

Report of the 19th National Conference



Australian Church Women

Perth, Western Australia

6-10 October 2003



Conference venue - Swanleigh



Standing: Nola Dickson, Edith Ridge, Marie Craddock, Beryl Kirkwood,  
Joan Tong, Nancy McLaren, Brenda Dickinson, Lyn Middleton,  
Eileen Holley, Heather Badgery, Cela Cooper, Helen Richardson,  
Jan Harrison, Isabel Hewitt, Janet Lang  
Seated: Shirley Wells, Beryl McLaughlin, Jean Porteous

**Report to NSW Unit Council Meeting 17 November 2003 of  
Australian Church Women National Conference  
Perth 6-10 October 2003**

The venue, Swanleigh, is located in a rural setting on the upper reaches of the Swan River. The spacious grounds made it easy to walk for exercise, and many availed themselves of the opportunity, especially early in the morning. Accommodation enabled most of the eighteen from New South Wales to be housed as a unit, and for five days we coped comfortably with our curtains, cupboards, and close living. Co-operation was compulsory - and we had lots of laughs. Our communal lounge was invaluable as a place where we could for short periods of time discuss seriously, joke, socialise over tea, coffee and slice, catch up briefly on world news, or give support to one another in word or prayer.

Meal times gave the opportunity to mix with interstate people, as well as to share in the really appetising meals prepared for us.

Devotions led by State Units and National Executive provided inspiration morning and evening.

Not all plans worked, but emergencies were dealt with effectively. The Reverend Eira Clapton who was to lead Bible studies was unable to attend the first day due to illness, and Lee Edwards and Nancy McLaren set questions relating to the theme of 'Community'. In reporting her group's findings to the plenary session, Brenda Dickinson said that the NSW theme song "We being many are one in the Lord" summed one question up, and we sang for the benefit of all, capably led by Brenda. It was a special moment.

The first Bible study presented by Eira considered how community as God's household of life is where all contribute by giving and receiving. We were reminded that God loves everyone, and we are expected to do the same as we share love in community.

Our next focus was on community with the earth. To lessen consumption of resources and improve sustainability it was suggested we live every day as though we will live for ever.

Most of the suggestions were not new to us, but were timely reminders that as Christians we should take seriously our role in the wider community, offering, for example, hospitality to the stranger, and being an example in sustainable lifestyle.

To set the scene for our sharing in and as community, the National Executive used the idea of an 'Agape' or fellowship meal. This is an ancient tradition of the Church followed by the Iona Community in Scotland whose service was adapted for our use.





Janet Watts with Wong Wai-Yin Christina from Hong Kong



Leeola Loughnan, Jean Porteous and Nancy McLaren at Government House

To organise conference participants beyond State groupings, interest groups were formed around photography, computers, travel, family history, books and reading, grandparenting, music, puzzles, handicrafts and interest in organisations. A facilitator from Western Australia was assigned to each group.

Business was conducted using consensus voting, a method which seeks to arrive at agreement while ensuring that people who differ from the majority feel that their voice has been heard. An illustration which might help us to appreciate this method was where a few people indicated they were not happy with the decision being taken. When they explained their view further it became the preferred option and was agreed on by everyone. The business sessions were conducted in a good atmosphere, but would it be better if visitors had other options rather than sitting through business where they can make no contribution?

Special guests at the conference were Wong Wai-Yin Christina, from Hong Kong who attended on a Winifred Kiek Fellowship, and Monique Crabtree from Western Australia, one of the Winifred Kiek Scholarship holders for 2003. Both these women spoke, Christina giving insights into the difficulties faced by church women in Hong Kong and some of the measures being taken to equip them for a more positive role. Monique told of her background, her studies and her trust for the future.

A number of resolutions were directed at clarifying and/or correcting the Constitution and Guidelines. For example, 'Honouring Australian Church Women' as the title should ensure that the Bursary Book is freed from the problem of whether women can be recognised in their lifetime.

The wider range of business resulted in conference agreeing that letters should be sent to governments regarding National Housing Policy; Asylum Seekers in Detention; Gender-inclusive Language in the Australian Constitution; Treatment of Women Victims of Trafficking; and the Plight of Young Carers - young children who are the primary carers for adults suffering from diseases such as Huntington. National Executive will make initial contact, but it is expected that State and Territory Units will be involved in follow up work.

Our great day of 'liberation' was a welcome break in the city of Perth. The Governor of Western Australia hosted conference members at Government House, though unfortunately his wife was ill. We enjoyed tea on the terrace overlooking the lovely gardens, as well as viewing the public rooms which featured fine furniture, portraits and photographs. Floral arrangements were eye-catching and beautiful.



Entertainers - "The Windbags"



ACW National Executive 2003-2005 - from New South Wales

Standing: Isabel Hewitt, Eileen Holley, Joan Tong, Marie Craddock, Nola Dickson, Brenda Dickinson, Jean Porteous, Edith Ridge, Shirley Wells,

Seated: Cela Cooper, Nancy McLaren, Jan Harrison



Perth Conference Report to NSW State Unit Inc Council Meeting 17/11/2003-page 3

We were then let loose in the city, before our next engagement, the Ecumenical Service in Perth Wesley Church where Janet Lang carried the NSW Unit banner. Highlights of the service included the contributions of a women's choir, the organ, and the challenge given by the Reverend Bev Fabb in her address calling us to respond to the needs of our neighbours. Bev had been asked to step in because of the illness of Mrs Sanderson, wife of the Governor, who had been the proposed speaker..

The conference dinner was a pleasant affair. We remember the entertainment with pleasure - four charming women who sang and one man on keyboard and piano accordion whose musical skills combined with humour to give a wonderful polished performance. It was certainly a class act.

