

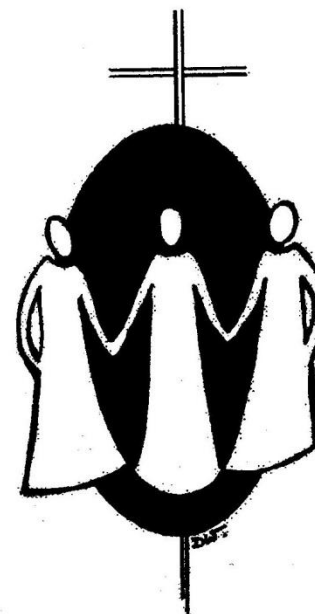


AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN
ACW NEWS

MAY 2004

"Forward Together in Christ."

Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labour in vain.
Psalm 127



Australian Church Women seeks to unite Christian women across denominational boundaries, to promote peace, understanding and unity through faith and love in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

FROM OUR NATIONAL PRESIDENT

Major Nancy McLaren.

Greetings to all!

"I am but one of the myriad names
inscribed on those huge Hands,
which hold, enfold, and embrace the Universe.
I am known completely
in all my complexity: Known intimately
in my individuality by the One who said:

'I have called you by name. You are mine. ' "

This is a beautiful verse which came across my desk some time ago,
and yet no matter how long or short our experience with the Lord is,
we can know with assurance that He does know us as if there were
only one of us to know.

I greet you and trust that all is going well in your part of God's
kingdom. We have only just gone through what is one of the most
important and some would say THE most important time in the
Christian calendar. To those who know and experience God's love
and forgiveness, Easter and all that it means is a very special and
beautiful time of the year. Many of you may have taken the
opportunity to visit your local cinema to see "The Passion of the
Christ" and may have come away from that film with very mixed
emotions. No matter which way our thoughts have taken, we all
would have very individual feelings and for some those feelings are
very personal and very hard to share. May the impact and message
of what is portrayed in this film touch many lives and cause hearts to
respond to what the Easter message is all about - God's sacrifice
through His son, Jesus, for a sinful and corrupt world, -- and yet a
triumphant resurrection over evil.

It was a wonderful experience to be able to visit with the ACT Unit
recently and I thank Jean and her team for their hospitality to me.
If at all possible, I would like to visit with as many Units as I can in
the next 18 months or so, in order for me to meet and see you in
your own areas of ministry. Please contact me.

We already have early plans in place for the next National
Conference in October 2005, and we will communicate with you as
the time progresses. Please start to think about attending. We invite
you to be praying for this Conference and for those who will be
invited to speak and lead the Bible studies.

God bless you richly and give you His peace. *Nancy.*

INTRODUCING our National Vice-Presidents.

Cela Cooper.. Born and educated in Bendigo, Victoria, Cela
graduated from Melbourne Teachers' College, gaining Primary and
Infant Teacher's Certificates. She taught at North Brunswick
Demonstration School until she and her husband moved to Sydney.
Two children were born there and then the family moved to Leeton,
where a busy family and community life went hand-in-hand with
participation in Church life.

When her youngest child reached school age, Cela returned to full-
time teaching in Catholic schools in the Riverina and this continued
after the family moved to Canberra.

With 'retirement' came involvement as a Catechist in State Schools
and in Adult Faith Programmes. On moving to the south coast near
Wollongong, Cela became a member of the Corrimal Branch of the
Catholic Women's League. Nine years ago she was appointed as a
Catholic delegate to ACW of NSW where she has served as Social
Issues Convener.

A mother, now with seventeen grandchildren, Cela prays for God's
continued care and blessed guidance in our challenging world.

Jan Harrison. Jan's involvement with Australian Church Women goes back to the mid-seventies, when she was a member of the Strathfield Branch of ACW. In 1995 she was invited by Mothers' Union (Australia) Diocese of Sydney to be their representative on the New South Wales Council. Jan has served as Secretary and President of this Unit.

She has held positions on Diocesan and Australian Executives of MU.

With Graham, her husband, an Anglican clergyman (now retired), Jan has enjoyed involvement in parishes, especially with women's ministries. The mother of two sons, she is now a proud grandmother of Sophie.

