed-of opportunities before them.

Our World Community Day theme spoke of the "bright hope" we can all have - not as a result of winning a medal but because of the new beginning we have by faith in God's Son, Jesus Christ - His life, death for

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sin, and resurrection - the new life or new beginning He gives us.

You might care to think on the World Community Day theme - "New Beginnings - Bright Hope", recalling the speaker's message, or just quietly at home re-reading the order of service which was prepared this time by the NSW Unit. The Bible Readings used came from Luke 15:1-7, Romans 5:1-11 and 1 Peter 1:3-9.

We have had a busy year! In NSW it started on New Year's Eve with that immortal word "Eternity" splashed on the TV around the world from Sydney Harbour Bridge. To understand Arthur Stace's "Eternity" we begin as we worship the Babe of Bethlehem "For to us a child is born..." Isaiah 9:6.

My kindest thoughts to you all as we move towards Advent, preparing us for Christmas.. With love, *Jan Harrison.*

GOINGS and COMINGS:

Since our last Newsette, we lost our valued State Secretary, *Major Glenys Holley*, on her move to Queensland where she is in charge of Women's Ministries from Bundaberg to Cairns and out to Mt Isa - her husband Brian is Divisional Commander for the area - equivalent to a Bishop in some of our churches. We were truly sorry to lose Glenys and record our great appreciation of her fellowship and contribution to NSW Unit. We do wish them much blessing in their new responsibilities.

We are now, however, pleased to announce the appointment of a new State Secretary - *Mrs Isabel Hewitt* - and are delighted at her availability and her willingness to undertake the position. Isabel is a member of Strathfield-Homebush parish of the Uniting Church. She grew up in the Presbyterian Church at Ryde-Meadowbank and worked in the Australian Council of Churches office in the early 1960's. While having a family she qualified as a teacher and taught in both Catholic and public schools. She still teaches occasionally when groups of Japanese students learning English require tuition. Each quarter Isabel assists with packing 'With Love To The World', a Bible study guide which originated in the parish over twenty years ago. She and Doug, who works with the National Council of Churches of Australia, and who was a speaker at our ACW State Conference last May, have three children and two lovely grandchildren. Isabel's interests include family history, playing tennis and quilt-making. She was recently involved in preparation for and participation in Pilgrimage to the Heart..

We look forward to getting to know Isabel, and sharing with her in the fellowship and work of ACW.

VALE - VI MINTY:

A Thanksgiving Service for Vi's life and service was held in the Chapel of Lottie Stewart Hospital.

The Chaplain, Les Underwood, who conducted the service spoke warmly of his association with Vi as she had shared in all aspects of ministry to the residents of Lottie Stewart. He spoke of her Bible studies, singing, organising skills, her forthrightness and guarding of her privacy. She had served in many capacities as she saw opportunities and had been an integral part of Lottie Stewart for 15 years.

Vi also volunteered at Chesalon Harris Park for two days a week, was active in her own church and in Australian Church Women, especially in the City Branch. Vi will be remembered for her zeal and faithfulness in preaching the gospel. She was unassuming, had a good sense of humour; her love for her Lord and her gutsy approach to life sustained her over the past months when she was battling physical difficulties and frailty.

It was a privilege to visit her on the day she was transferred from home to hospital and she entered the full joy of her Lord later that day.

Heather Badgery, Pastoral Care Convener.

A PLEASANT SUNDAY AFTERNOON

The *Asian Church Women's Conference Annual Service* is held in all the 17 countries which are affiliated in ACWC including Australia.

This year our observance of this service in NSW will once again take the form of a '*Pleasant Sunday Afternoon*' program, with a multi-cultural focus. Prayers, Bible Readings and songs will be shared in Korean, Chinese, Vietnamese and other languages, and there will be some beautiful music to enjoy, concluding with fellowship over afternoon tea.

This will be held on *Sunday, 5th November*, commencing at 3 pm at the *Belmore Salvation Army* (very close to Belmore Station), at the invitation of the Belmore Korean Salvation Army Corps. Do make a special effort to come along - men and women - and share another uplifting time together.

SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT DAY:

This year's Spiritual Enrichment Day in July was, for the 60 members and friends who attended, a day of spiritual enrichment indeed.

The Speaker was Mrs Marj Dredge, ACW National President, and we were taken on a study of the well-known story of Jesus' meeting with the Samaritan woman at the well. Marj's handling of her theme "A Journey Into Wholeness" gave us new insight into the story and a positive challenge to review our own religious journey. She stirred our imaginations, leading us with vivid word pictures through that lonely scene near a well in a hot dry country. We sensed the fear of the woman as she approached it as Marj encouraged us to make the story our own.

The Day was divided into three sessions, each ending with questions for reflection. The final session left us asking "Where does this woman's journey touch mine?" and "How would I have liked the conversation to develop if I had been there with Jesus?" We were challenged to consider significant times in our spiritual growth, to become aware of what it is that we yearn and thirst for in life and what it would mean for us to find Living Water. We were encouraged to share some aspect of the story that seemed particularly relevant to us in our faith journey.

We were left with an understanding of the woman's need to share what she had learned when she met a Man who changed her life. She left her water jar and ran back to her people. Sharing His message had become top priority. Was this woman His first witness? She "put down" her water jar. This may be the heart of this beautiful story. Her water jar is her own agenda - it's the reason she came to the well - to draw water. She left with eternal life, because she was able to let go her own agenda, to put down her water jar. She brought other people to the well, and so to Jesus. She became a bucket, a means of bringing others to the Living Water.

Helen Richardson thanked Marj for her very thoughtful exposition of the story and said how much we appreciated her visit. Jan Harrison then extended our prayerful good wishes to Marj in her role as National President of the Churches of Christ Christian Women's Fellowship forthcoming National Conference. *Peg Blake, Publicity Convener.*

Following her visit to NSW as reported above, *Marj Dredge* wrote "We had a very warm sense of "togetherness" as we met in the Uniting Church rooms. I never cease to be amazed at the "connectedness" we experience in ACW. Across borders and denominational boundaries we are certainly "one in the Lord." It was a helpful day as we reflected on our journey thus far and the difference that our relationship with God makes to our lives."

FELLOWSHIP OF THE LEAST COIN:

Warmest greetings to you all as we approach Christmas and the end of the year 2000. World Community Day has come and gone and our least coins have been dedicated and forwarded to our treasurer.

The International Committee of FLC is now preparing for its annual meeting in Fiji from November 6-14, when they will be allocating the grants for next year. Please remember them in prayer, that they will have safety in travel and wisdom and guidance as they make their decisions.

I am happy to advise that the fifteenth volume of Circle of Prayer is now available, the cost per copy being \$2.00 or \$3.00 posted. The theme of this Circle of Prayer is Repent, Renew, Reconcile, and Australia has contributed two of the devotional thoughts and prayers to it. Copies can be obtained by writing me at 125/3 Homelands Avenue Carlingford 2118 or phoning (02) 9872.1719.

Let us all thank God for what the Fellowship is doing to bring Peace, Justice and Reconciliation to countless needy people; may we all pray the prayer of St Francis of Assisi: "For it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life."

Shirley Wells, FLC Convener

WORLD COMMUNITY DAY SPECIAL PROJECT:

From World Community Day Services each year, half the offertory goes towards ACW's commitment to Asian Church Women's Conference and the other half to a special project selected by our National Executive.

This year's Special Project for the recent World Community Day Services in October was *Teen Challenge*, which began in 1971 in Brisbane and now has centres in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, Canberra and other major regions throughout Australia. They seek to provide services to the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of the individual and to impact Australia's youth for Christ. They minister to drug addicts, alcoholics, prostitutes, troubled youth and the hurting and lonely. They have Phone Counselling, Teenhope, 24-hour counselling service, Youth suicide Helpline; also Prison chaplaincy, Primary and High School Education, courses dealing with 'real-life' issues to equip youth workers, including Real Edge Insight Groups and Turning Point Seminars; they have emergency and supported accommodation houses.

