

NEWSLETTER

# Australian Church Women

AUGUST, 1964.

This newsletter comes to you with greetings and good wishes from the Interim Committee of AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN. There are several items of interest that we want to share with you.

## FIRST WINIFRED KIEK SCHOLARSHIP

Funds for the granting of the first Winifred Kiek Scholarship will be sought during the observance of Fellowship Day in April next year.

The scholarship, which was inaugurated as a tribute to the pioneer work of the Rev. Winifred Kiek, a South Australian Congregationalist minister, in the field of co-operation between men and women.

Collections taken by women's groups on Fellowship Day will be used to provide a scholarship for women from Asia, New Guinea or the Pacific, to come to Australia for studies. Groups in many parts of Australia would be given the opportunity of meeting the scholarship holder during her stay.

## WORLD PEACE IS STUDY THEME

When World Community Day is observed throughout Australia on October 23 this year, church women will have the opportunity of studying the theme "Christians and world peace".

A special service of worship and study material has been produced by the Women's Inter-Church Council in Victoria, at the request of the interim committee of Australian Church Women. The study is based on readings from Micah 4: 1-5 and Ephesians 2: 11-18.

Community Day has been observed by church women in other parts of the world for many years and is a day set aside for study of a topic of world dimension.

The observance will be promoted by State Women's Inter-Church Councils linked with Australian Church Women.

## SURVEYS ON STATUS OF WOMEN

. Church women's organisations in Australia are being asked to undertake surveys of the status of women in their churches. Methodist groups throughout Australia have already completed the task, which is regarded as an essential preliminary step before discussion can take place on methods of increasing co-operation between men and women in the Church.

#### WOMEN IN INDONESIA TEAM

. Much of the detailed planning and organisation for a working visit to Indonesia by a 46-member Australian churches team in June was carried out in Djakarta by an Australian woman, Mrs. Mary Sorongan, a member of the staff of the National Council of Churches in Indonesia. The team included 12 women, five of them social workers.

#### HERE AND THERE

- . A Pacific church women, Mrs. Fataui Mataffa, of Samoa, is one of the seven-member Executive appointed by the Pacific churches to plan the first Pacific Conference of Churches meeting in 1966.
- . A young Australian girl, Miss Wendy Dowding, Executive Secretary of the Australian Christian Youth Council, will represent Australian church youth organisations on the Asian Christian Youth Assembly planning committee. Six hundred youth, including 50 Australians, will attend the Assembly in the Philippines at the end of the year. About half the Australian delegation are girls.
- . The Evangelical Protestant Church of Belgium has voted by a large majority to admit women theologians to the full pastorate. Two have applied for ordination. The Moderator said women theologians had been excluded from the pastorate not by church statutes, but by long-standing tradition.
- . "In African society, there was (previously) no idea of life for a woman beyond marriage and child bearing. She was regarded as the property of the man. But the Christian view is of two people equal in God's sight living together in love. A woman has a value of her own apart from marriage or child bearing". ---Rev. J. Mbogori, of Kenya, speaking at Kenya conference of Christians on Home and Family Life.

#### AN AUSTRALIAN WOMAN LOOKS AT ASIAN CHURCHES ASSEMBLY

(Mrs. Lilian Wells (Congregational, South Australia) writes here of her impressions as one of the five Australian church delegates to attend the East Asia Christian Conference Assembly in Bangkok early this year)

My experience as a delegate to the Bangkok Assembly were many and varied. There was so much that was reminiscent of a church assembly in Australia, yet there was the added richness due to the fact that delegates came from so many churches and from so many East Asian countries.

Although there were differences in racial, political, social, cultural and religious backgrounds we were very much one in Christ.

This was most evident in the memorable services of worship and in the simple morning and evening prayers, which were an important aspect of our life together. We were "all together in one place", for the purpose of worshipping God, the Father of us all; and although our worship was led by people from many branches of the Christian Church, although sometimes the Bible reading was in an unfamiliar tongue, although we sang our praises at times in a slightly different idiom from the one to which we were accustomed, yet we were, without doubt, united in our worship. Much richness derived from our very diversity.