Belonging to Know Your Bible groups over the years has been a great blessing in Jan's life, as she seeks to understand God's work and Jesus' redeeming love.

Jan brings to this office, great good humour and compassion and the benefit of her life's experience.

FELLOWSHIP OF THE LEAST COIN

National Convener Shirley Wells writes:

"Greetings to you all who so wonderfully support the FLC movement. May we continue to put our prayers and coins together as our way of moving our world towards real peace, justice and reconciliation.

Did you know that in 2006 we will be celebrating the 50th Anniversary of FLC. What a wonderful year it will be, when women from over sixty countries and from every continent will give thanks to God and rejoice together.

Preparations are already under way. The World Committee envisions a two-fold purpose:

1. To honour Shanti Solomon, the founder, and our foremothers and sisters;

2. To revive ourselves and strengthen the FLC Prayer Movement for another 50 years.

The Committee proposes :

1. The Venue. First preference is India. The alternative is Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
2. Timeline. 2004: Initiate the Celebration at the Committee level.
2005: Year of National Celebration.
2006: Reaching the climax of the Celebration.
3. Theme. Celebrating the legacy, envisioning the future, living the jubilee.

HOW WE CAN BE INVOLVED NOW

We have been requested to supply a history of the FLC Movement in our country, together with any interesting stories of how, when and who promoted FLC locally, telling how people's lives were touched by prayers and least coins through various projects.

Please pass on any information you have (any stories you can recall) to your FLC State Unit Convener, who will send these stories to me, your National Convener. The success of this depends on the information you can supply - so please do all you can to contribute. In love and fellowship, *Shirley.*

[A snippet from the Editor. Recently I was able to introduce FLC to the Fellowship group in my church. When we met the next time, and were putting our least coins in the basket provided for them, one dear lady told us how 'easy' it is to collect for FLC.

"Why," she said, " when I'm in the room waiting for the doctor, I tell the other patients that I collect all my least coins for FLC and straight away everyone opens their purses and digs in their pockets, and they give me their least coins!"

I am your witness that she nearly filled the little basket. It shows what a power there is in the enthusiasm of a new 'convert' !!]

WINIFRED KIEK SCHOLARSHIP

National Convener Joan Tong reports:

News on Mereani. 2004 Scholar Mereani may now take up her Scholarship in the Philippines. Project Respect has been able to find a place for her in the course where they deal with women who have been victims of trafficking. It is expected that the WKS Trustees will give permission for this change, as it is considered that this experience will be more beneficial to Mereani.

We look forward to having more news of her soon.

State Unit Conveners have shared with Joan news of former scholars who wrote at Christmas time.

Judith Cayzer (NSW) and Betty Farrell (ACT) heard from Nighat Gulzar and Rachel McManus. Nighat says "I always remember you 'guys' in my daily prayers."

Rachel has just finished a year at Uni., with 3 years to go. She is doing Bachelor of Education in Indigenous Studies, by correspondence as well as working 3 days a week doing clerical work.

Susan Liersch's report has gone to all Unit Conveners. Here is a small part of it.

Susan, who was one of the 2003 Scholars, undertook a course, 'Certificate of Counselling and Family Therapy.' She found the training so beneficial that she is continuing with the second year of the course. She appreciated the support received through ACW and the Scholarship, which has relieved the financial burden of studying. She said "I particularly appreciated the letters I received throughout the year from members of ACW and enjoyed meeting the ladies from the ACT Unit. I feel I now have a greater understanding of the work of ACW." (Thanks to Betty Farrell and Jean Hambley for this item.)

SPECIAL DAYS

All Units have received copies of the Fellowship Day service. The theme for 2004 is "My Peace I Give to You" and the NSW Unit wrote this service. When we give our offerings for Winifred Kiek Scholarship at this service, let us also remember to pray for our Scholars, past and present.

The theme for the World Community Day Service, written by the South Australian Unit, is "Be One, That the World May Believe." The Special Offering will be divided between Asian Church Women's Conference and The Kairos Prison Ministry. This was a submission by the ACT Unit and the members there are pleased that it was chosen. Also remember that FLC offerings are dedicated at World Community Day Services.