We came away from Perth with the feeling that there is much to be done, not just in preparation for National Conference 2005, but in implementing the decisions just taken. With the knowledge that NSW is responsible for the next National Conference, we were mindful of the many small points we need to attend to, as well as the obvious ones. The small team which organised the Perth conference so capably is to be congratulated for their hard work and for the hospitality they afforded us.

Isabel Hewitt  
Secretary ACW NSW State Unit Inc.



ACW National Executive 2001-2003 - from Western Australia  
Leeola Loughnan, Janet Watts, Margaret Ker (obs), Laurel Pearce, Leila Wilson,  
Lee Edwards, Sheila Mellar, Olive Dell, Phillis Dolling, Marie Majoor, Barbara Bourhill







## THE AGAPE

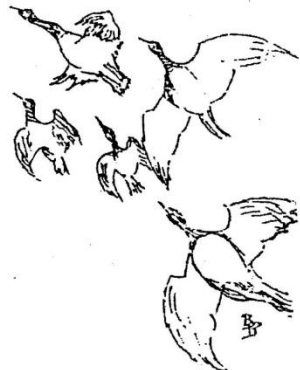
*The Agape is a fellowship meal, a very ancient tradition of the Church.*

*'The Agape is sacramental in the sense that every shared meal, and every aspect of our life as God's children, on God's good earth, can be called sacramental.' from the Iona Abbey Worship Book, from which this Service has been adapted.*

*In this Service we celebrate our life together in community.*

### OPENING RESPONSES:

Out of darkness came light; *and the power of God was revealed  
in the running wave and the flowing air, in the quiet earth and the shining stars.*  
Out of the dust came life; *and the image of God was revealed  
in the human face and the gentle heart, in the warmth of flesh and the depth of soul.*  
Out of justice came freedom; *and the wisdom of God was revealed  
in the need to grow and the will to love, in the chance to know and the power to choose*  
And God looked at the creation, *and behold, it was very good.*



### A SONG OF PRAISE & THANKSGIVING:

.We rejoice to be God's chosen, not through virtue, work or skill,  
but because God's love is generous, uncomformed to human will.  
And because God's love is restless like the surging of the sea  
we are pulled by heaven's dynamic, to become, not just to be.

We rejoice to be God's chosen, to be gathered to God's side  
not to build a pious ghetto or be steeped in selfish pride;  
but to celebrate the goodness of the One who sets us free  
from the smallness of our vision to become, not just to be.

Tune: AHB 93, 374, 363,  
148, 92

We rejoice to be God's chosen, to align with heaven's intent,  
to await where we are summoned, and accept where we are sent.  
We rejoice to be God's chosen and amidst all that we see,  
to anticipate with wonder that the best is yet to be,

### PRAYER OF ADORATION:

I will keep on thanking God with constant words I will glory in the living God; the humble will hear  
and be glad.

Living God, our loving parent: you cherish your creation and we praise you.

*With earth, air, water, fire: in our element as your children, we praise you.*

*With our lips, with our lives, in all our diversity, each one made in your image, we praise you.*

*Because, in Jesus, you came to share our human lives, our sorrow and joy, we praise you.*

*Because your Spirit is at work today: encouraging, enabling, surprising us, we praise you.*

*Poor as we are, you give us hope.*

*Salt of the earth, you give us meaning and purpose, and we praise you. Amen*

### PRAYER OF CONFESSION:

Salt is good, but if salt has lost its saltiness, how can you season it?

Giving God, you blessed us with saltiness, *but we became bland.*

You trusted us with your Word, *but we did not keep it.*

You lit a flame in our midst, *but we hid it under formality, smothered it with,  
our tears.*

God in your mercy, *Forgive us we pray!* [silence]

Forgiving God, we believe that you have called us *to be salt and light.*  
that you offer us time and space and strength *to begin again.* [SILENCE]

Giving and forgiving God *we thank you.* [SILENCE]

Have salt in yourself, and be at peace with one another. AMEN.

**A SIGN OF PEACE** We share the peace with each other – first at our tables then around the room.

**THE WORD** A scripture reading and brief reflection.

The invitation is extended to share something of our journey over the past 2 years as members of ACW – nationally and within our Units, especially remembering our theme and our experience of it. [Could be from the thinking we shared: ‘During the past 2 years I am conscious of having moved towards community by/in/through.....’]

Prayer – brief prayer of thanksgiving [gathering up the sharing] and the Lord’s Prayer.

**THE SHARING OF THE MEAL** The National Executive members will host a supper of fruit juice and biscuits at the small community tables. [You can have a hot drink back in the houses!]

**WE FINISH WITH A HYMN:**

I, the Lord of sea and sky, I have heard my people cry.  
All who dwell in dark and sin my hand will save.  
I who made the stars of night, I will make their darkness bright.  
Who will bear my light to them. Whom shall I send?

*Hear I am Lord, is it I, Lord?  
I have heard you calling in the night.  
I will go, Lord, if you lead me.  
I will hold your people in my heart.*

I, the Lord of snow and rain, I have borne my people’s pain;  
I have wept for love of them. They turn away.  
I will break their hearts of stone, give them hearts for love alone;  
I will speak my word to them. Whom shall I send?

{Tune: TiS 658}

I, the Lord of wind and flame, I will send the poor and lame,  
I will set a feast for them. My hand will save.  
Finest bread I will provide, till their hearts are satisfied.  
I will give my life to them. Whom shall I send?

**CLOSING RESPONSES:**

O God of life, of all life, and of each life,  
we lay our lives before you;  
we give our lives to you  
from whom nothing in us is hidden.

*You are before us, God, you are behind.  
You are around us, God, you are within.*

O God of life, O generous Spirit,  
Renew us with your life,  
Tonight, tomorrow and always. AMEN.



