



JUNE, 1977.

WOMEN AT WORK

June 1977 marks a significant step in Church History. How future generations will read that history depends on us, and particularly on those who will take that step on 22nd June, when people from the three churches - Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational - become the UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA.

The road has not been an easy one, and we are conscious that there are still hazards ahead, but we follow the directions of our Leader in the sure belief that we will reach our goal. We are not cumbered with the impedimenta of sentimental memories. We bring only what we have become - the heritage of our Churches, the gifts of the past, our learning experiences - these are within us, to use along the new road, to share with our fellow wayfarers and to accept from them what they, in turn, have to share.

So we go forward, humbly dependent on each other and on our Lord, confident that Christ is our Way, our Fellow Traveller and our Goal.

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BREAKING DOWN THE WALLS

It is good to know that people have become so aware of our theme that they are finding illustrations of this kind of thinking and also opportunities to break down the walls. So, from Margaret Roberts of the Society of Friends, we have received this note:

"I am enclosing an article I thought might interest you. You will understand from the title why it particularly caught my eye. It is from the weekly paper issued by Friends in London".

The following is an extract from that article. I am sure that some of you will remember C.F. Andrews and his book, What I Owe to Christ.

Fifty years ago a beloved figure was moving about India, a trusted friend of Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore. He was to be found continually in places of desperate need, among the victims of flood or famine or man-made exploitation and cruelty, sparing himself nothing in the effort to bring comfort. This was an Englishman: his name was Charlie Andrews and there is no doubt what made him 'tick'; his autobiography is called WHAT I OWE TO CHRIST. Yet one of his closest friends said; "I never thought of him as a Christian". What he meant was that Charlie's gift of human friendship transcended all our labels and broke down our dividing compartment walls. The experience which transcends division has been recognised by the poets and seers in all the centuries. The Sikh teacher and poet, Guru Gobind Singh writes:

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He is Allah of the Muslim, the Formless One of the Hindu.
 Ouran and Veda seek the same God.
 Everywhere and in every place
 The spirit of the One Lord prevails.

One might also quote, in this context, the words of George Matheson:

Gather us in, Thou Love that fillest all!
 Gather our rival faiths within the fold!
 Rend each man's temple-veil and let it fall,
 That we may know that Thou hast been of old:
 Gather us in.

Each sees one colour of Thy rainbow light.
 Each looks upon one tint and calls it heaven;
 Thou art the fullness of our partial sight;
 We are not perfect till we find the seven;
 Gather us in.

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WINIFRED KIEK SCHOLARSHIP

We should like to think that this is one way in which A.C.W. can continue to break down the walls.

Our convener reports that fourteen applications were received for the 1978 scholarship. At a meeting of the committee together with representatives from Overseas Mission departments of the churches, a short list was selected. These applicants are being carefully considered, and details will be presented at the National Committee Meeting.

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COMMUNITY DAY PROJECT 1976

Apparently there were some questions about the project for last year. In a letter to our Special Days convener, Marjorie Scurlock, the Finance and Administration Secretary of World Christian Action, Thelma Skiller, writes:

"Despite the adverse publicity about Indonesia in our press, I can assure you that the churches have carried through the Transmigration Programme and are very much involved in assisting those people to resettle. Please assure your members that their participation in the 1976 Community Day project helped many people".

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NEWS ITEMS

The N.S.W. Unit of A.C.W. sends this item of interest through Joan Curtin.

"On Monday, 30th May, the President of the Australian Church Women (N.S.W. State Unit), Mrs Lt Col. E. Baker, welcomed about one hundred and twenty women to a Service of Thanksgiving in the Methodist Chatswood Central Church, when the Executive Officers and Council members renewed their commitment and dedication.

The Executive Officers knelt at the altar and consecrated to the Lord's service their personality, character, talents and ability in order to effectively become ...

channels through which they might be used to bring blessing to all Christian women. This was followed by the prayer of Council members to work together in "harmonious cooperation to the end that we may glorify our Maker and Redeemer".

Mrs Abrahams sang two beautiful solos expressing the theme of the Service.

The inspirational address was given by Major Gerben Stelstra, Executive Secretary of the N.S.W. Council of the Australian Council of Churches, based on 2 Kings 2.9. "Elijah said to Elisha, 'Make your request. What can I do you for before I am taken from you?' Elisha answered, 'Let me inherit a double share of your spirit'." In all human circumstances, we must strive to see the spiritual reality behind them.

The Service concluded with the Benediction pronounced by the President, after which all present were entertained to lunch in the Activities Centre adjoining. Acknowledgments, thanks, floral tributes to retiring officers and general announcements concluded which had indeed been a very happy and successful occasion.

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AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN - - - NATIONAL COMMITTEE MEETING

JULY 26 - 29 1977

We know that you cannot all be with us from 26th to 29th July, but we want you to be aware of where we are and what we are doing. For this reason we print this supplement to Women at Work.