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WINIFRED KIEK SCHOLARSHIP:

We have all been most concerned at the serious illness of Edith Ridge, our WKS Convener and assure her that she and her family are surrounded by our love and prayers.

This WKS Report comes from the ACW National News:

This year's Scholar, *Sue Nitrai*, has been very busy catching up her study following time taken off immediately before and after her father's death. However she feels confident that her year will finish without too much interruption. Her Parish work has been slightly heavier due to staff holidays and the preparation of a parish-wide Bible Study on St Mark's Gospel. Sue sincerely thanks all ACW members for their prayers and thoughts following her family's bereavement.

The WKS Trustees have announced next year's Scholar - this has been delayed due to the political unrest in the South Pacific area. She is *Miss Celestial Lusi* of *Honiara* in the Solomon Islands. Aged 33, she has been sponsored by the Roroni Women's Fellowship Group of the South Seas Evangelical Church, which is an inter-denominational organisation. Celestial will be undertaking her final year of her Diploma in Theology at the Christian Leaders' Training College of PNG & The South Pacific. Her ministry so far has included working with women and children and her local church.

Celestial's sponsors wrote "We wish to heartedly express our most sincere thanks and unspeakable joy for your considerable approval and select Miss Celestial Lusi as Winifred Kiek Scholar. Yours is indeed a tremendous assistance which we believe God's providence for us and her. You are truly investing into the eternal kingdom in edifying God's church. The beneficiary of your funding is not only Celestial but also the women and churches of Roroni association at large." We were told that Celestial was so excited that after she had heard the news she couldn't sleep! May we all pray that her country will continue to return to normal and that she will be able to undertake her studies in New Guinea without any delays or problems.

Also from ACW National News: **WORLD DAY OF PRAYER** - It is 113 years since the commencement of this movement and this was celebrated in a wonderful service of thanksgiving and praise. From the trumpet fanfare to the sung benediction the Service was enjoyed by a large congregation. *Noelene Roose* (National Liaison Officer) brought a greeting and *General Eva Burrows* used two words from World Day of Prayer material for her message: "Prayer" and "Action."

7.

PLATFORM FOR ACTION:

On July 20th 2000 the "*Platform For Action 2000-2002*" was launched at the Masonic Centre in Sydney. This was the culmination of work on issues of concern to older people in NSW emanating from the International Year of Older Persons and the formation of Coalition '99.

Helping to launch the document were the former Federal Member *Tom Uren*, the President of the Local Government Association *Peter Wood*, and a member of the consultation committee *Betty Scott*.

The document was well-presented, full of ideas and issues which can be followed up. Copies are available from Platform For Action Steering Committee, P O Box A840, Sydney South NSW 1235.

Heather Reid, Social Issues Convener.

Other Social Issues from ACW National News:

Fairwear Breakfast, Adelaide was very well-attended. A young man from Indonesia said that Nike paid their workers in that country very low wages; a Union member from NSW spoke on how they were working to get improved conditions for the workers; a representative from Sheridan (formerly Actil) was able to detail how well that Company looks after its workers.

In Canberra, Social Justice Convener Jean Thomson reported on a Seminar and Workshop organised by the ALP 'Status of Women Policy Committee' to address the unmet needs of women in the ACT. First speaker was *Denise Simpson*, Domestic Violence Crisis Service in ACT, her subject being the incidence of domestic violence in all forms within the community. The second speaker was *Lorna Shuttleworth*, Financial Planner, on the importance for women to arrange their own financial security throughout life and not rely solely on their partner's superannuation.

This was followed by three workshops on Domestic Violence, Elder Abuse and Financial Security. Jean felt it was important to let the ALP and other NGOs know that church women are present and interested in all aspects of social policy - she was planning to represent ACW at a full day seminar on 21st October.

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PILGRIMAGE TO THE HEART:

In a Newsette earlier this year we included an account given to a Council Meeting by *Lisa Jackson* of her experiences in Geneva as the first Aboriginal young person to be sponsored by the National Council of Churches as a Youth Steward to the United Nations.