COMMIT

CUNT  
COUNT  
CITY  
MINT  
MUTINY  
TONIC  
TINY  
TUMMY  
TUNIC

UNIT  
UNITY  
MOUNT

INTO

UNTO

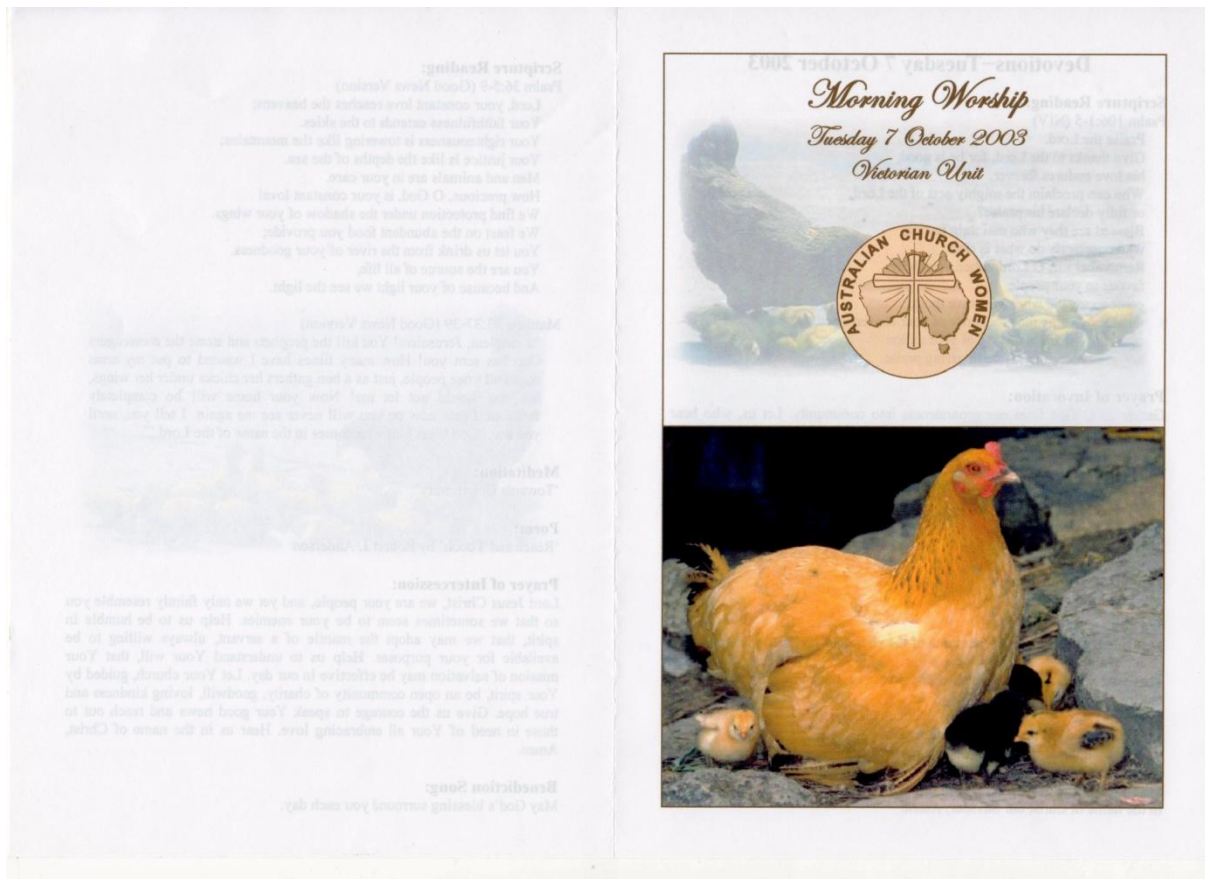
OMIT

O	I	M
C	T	U
Y	M	N

Make as many words as possible using the letters of this word. Can you find the 9-letter word?  
Each letter to be used only once, and each word to contain 4 or more letters. Each word must  
include the letter 'T'.

No abbreviations, slang, swear-words please!

AND: please spend no more than 10 minutes on this!



## Devotions—Tuesday 7 October 2003

### Scripture Reading:

Psalm 106:1-5 (NIV)

Praise the Lord.

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;  
his love endures forever.

Who can proclaim the mighty acts of the Lord  
or fully declare his praise?

Blessed are they who maintain justice,  
who constantly do what is right.

Remember me, O Lord, when you show  
favour to your people,  
come to my aid when you save them,  
that I may enjoy the prosperity of your chosen ones,  
that I may share in the joy of your nation  
and join your inheritance in giving praise.

### Prayer of Invocation:

Gather us O God from our separateness into community. Let us, who bear Christ's name, love one another as we are loved; let us nurture and care for one another, demonstrating the fruit of the Spirit such that our fellowship reflects the fellowship of heaven; and let us lift our hearts and voices in unity together, in God's praise. Amen.

### Song:

The Body Song

Scripture in Song 393

### Prayer of Thanksgiving:

(Please pause at—)

We thank you God—

For Christ, the head and cornerstone of the church, who holds us all together  
in our diversity—

That you love us, your unfinished creation, and are unfailingly involved in  
our transformation—

That your peace, which is far beyond human understanding, guards our minds  
and hearts, and enables us to be peacemakers—

That you continue to mould your church into the fullness of our potential as  
Christian community and servant in the world—

For the privilege of sharing in your unfinished work—  
In the name of Christ our Saviour, Amen.

### Scripture Reading:

Psalm 36:5-9 (Good News Version)

Lord, your constant love reaches the heavens;  
Your faithfulness extends to the skies.

Your righteousness is towering like the mountains;  
Your justice is like the depths of the sea.

Men and animals are in your care.

How precious, O God, is your constant love!

We find protection under the shadow of your wings.

We feast on the abundant food you provide;

You let us drink from the river of your goodness.

You are the source of all life,

And because of your light we see the light.