Our days will begin at 7.30 with morning prayers, and end with evening prayers. Perhaps, in spite of the differences in time and place, you could be with us particularly then, even as you go about your daily tasks, or in your times of silence and thinking.

THE RAILTON will be the home of delegates for the duration of the National Committee Meeting. It is conveniently situated close to the centre of the city, yet sufficiently apart and sufficiently self contained to be a home for three or four days. Incidentally, The Railton belongs to the Salvation Army, and you know what a reputation it has for caring.

THE CONFERENCE ROOM. Here the 'family' will meet each morning for Bible Study. This should produce the kind of thinking needed for discussions of policy and the making of important decisions. Here, too, we will 'discover' people, who for some, have been only names - and this in itself could be an adventure.

We hope that as we meet here on Tuesday afternoon, on Wednesday, and on Thursday and Friday mornings, we will be able to face problems squarely and together, to think clearly and honestly, to listen patiently and sympathetically, to keep our own words few and to the point - in short, we hope to see walls disappear.

SLEEPING is important if we are to be alert and ready to face the challenges of the day. To this end, The Railton offers to conference delegates comfortable and well equipped rooms - the rest is up to you.

THE DINING ROOM is pleasant and we may look forward to breaking bread in fellowship and sharing at the table food for body, mind and soul.

Quite close to The Railton, almost adjoining, is the SALVATION ARMY FORTRESS; and not far away the BURT MEMORIAL HALL, belonging to the Anglican Cathedral complex of buildings. Into these two halls, we welcome other interested people to share three public meetings with us:-

1. Tuesday, 11 a.m. in the FORTRESS, the FELLOWSHIP DAY SERVICE becomes our opening celebration.
2. Tuesday 7.30 p.m., also in the FORTRESS, we learn to LOOK THROUGH THE WALLS AND FIND OUR NEIGHBOUR.
3. Thursday, 7.30 a.m., in the BURT MEMORIAL HALL we JUMP OVER THE WALLS AND RENEW THE EARTH.

Now that you have found your way around the conference, there are four things which YOU MUST NOT MISS.

The ART EXHIBITION
The BOOK STALL
DREAM-TIME

in the Burt Memorial Hall;
which will be very much in evidence;
the film from Australian Council of Churches,
teaching about Aboriginal Culture in the
Kimberleys;
on Thursday afternoon - to show as much as
possible of our beautiful city and its suburbs.

The BUS TRIP

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THE PEOPLE. You will meet MAISIE MCKENZIE, our guest speaker for the Fellowship Day service. We quote from the cover of Maisie's book, MISSION TO ARNHAM LAND:

Mrs McKenzie is now president of the Northern Territory Unit of Australian Church Women. In the past four years she has had several visits to Asia to forge closer contacts between Northern Territory and Asian Church women, and in 1974 she took part in the Australian delegation to the Asian Church Women's Conference in Bangkok.

Her great love and concern for the Australian Aborigines has sprung from her close contact with them in the West Australian Kimberley region, in Central Australia, and in Arnhem Land. She deals with some of the problems now faced by these people in her first book, THE ROAD TO MOWANJUM (1969). "I am more and more convinced", she says, "of the riches they could pass on to white Australians if only we were more willing to receive."

With such a background we feel sure that this will be a very good introduction to the theme of our whole conference - BREAK DOWN THE WALLS.

You will also meet Elizabeth Appleby, Robin Schaeffer and Sam McCollum, the leaders of the Bible Studies. Elizabeth is very refreshing as a speaker. She shared with our president, Dorothy Wacker - and others - in the Nairobi Experience. Robin Caudwell became Robin Schaeffer when she married in December 1976. A young Churches of Christ minister, she is an attractive speaker with a thoughtful presentation. Sam McCollum is a minister in the Uniting Church - dynamic, challenging and with a delightful sense of humour.

At each of the evening meetings we have arranged for four short addresses, and the speakers involved are:

TUESDAY

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| Adele Thomas | - who comes from "Women in Crisis" |
| Heather Jenkins | - represents the young people |
| Robert Dunn | - who claims he is disenchanted with the Church |
| An Aboriginal Woman | - representing her own people |

THURSDAY

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| Archbishop Sambell | - Religions that divide |
| Sandra Penrose | - Alternative Life-Styles - different political systems |
| Dr Peter Newman | - Renew the Earth |
| Rev'd Keith Dowling | - Alternative Australia |

We would like to introduce you to many more people, but we haven't the space. You will, of course, meet Dorothy Wacker, and Vera Dean, President and Secretary of the present Working Committee, and several members of the new Working Committee from New South Wales.

Please be with us when you can. We need your support: and be sure that we will be thinking of all church women throughout Australia as we attempt to Break Down Many Walls.