At August Council we welcomed Lisa again, to tell of travelling as one of the young people who journeyed with the heads of churches on the Pilgrimage of the Heart which was part of Jubilee 2000. Lisa displayed the brilliantly coloured scarves and other items from the "Pack" - shell, water, prayer card - given to each traveller as part of the Commissioning Ceremony in *Canberra* by the Governor General. This ceremony included singing by a combined choir of Public School and Catholic School children - the first time ever children had been united in this way.

From Canberra the bus took them to *Griffith* - lush Riverina country where they grow all the gherkins used by McDonalds for their burgers; then on to *Cobar*, where for the first time ever the congregations of the different churches had come together, so the aim of reconciliation between churches, peoples and individuals was coming towards fruition.

Lisa was nervous as they approached *Wilcannia*, because of the unfortunate media reports of violence and strife, but they received the warmest possible welcome and shared in a Barbecue at the Darling River. In *Broken Hill* they saw reconciliation between the Catholic priest and another Christian group who had had a falling out.

In *Peterborough*, 60 people came together in the tiny combined Baptist/Uniting Church and there was reconciliation by the Salvation Army and the young people. At *Port Augusta*, they saw reconciliation of the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities between whom there had been much friction - they sang together in a combined choir.

Reaching *Woomera* at the time of the breakout of illegal immigrants being held there was a sobering experience - some Orthodox on the bus tried to see them, but were not permitted. At *Coober Pedy*, they stayed in the underground hotel and visited 3 underground churches, the Anglican, Catholic and Uniting.

The culmination of the journey was at *Uluru*, where they were welcomed and hosted by the local Aboriginal people who shared in the ceremony which was the climax to an epic trip, a project which for the first time brought together the heads of our churches and the youth representatives in the desire for unity in our churches and our communities.

Reported by Beryl McLaughlin, Newsette Editor.

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A VISIT TO NUNGALINYA COLLEGE:

During a recent trip to Darwin to see my daughter and her husband I had the privilege of visiting Nungalinga, which is run by the Anglican, Roman Catholic and Uniting Churches providing training for indigenous Australians in theology, community organising, family and community services and textile art. Students come from all over Australia. I was taken on a tour of the College which occupies 10 acres, by the Principal Rev Wali Fejo, and it was interesting to see the layout of the classrooms, the magnificent library and the textile art workroom. It was delightful to meet the clever ladies and men who design and make the beautiful tablecloths, sarongs, scarves and tee-shirts - I bought a tablecloth made by a Torres Strait Island lady who was particularly gifted in design and I was fascinated watching her blending and painting colours - our Aboriginal brothers and sisters are very clever artistically - it was such a pleasure to meet them.

Students are able to live on the Campus and there is accommodation for some families. A very pleasant area contains fruit trees - mango, plum and several others common to the Northern Territory. The College always welcomes donations to assist with its finances and I can guarantee that every amount donated is very well spent.

A very enlightening experience and wonderful to see God's word being absorbed by our indigenous Australians.

Reported by Mina Whybourne, Minute Secretary.

A DESERT EXPERIENCE:

When I became a delegate to ACW for the Catholic Church, I was nominated by the Paulian Association, which among other activities, sends lay volunteers to work in areas where we are invited by the local church. Some years ago at an ACW National Conference, my prayer partner was Pat Walker from South Australia. Pat is now nearing the end of her service as a volunteer in the East Kimberley area of WA and as she is a friend, the Paulian Association sent me to visit her.

The trip took 6 hours from Sydney to Darwin, then on to Kununurra and another 6 hours in the mail plane to Balgo, my final destination. Balgo is the desert between the Great Sandy Desert and the Tanami Desert. There is no surface water and the ground is very red sand. Small stunted trees and shrubs and a spiky grass are the only vegetation and the grass grows in clumps and is not a ground cover.