Matthew 23:37-39 (Good News Version)

"Jerusalem, Jerusalem! You kill the prophets and stone the messengers  
God has sent you! How many times have I wanted to put my arms  
round all your people, just as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings,  
but you would not let me! Now your home will be completely  
forsaken. From now on you will never see me again. I tell you, until  
you say, 'God bless him who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

### Meditation:

'Towards Community'

### Poem:

'Reach and Touch' by Robert J. Anderson

### Prayer of Intercession:

Lord Jesus Christ, we are your people, and yet we only faintly resemble you  
so that we sometimes seem to be your enemies. Help us to be humble in  
spirit, that we may adopt the mantle of a servant, always willing to be  
available for your purposes. Help us to understand Your will, that Your  
mission of salvation may be effective in our day. Let Your church, guided by  
Your spirit, be an open community of charity, goodwill, loving kindness and  
true hope. Give us the courage to speak Your good news and reach out to  
those in need of Your all embracing love. Hear us in the name of Christ,  
Amen.

### Benediction Song:

May God's blessing surround you each day.

TOWARDS COMMUNITY

AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN  
NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2003

**"YOUR OUTFIT LIST  
FOR MINISTRY"**

"DRESS IN THE WARDROBE  
GOD PICKED OUT FOR YOU".

- COMPASSION
- KINDNESS
- HUMILITY
- QUIET STRENGTH
- DISCIPLINE

AND REGARDLESS  
OF WHAT ELSE YOU PUT ON,  
**WEAR LOVE**

IT'S YOUR BASIC  
ALL PURPOSE GARMENT.

NEVER BE WITHOUT IT.

THE MESSAGE  
COL. 3 SELECTED

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN UNIT



**BLESSING:** *Risen and Still with you (Luke 9, Matthew 28)*

You are wayfarers, following roads to the ends of the earth,  
pilgrims on your way to the end of the age.

You are travellers on the road to freedom,  
a community of grace, with good news for all you meet.

Travel lightly, travel together. Learn as you go.  
You are disciples, the mission is urgent, the journey is long.

Travel with authority, be fearful of no one,  
you are apostles, opponents of evil, heralds of hope.

Travel with humility, no task is too menial;  
you are servants, the cross is your compass,  
love is your sign.

(author unknown)

**Leader:** God be with you.

**Response:** *And also with you.*

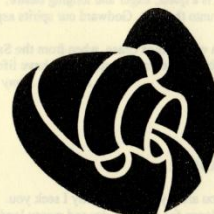


**AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN**



**NATIONAL CONFERENCE DEVOTIONS**

**WESTERN AUSTRALIAN UNIT**



**Living Water**

**CALL TO WORSHIP:**

We come to God, the Giver and Sustainer of Life for refreshment as we start a new day on our journey of faith. We come for a fresh infilling of His Spirit, so that we may truly know Him and serve Him and others in love this day.

**DUET:** Sung by Laurel and Olive

**'LIFE IS A JOURNEY'**

Life is a journey, long is the road, and when the noontide is high  
Souls that are weary faint 'neath their load. Long for the waters, and cry:

*The well is deep and I require a draught of the water of life.  
But none can quench my soul's desire for a draught of the water of life.  
Till one draws near who the cry will heed, helper of men in their time of need  
And I, believing, find indeed that Christ is the water of life.*

Life is a seeking, life is a quest, eager and longing desire;  
Unto the true things, unto the best, Godward our spirits aspire.

Life is a finding; vain wanderings cease, when from the Saviour we claim,  
All we have longed for, solace and peace, and we have life in his name.  
*Salvation Army Song Book 351 Tune 825*

**RESPONSIVE READING:**

**Voice 1:** O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you. My soul thirsts for you,  
my body longs for you in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

**Voice 2:** When my people in their need look for water, when their throats are dry  
with thirst, then I, the Lord will answer their prayer; I the God of Israel,  
will never abandon them. I will make rivers flow among barren hills  
and springs of water run in the valleys. I will turn the desert into pools  
of water and the dry land into flowing springs.

**Response:** *Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. The  
Lord, the Lord, is my strength and my song; He has become my  
salvation. With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.*

**Voice 3:** Jesus answered, 'Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again  
but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed the  
water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to  
eternal life.

**Response:** *Jesus said, 'If a man is thirsty, let him come to me and drink.  
Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said,  
streams of living water will flow from within him.'*

**Speaker:** I pour water from this jug to this glass to symbolise God's living water  
flowing into our lives. I pray it will overflow to others so that they  
may catch a glimpse of God in us and desire to come to Him, the  
source of living water.

**PRAYER:**

O Lord our God, we come to you, the source of life.  
Refresh and renew us this day with your Spirit.  
Help us to encourage and support each other.  
Enable us to demonstrate your love in our living.  
Give us the courage to reach out to the lonely, the dispossessed, the outcast,  
the stranger, without condescension or judgement.  
Show us how to listen, to understand, to care.  
Work through us to build community in society.  
We ask these things in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

**HYMN:** **'BROTHER, SISTER LET ME SERVE YOU'**

1. Brother, sister let me serve you, let me be as Christ to you.  
Pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant too.
2. We are pilgrims on a journey and companions on the road;  
We are here to help each other walk the mile and bear the load.
3. I will hold the Christ light for you in the night time of your fear,  
I will hold my hand out to you, speak the peace you long to hear.
4. I will weep when you are weeping, when you laugh I'll laugh with you.  
I will share your joy and sorrow till we've seen this journey through.
5. When we sing to God in heaven we shall find such harmony,  
Born of all we've known together of Christ's love and agony. *TIS 650*

Travel with humility; no task is too menial.  
You are servants, the cross is your compass, love is your sign.