Advance Notice. The theme chosen for Fellowship Day 2005 is "Together in Love and Fellowship."

SOCIAL ISSUES

National Convener Jean Porteous reminds us that individual letters carry more weight than corporate ones. Everyone should be encouraged to write to Members of Parliament, Radio and TV Stations and to manufacturers and stores, when we have suggestions, praise or complaints.

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

In Australia, this week 23-30 May overlaps with the Week of Prayer for Reconciliation (27 May -3 June.)

The quest for peace in the Middle East forms the backdrop to the celebrations and meditations for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Resources are available from the Ecumenical Councils in your State.

National Sorry Day is 26 May. On this day, in Canberra, a memorial to the Stolen Generations will be unveiled. There are resources for this week also, and Prayer cards available from Ecumenical Council, NSW Locked Bag 199, Sydney 1230. Try your own Council, they may also have them.

Simply Sharing Week.

It is a sobering thought that almost 24,000 people die daily from hunger. 75% of these are children under 5 years old.

East Timor is our newest neighbour and on 20 May will celebrate its second anniversary of independence as the poorest country in Asia. We can be involved in Simply Sharing Week so that people in East Timor can grow their own food and not have to rely on food aid to feed the people.

A set of hand tools costs just \$35 and a garden starter pack for 10 families costs only \$1250. Wouldn't it be great if ACW members could spare some 'spare' cash to support this appeal?

Information on how to get involved on www.forceten.org.au or ring (02)9299 2215 and ask for Kirsty.

AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S COALITION

Jean Hambley, our representative on this organisation, has been appointed to the Committee on Grandparenting. A high profile public forum on this subject will be held in Canberra on 21 June. Trafficking. AWC has chosen to do a research project on two particular aspects of trafficking. The project will analyse and document : * international leading practice strategies aimed at preventing trafficking and prosecuting perpetrators, and * international leading strategies aimed at caring for women who have been victims of trafficking.

This is a new project for AWC but not for ACW..... we had a session on this subject at the National Conference.

Other news from AWC. National Osteoporosis Prevention and Management Strategy. This project was presented to the Minister for Health and the Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on the Status of Women, in October.

ACWC PRESIDENT'S APPEAL

Annamaney Arumanayagam has sent the following appeal to all member countries of ACWC.

One of the biggest donors to ACWC over many years has been a committee of the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church of the USA. An annual grant of US\$7000 has been a large part of ACWC's budget. Now it is no longer possible for the church to give this grant.

Australia honours its annual payments as a member of ACWC, but at this time there is perhaps more that we can do.

National Conference encouraged all Units to use the Signature Campaign forms. It was thought that a good time to ask people for their signatures to show solidarity with our sisters of ACWC would be at our Special Days Services.

Pat Walker, our representative to ACWC will attend the ACWC General Meeting in early June and would like to take any completed forms with her. Originally, we were asking for signatures only; now we offer the suggestion that if \$1 per signature were given, it would be a 'second-mile' gift and would be very much appreciated.

How to learn more about ACWC? Ask your Unit Secretary how you may subscribe to ACWC Newsletter.

YOUNG CARERS

Statistics in 2003 tell us that there are 181,000 Young Carers (under 18 years old) in Australia.

At National Conference we were challenged by the report from South Australia on Young Carers. Each State/Territory is asked to 'make waves' by contacting the relevant authorities to ensure support in whatever way it is needed for these children/young adults. If you would like more information visit a website pertinent to your State/Territory by typing in Young Carers -- there are many sites to choose from.

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CONTRIBUTIONS to ACW NEWS are eagerly sought. Please send them to The Publication Editor, Edith Ridge, 54 New Line Road, West Pennant Hills. NSW 2125

If you enjoy reading ACW NEWS, pass it on to a friend and share our Good News.

Deadline for the August Issue, 9th July, 2004. Please.

REFLECTION

Someone defined a cross as an intersection -- a place where two lines meet!

Intersections provide us with a choice of direction -- to leave the familiar path, which may well be a comfort zone for us, to go in an entirely new direction and explore new opportunities. Often our personal crosses provide us with an opportunity to reach out and experience a new avenue of service, which God is leading us towards.

From ACW (Victoria) News, Feb./March 2004