The Kutjunga people were the last Aborigines to come from the desert and settle in four communities about 40 years ago; there are about 1000

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altogether with Balgo being the largest (about 500). The Kutjunga people invited the Catholic Church to come and be responsible for pastoral care in collaboration with their own leaders in each community. I found them to be a spiritual people who turn to prayer whenever a crisis arises. They have Mass celebrated in their own language, also written and recorded hymns. On Sunday morning the bell is rung by the elders and hymns broadcast over loud speakers, calling the people to worship; when everybody has arrived they tell the priest it is time for Mass to commence.

The people seek to keep their traditional way of life - the men hunting and the women gathering, but need to supplement their food with western food from the store.. Balgo is a 'dry' community regarding alcohol, but unfortunately the young boys are into petrol sniffing. The people must work for the dole but it is difficult to find occupations for them. An Art Centre has been opened and there is magnificent desert art being produced; the women do silk screening, make jewellery from seeds and pods, learn child-care and to become teachers' assistants. It is not possible to describe all the experiences I had but I feel that I was very privileged and it is thanks to being part of Australian Church Women.

Marie Majoor, State Treasurer.

PROTECTING THE CHILDREN:

The Wood Royal Commission which began as an enquiry into the Police Service was eventually widened to include an enquiry into paedophilia in the institutions of our State. This has had, and is going to have, serious and far-reaching repercussions and one of them is going to be felt here in our churches.

Coming under scrutiny were the Dept of School Education, the Dept of Community Services, Juvenile Justice, and churches. Justice Wood's final report stated that the problem had "been compounded by the past approaches, where if forced to be confronted by the problem, it was dealt with in a way that was based upon denial and protection of institutional reputation rather than regard for the welfare of children."

Legislation has now been proclaimed by the NSW Parliament under which all people in child-related employment will need to undergo some form of character screening. The big change for churches is that the term "employment" now means work done voluntarily, as well as paid. That means all Sunday School teachers, leaders of kids' clubs, Girls' or Boys' Brigades, youth groups and creche leaders now fall under the terms of the legislation. Also the newly-formed Commission for Children and Young People recommends that employers (which includes

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churches) "train paid staff and volunteers...in the prevention of child abuse and child protection issues...plan the work of the organisation so as to minimise situations where the abuse of children may occur...and provide effective supervision of all paid employees and volunteers to reduce the risk of child abuse occurring..."

The landscape of children's and youth ministry has changed forever. We need to make arrangements to train our volunteers in appropriate behaviour, recognising child abuse and avoiding compromising circumstances. This prompts us to ask two questions. Firstly, why did we have to wait for a Royal Commission to tell us, as a Christian denomination, that, and how, we ought to get our house in order? Why has it taken so long for us to realise that, under past practices and attitudes seen in our children's and youth ministries, children and young people were, at best, not being treated properly and, at worst, actually being abused?

The second question is this: why are some people - pastors, leaders still resisting these new responsibilities? Is it because it brings additional administrative pressure, or because confronting some difficult issues is just too hard?

From Anglican Diocesan Newspaper 'Southern Cross'

FROM SPY TO PASTOR:

Barnabas Moam is pastor of a large church in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, who was converted in 1972 when, as a communist agent, he was sent to spy on an evangelistic event held in Cambodia. Mr Moam was moved by the message of the prodigal son preached by the World Vision speaker, and put his faith in God. He was very impressed by the interpreter, Son Sonne, the Bible Society representative in Cambodia at that time, who later died under the Pol Pot regime along with a third of Cambodia's population, but Barnabas Moam, the former communist spy, survived to lead many people to Christ. Mr Moam does not speak about the hardships he suffered under the Pol Pot regime - he would rather share the good things the Lord has done and is doing in Cambodia.

Another Christian, *Kom Sar Nat*, however, tells about how he heard about Jesus at a church Mr Moam had established in a Thai refugee camp and had spent 8 years in the camp teaching the Bible. When *Kom Sar Nat* was able to return to his village in Cambodia he found that he was the only Christian. Reading his Bible each day helped him overcome opposition and persecution, especially from his family, but he missed the support of other believers and moved to Phnom Penh where he once again met Mr Moam and joined his church.

From the Bible Society's "The Sower"