Go in peace

**to love and serve the Lord. Amen.**

(This prayer adapted from a Catholic Mission leaflet)

*- The Christ Candle is extinguished as a symbol  
that we carry the light of Christ into the world -*

THE PARTICIPANTS AND BANNERS PROCESS OUT OF THE CHURCH

ORGAN VOLUNTARY

**PARTICIPANTS:**

GUEST PREACHER: Mrs Lorraine Sanderson (Wife of the Governor of WA)

LEADERS: Revd Lee Edwards (President)

Lady Wilson (Leila) & Mrs Barbara Bourhill (Vice Presidents)

READER: Mrs Sheila Mellor

CANDLE-LIGHTER: Major Laurel Pearce

ORGANIST: Mr John Beaverstock

CHOIR: WASIMH (With A Song In My Heart)

Our sincere thanks to Wesley Mission Perth for the use of the Church for the Service, the Auditorium for the afternoon tea, and other resources.

Our sincere thanks also to the Organist and to the Choir for their part in the Service.

Everyone is invited to use the lifts in the arcade to the auditorium on the second floor for afternoon tea and the opportunity to meet our guest from Hong Kong and Conference participants who come from overseas and all round Australia.

THE PARTICIPANTS AND BANNERS WILL PROCESS INTO THE CHURCH

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE PEOPLE OF THE LAND

Our God is a remembering God and we are a remembering people.  
We acknowledge with gratitude that this land was cared for  
by the people of the Noongar tribe from time immemorial.

INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

**WE COME IN COMMUNITY  
TO APPROACH GOD**

AS WE LIGHT THE CHRIST CANDLE

'We light this candle as a symbol that Christ is the light  
of the world and we live in this light'

AS THE CHOIR SINGS - 'Sing a New Song'

AS WE PRAY TOGETHER

Called to be in community with God

**we come to you  
from many places and backgrounds;**

Called to live in community with one another

**we come to you  
as people from many different congregations;**

Called to serve in the communities in which we live

**we come to you  
to commit ourselves to continuing loving service.**

May our worship be in spirit and in truth.

**Amen.**

AS WE SING THE HYMN - 'PRAISE TO THE LORD'

**Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation;  
O my soul, praise him, for he is your health and salvation.  
Come all who hear, brothers and sisters draw near,  
praise him in glad adoration.**



**AUSTRALIAN  
CHURCH WOMEN  
NATIONAL  
CONFERENCE**

**ECUMENICAL SERVICE**

at

**Perth Wesley Church**

**1.30 pm**

**Wednesday 8th October 2003**



**Praise to the Lord who in all things is wondrously reigning  
and, as on wings of an eagle, uplifting, sustaining:  
Have you not seen all that is needed has been  
sent by his gracious ordaining?**

**Praise to the Lord, who will prosper our work and defend us;  
surely his goodness and mercy shall daily attend us:  
Ponder anew what the Almighty can do  
as with his love he befriends us.**

**Praise to the Lord, who when darkness of sin is abounding,  
who, when the godless do triumph, our best hopes confounding,  
sheds forth his light, scatters the horrors of night,  
saints with his mercy surrounding.**

**Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me adore him!  
all that has life and breath, come now with praises before him.  
Let the Amen sound from his people again:  
Gladly for ever adore him.**

(Together in Song No.111) Joachim Neander 1650-80 tr. Catherine Winkworth 1827-78 and others  
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AS WE OFFER OUR PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

We confess, O God, that we sin when we fail to nourish our connection with Christ, the head of the church:

**when we are careless in availing ourselves of the means of  
grace, neglecting our prayer life, substituting works for worship,  
absenting ourselves from your table though you have invited us  
to your feast.**

When we abide not in you but in ourselves we enter into factions and frictions, fuss and fury.

**Differences become divisions; competition and jealousies  
abound until there is no health and peace in us.**

We wonder why our efforts bear no fruit; we become weary, disillusioned and depressed.  
**O God, with sorrow we confess our lack of love, our insensitivity  
to your Spirit and to one another, our harbouring of ill-will and  
resistance to reconciliation.**

Release us from the guilt of our sin we pray

**And create within us new and contrite hearts, tender and  
forgiving, even as we seek to be forgiven.**



Hear then Christ's word of grace to us: Your sins are forgiven.  
**Thanks be to God. AMEN.**

AS WE SHARE THE PEACE WITH THE WORDS  
The communion of the Spirit of the Lord be with you  
**And also with you**

## WE COME IN COMMUNITY TO LISTEN TO GOD

AS WE SING THE HYMN - 'FATHER, LORD OF ALL CREATION'

*Father, Lord of all creation,  
ground of being, life and love;  
height and depth beyond description  
only life in you can prove:  
you are mortal life's dependence;  
thought, speech, sight are ours by grace;  
yours is every hour's existence,  
sovereign Lord of time and space.*

*Jesus Christ, the Man for Others,  
we, your people, make our prayer:  
let us love as sisters, brothers,  
all whose burden we can share.  
Where your name binds us together  
you, Lord Christ, will surely be;  
where no selfishness can sever  
there your love we all may see.*

*Holy Spirit, rushing, burning,  
wind and flame of Pentecost,  
fill our hearts afresh with yearning  
to regain what we have lost.  
May your love unite our action,  
nevermore to speak alone:  
God, in us abolish faction,  
and through us your love make known.*

(Together in Song No. 631) David Stewart Cross 1928-89. Words © S Cross. Australian Hymn Book Company. CAL Licence 203. Unauthorised copying prohibited.) 3

We see the pain and struggle of the people of the world,  
bowed down by exploitation and conflict.  
We hear the groaning of creation as it waits for new life and hope.  
We pray for the world's leaders and the leaders of our own country,  
that they may promote peace, justice and hope.

**Make us part of your new creation, O God.**

We picture our towns and cities in all their beauty, and feel the pulse of their life –  
moving and stopping, despairing and hoping, laughing and crying; with all the  
possibilities for community – and the possibilities for alienation.