In Bible study, committee work, consultations, addresses and business sessions, as well as in our recreation time, the same total enrichment of thought and living, because of our different traditions and backgrounds, was evident. Each delegate brought his or her own special contribution to the worship and work of the Assembly.

For me it was a memorable experience, to grow in friendship with the women delegates, most of whom were enthusiastic members of the Asian Church Women's Conference and who had met each other at consultations arranged in past years by that body.

All were keen church women, serving the Church in many different capacities, some honorary and others in paid positions; some were in full-time professional work, others working part-time; but all were conscious of Christ's call to be "more effectively His people in the various situations in which they found themselves".

It was, for me, an unforgettable experience, as a member of one of the pre-assembly consultations, to take part in discussions on planned parenthood and birth-control, which were more frank and less inhibited than any in which I have shared in this country -- and this was a multi-racial group of both men and women!

All aspects of responsible parenthood came up for discussion, based on Biblical background teaching given by a U.S. Methodist bishop. Many worthwhile recommendations were made to the Assembly. Some of the subjects dealt with included pre-marital training in all aspects of planned parenthood, the nurture of children who would be worthy members of the Christian home and many other aspects of the parents' responsibility towards their children.

The report of this consultation was dealt with in detail by the committee on the co-operation of men and women in church, home and society and "follow-up" plans were made. To me it was significant that such a topic should be part of the committee's work and the impact of this meeting alone can be seen when one learns that involved in it were ministry and laity, professional and non-professional groups and men and women delegates from churches in 15 countries which make up the East Asia Christian Conference.

#### BOOKS REVIEWED

This year three short but interesting and important books have been published on the co-operation of men and women in the church and in the home. They are reports of Consultations held in Asia and Africa.

"Men and Women in Home, Church and Community in Asia." ---This book is published in Burma by the East Asia Christian Conference. It is the report of a consultation held at Petchburi, Thailand. Forty delegates from 16 Asian countries discussed three major topics --What does the Bible say about the nature of man and woman? Asian Family in the midst of change; The Challenge the Churches face. The chairman of the consultation, J.S. Quianbao writes: "The delegates tried to analyse the new social and cultural forces operating in the Christian family and the role of the Christian Church in relation to the present needs and problems of the family in a changing society."

(5/- each)

"Christian Women of Africa Share in Responsibility." ---This is a report of the Women's Consultation held at Kampala, Uganda, August 1963. Fifty-four women from all parts of Africa took part. They included mothers, nurses, teachers, theological students, school principals, social workers, and professional church workers. This consultation made important recommendations to the first All Africa Church Conference which was held immediately afterwards. Dr. Madeleine Barot writes that the way in which African women are facing the new conditions of present-day life is a fruitful example for all women and that the manner in which the Church will know (or not know) how to entrust responsibilities to women and use their gifts will greatly influence the way in which these Churches can be faithful to their mission of service and witness in the world. This book is well illustrated with pictures and maps.

(8/- each)

"Report of the All Africa Seminar on the Christian Home and Family Life". --- This was held at the Mindolo Ecumenical Centre, Northern Rhodesia from February to April 1963. The book is the concerted effort of a group of 40 able men and women mostly Africans, but with the collaboration of counsellors from overseas, to formulate answers to the questions. What is to be the character of the life of the African family? What are the greatest obstacles to the understanding and practice of Christian family life? The intention was that this should be primarily a "thinking" Conference. There are chapters on Customary Marriage, Bride Price, Polygamy, Family Planning, Church disciplines. This book is valuable reading for those who are concerned with the life of younger churches, not only in Africa, but in the Pacific, and elsewhere where men and women, marriage and family are caught up in the process of rapid social change. It is a "must" for all missionaries, both those in training and those working with churches overseas.

(5/- each)

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POSTAGE for each book.

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