**Make yourself known to us in the heart of our towns and cities,  
in the small regional towns, and in the scattered country  
communities.**

We see your church in all its humanness, still divided in its witness,  
and struggling to understand and interpret the Gospel for this time and place.  
We pray for the leaders of the churches throughout the world  
that their conversations with each other may be filled  
with the spirit of openness and trust.

**Re-create us O God, and send to us your liberating Spirit.**

We see ourselves, O God – people of faith and faithfulness, dancing in the sun one day  
and overwhelmed by the reality of our sinfulness the next; joyfully announcing the  
Gospel sometimes and at others trembling in our uncertainty. We acknowledge the  
hope that beckons us on – the hope that we may care and live in community with each  
other and the world.

**Give life to this hope within us, O God of community. Bring to  
us a celebration of all that such community could be, despite its  
ambiguity, its frailty, and its cost. Amen.**

(This prayer adapted from the UCA Mission Prayer Handbook 1980)

AS WE SING THE HYMN - 'COMMUNITY OF CHRIST'

*Community of Christ,  
who make the Cross your own,  
live out your creed and risk your life  
for God alone:  
the God who wears your face,  
to whom all worlds belong,  
whose children are of every race  
and every song.*

AS WE LISTEN TO THE FIRST LESSON

**Acts 2:43-10** (page 1206 )

AND THE GOSPEL

**Matthew 5:43-48** (page 1053)

AS THE CHOIR SINGS - 'For the Beauty of the Earth'

FROM THE PULPIT

## WE COME IN COMMUNITY TO RESPOND TO GOD

BY BRINGING OUR OFFERING

BY SINGING THE HYMN - 'FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT'S POWER'

*Filled with the Spirit's power, with one accord  
the infant church confessed its risen Lord:  
O Holy Spirit, in the church today  
no less your power of fellowship display.*

*Now with the mind of Christ set us on fire,  
that unity may be our great desire:  
give joy and peace; give faith to hear your call,  
and readiness in each to work for all.*

*Widen our love, good Spirit, to embrace  
in your strong care all those of every race:  
like wind and fire with life among us move  
till we are known as Christ's, and Christians prove.*

(Together in Song No 411) John Raphael Peacey 1896-1971 alt. Words by permission Hope Publishing Co, USA. CCL License 142015. Unauthorised copying prohibited.

AS WE OFFER PRAYERS FOR THE WORLD, THE CHURCH  
AND OUR LIFE IN COMMUNITY

Let us pray: O God, whose Son Jesus looked upon the city of Jerusalem and wept over it,  
guide us as we look at our cities and our world

**For we long to see a new heaven and a new earth.**

4

*Community of Christ,  
look past the Church's door  
and see the refugee, the hungry,  
and the poor.  
Take hands with the oppressed,  
the jobless in your street,  
take towel and water, that you wash  
your neighbour's feet.*

*Community of Christ,  
through whom the word must sound -  
cry out for justice and for peace  
the whole world round:  
disarm the powers that war  
and all that can destroy,  
turn bombs to bread, and tears of anguish into joy.*

*When menace melts away,  
so shall God's will be done,  
the climate of the world be peace  
and Christ its Sun;  
our currency be love  
and kindness our law,  
our food and faith be shared as one  
for evermore.*

(Together in Song No. 473) Shirley Erena Murray 1931. Words by permission Hope Publishing Co, USA. CAL Licence 203. Unauthorised copying prohibited.

AS WE COMMIT OURSELVES TO LIFE IN COMMUNITY  
You are wayfarers, following roads to the ends of the earth,  
pilgrims on your way to the end of the age.

**We are travellers on the road to freedom,  
a community of grace,  
with good news for all we meet.**

Travel lightly, travel together, learn as you go.  
You are disciples; the mission is urgent, the journey is long.

**We will travel in community,  
be fearful of no one.  
We are apostles, opponents of evil, heralds of hope.**

6



DEVOTIONS FOR CONFERENCE 2003

PRESENTED BY MEMBER OF TASMANIAN UNIT

OPENING PRAYER:

HYMN: Christ has no hands but our hands.....

1. Christ has no hands but our hands,  
To do His work today,  
He has no feet but our feet,  
To lead men in His way;  
He has no tongue but our tongue  
To tell men how He died;  
He has no help but our help  
To bring men to His side.
2. What if our hands are busy  
With other work than His?  
What if our feet are walking  
Where sin's allurements is?  
What if our tongues are speaking  
Of things His lips would spurn?  
How can we hope to help Him  
And hasten His return?
3. Jesus our Lord and Master,  
Before Thee now we bend  
And pray that Thou wilt help us  
To serve Thee till life's end.  
Use us and all our power,  
Our best to Thee we bring,  
O take us, Lord, and make us  
True servants of our King.

READING: People Plead The Lord

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 9: 35 - 10: 8

MESSAGE:

PRAYERS:

LEADER: Let us pray for all Families.  
We pray that the Gift of the Gospel of Jesus Christ  
will renew the commitment of families and individual  
people.  
We pray for families separated by war and terror.  
We pray for all refugees. *Pause*

ALL: We commit ourselves to becoming people of a  
generous spirit.

LEADER: We pray for the Unemployed.  
Let us remember those who suffer the pain,  
frustration and disappointment brought about by  
unemployment. *Pause*

ALL: We commit ourselves to becoming people of a  
generous spirit.

LEADER: We pray for the Youth.  
Encourage God, place within every Christian  
congregation, people gifted in ministry to guide  
and encourage the Youth preparing them for life  
in the community. *Pause*

ALL: We commit ourselves to becoming people of a  
generous spirit.

LEADER: Pray for the Sick and Lonely.  
Lord in Your mercy tend the needs of the sick  
and be a Companion to the lonely. *Pause*

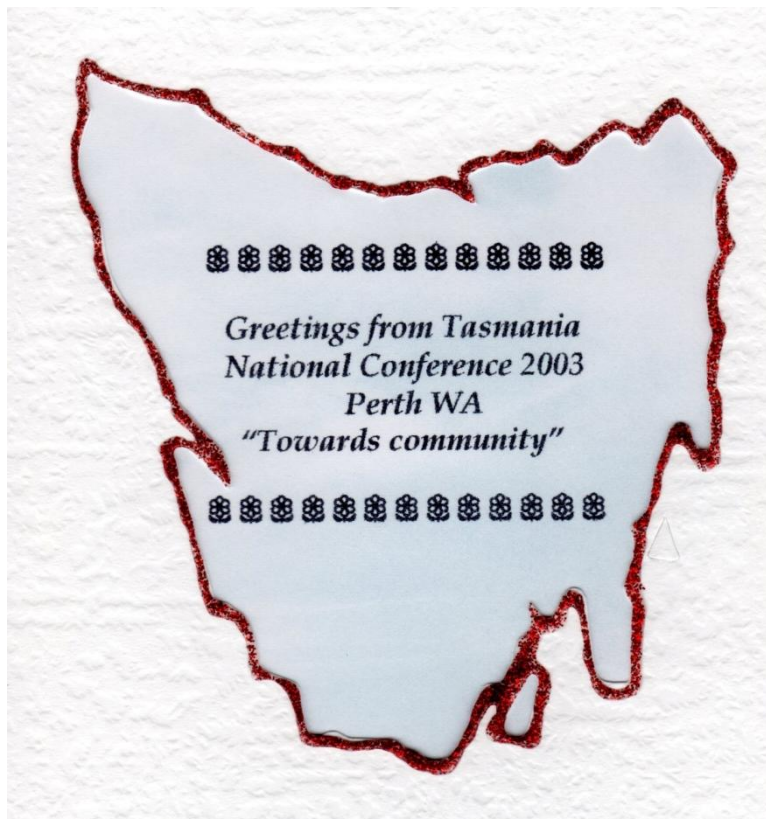
ALL: We commit ourselves to Your service and mission.

HYMN: Bind us together Lord.

READING: They Need Christ.

BENEDICTION.....The Lord's Prayer.

\*\*\*\*\*



### **Benediction.**

Father, we present to You our lives and hearts.  
As we work together may we be led by Christ,  
Who is the Light and the Door.

May we go out into the world to become door openers,  
To open doors and give hospitality.  
To open doors and give invitation.  
To open doors and be willing to receive from others.  
To open doors and accept the presence of God.  
For in opening doors we will both give and receive  
Jesus, the Light of the World.

Amen

### **Take My Life.**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Take my life, and let it be<br>Consecrated, Lord, to Thee;<br>Take my moments and my days,<br>Let them flow in ceaseless praise.  | 4. Take my silver and my gold;<br>Not a mite would I withhold;<br>Take my intellect and use<br>Every power as Thou shalt choose.        |
| 2. Take my hands, and let them move<br>At the impulse of Thy love:<br>Take my feet, and let them be<br>Swift and beautiful for Thee. | 5. Take my will, and make it Thine;<br>It shall be no longer mine:<br>Take my heart – it is Thine Own,<br>It shall be Thy royal throne. |
| 3. Take my voice, and let me sing<br>Always, only, for my King;<br>Take my lips, and let them be<br>Filled with messages from Thee.  | 6. Take my love; my Lord I pour<br>At Thy feet its treasure store;<br>Take myself, and I will be<br>Ever, only, all for Thee.           |

F. Havergal

### **Matthew 4:16, 5:14-16; John 1: 3-5, 8:12.**

White light as we know it is made up of a band of colours and a mixture of all colours.

We can use the analogy of Jesus being the *Pure White Light of the World* and we as his disciples who reflect His light. Each of us becomes at one time or another a fragment of that light – all together representing a rainbow of colours.

Colours create moods and produce emotional responses. Some are soothing, others stimulating; some project coolness, others warmth; some make a loud statement and others produce quietness of spirit.

### **Yellow for Clarity.**

O God we thank You for the marvellous light of the Gospel which continues to dispel the darkness of sin in our midst. We thank You for those who have displayed courage and fortitude and confidence in sharing it's message with others.

*R. We give You thanks, O Lord.*

### **Red for Strength and Danger.**

O God, we thank You for Your very real presence and refuge when we have been faced with disasters and hardships. Thank You for those who responded when we were in need.

*R. We praise You, O God.*

### **Restful Green.**

For the splendour of Your Creation, O Father, we thank You. For trees and plants and flowers that delight us and provide our sustenance we are grateful.

*R. We give You thanks, O Lord.*



## **AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN**

### **QUEENSLAND UNIT**

## *Towards Community*

### **Devotions**

**Thursday, 9 October, 2003**

### **Purple for Royalty and Mystery.**

We stand in awe of You, O Father and for Your love and kindness to each of us. We are constantly reminded that we are undeserving of Your gifts. Continue to help us as we learn from You to show Your great love to others.

*R. We thank You, O God for Your patience with us.*

### **Calm Visionary Blue.**

O Lord, we thank You for the unity we share with one another. We are very grateful to the women who have gone before us with vision and with courage. Thank You for the women of today who continue to offer their skills of leadership and generosity of spirit.

*R. Guide us by Your Spirit, O Father.*

Our lives as Christians are growing, changing, and fragile in colour and substance as we explore new dimensions. The foundation of our faith is in a living, loving and just God Who gave Jesus for our salvation.

We can celebrate our oneness in Christ, our different traditions, our oneness in purpose and our diversity in carrying out this purpose. We find a unity in serving our Lord as we serve each other in love.

As we relate to issues confronting women today, we can try to be the instruments of God to bind up the wounds of others- in our homes, in our churches, in our communities and the wider world.

**Hymn – Take My Life (Nottingham)**

We are the people of hope and faith.  
**Together we will celebrate the moments of new life.**  
**Together we will work and play.**  
**Together we will give thanks for the gifts along the way.**  
**AMEN.**

HYMN: We are companions on the journey

*We are companions on the journey, breaking bread and sharing life  
and in the love we bear is the hope we share  
for we believe in the love of our God,  
we believe in the love of our God.*

No longer strangers to each other, no longer strangers in God's house;  
we are fed and we are nourished by the strength of those who care,  
by the strength of those who care.

We have been gifted with each other, and we are called by the Word of the Lord,  
to act with justice, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with our God,  
and to walk humbly with our God.

And now we are pleased to hand over to the new National Executive members:

Nancy McLaren,	Shirley Wells,
Cela Cooper,	Eileen Holley,
Jan Harrison,	Marie Craddock,
Isabel Hewitt,	Edith Ridge,
Nola Dickinson,	Jean Porteous,
Brenda Dickinson,	Joan Tong

to lead our Evening Devotions on the theme of their choice.



## AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN 19th NATIONAL CONFERENCE

### Installation of incoming National Executive.

Let us gather together as community.

*[we sit together around a 'worship centre' of Cross, Bible, Christ Candle,  
12 scented candles and a basket of small stones/pebbles]*

Hymn TIS 434 Where there is charity and love.

*Where there is charity and love, there the God of love abides.*

The love of Christ has gathered us as one:  
rejoice in him with joy which he imparts;  
let us revere and love the living God  
and love each other with unfeigning hearts.  
**ANTIPHON**

And so, when we are gathered here as one,  
let quarrels die, and envious rancour cease;  
be our resolve all bitterness to shun,  
and in our midst be Christ, his love and peace  
**ANTIPHON**

O Lead us, Master, by your saving grace,  
to where the blessed glory in your sight;  
there let us see and love you, face to face,  
gathered once more in everlasting light.  
**ANTIPHON**

[Acknowledgement: This Liturgy based on material by Dorothy  
McRae McMahon with thanks.]

4

Let us share together our names for God.  
*[we call out names that we use, or that define our understanding of, or that we have  
heard for God]*

We name those who have gone before us or who still travel with us in  
ACW, but are not here.  
*[we remember members no longer with us, and those at home who are  
specially important to us]*

We name our family members, our colleagues, our friends – those whose  
lives intertwine with ours.  
*[we do this quietly or aloud]*

We are surrounded by a cloud of witnesses. Their love enfolds us with  
light and fragrance.  
*[All National Executive members light the perfumed candles they have brought.]*

We are living stones in the building of the holy city of God.  
*[all National Executive members take their own stone from the basket and return to  
their seats.]*

Community is costly. It requires from us

*vulnerability	}	
*prayer	}	
*trust	}	
*commitment	}	
*faithfulness	}	
*forgiveness – given and received	}	<i>{ read by National  Executive members }</i>
*openness	}	
*acceptance of diversity	}	
*kindness	}	
*risking of ourselves.	}	

Let us reflect in silence on our understanding and experience of community.

2

Let us pray: O God, we would prefer to travel without responsibility.  
*[Vice Presidents and Secretary read following lines]*

*We would rather not risk being hurt.  
We find it more comfortable to have structures of power.  
We sometimes choose to stay with our guilt and separate ourselves from your com-  
munity.*

**ALL: Forgive us, O God, and help us to remember that we are your body.**

We are always the broken body but the word to us is that in Jesus Christ we are made  
whole and able to do the task. Our sins are forgiven.  
**Thanks be to God.**

*As the National Executive based in Western Australia we have become a community.  
We are now to lay down our responsibility and tasks. To symbolise this we are going to  
hand on a stone to each of our successors before pinning on their badges.*

*[As the stones are passed on each Outgoing National Executive Member will in turn make  
a brief simple statement concerning her experience in office.]*

*[Then the Badges will be pinned on the new Incoming National Executive Members in  
turn.]*

### LITANY OF AFFIRMATION: *[all to join in]*

We are the royal children of God:  
**those who join the whole communion of saints,  
honoured of God,  
respected by Christ  
and befriended by the Holy Spirit.**

We are the people whose tears fall  
for the suffering of the world.  
**We truly care about the world in which we live even as we feel our lack of power and  
our need for wisdom.**

3



## BE STILL AND KNOW

Be still and know that I am God  
Be still and know that I am God  
Be still and know that I am God

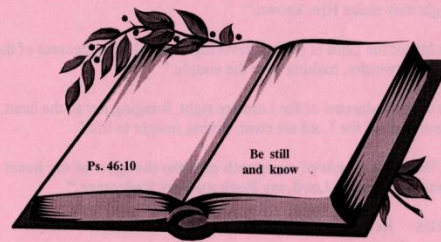
Be still and know His perfect ways  
Be still and know His perfect ways  
Be still and know His perfect ways

Be still and know the Father's love  
Be still and know the Father's love  
Be still and know the Father's love

Be still and know the Spirit's power  
Be still and know the Spirit's power  
Be still and know the Spirit's power

Words and music. (Author unknown)

## Devotions - N.S.W. Unit National Conference 2003



### Selected verses

Psalms 19  
Romans 11: 33-36  
John 17:3  
Philippians 3: 8-11  
Ephesians 3:8-19

### Leader:

To know God is to adore God, to cherish Him, to love Him, to enjoy Him and to worship Him.

### CHORUS. Be still and know that I am God

1. "The heavens tell of the glory of God; the skies display His marvellous craftsmanship. Day after day they continue to speak; night after night they make Him known."
2. "The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul. The decrees of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple."
3. "The commandments of the Lord are right, bringing joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are clear, giving insight to life."

**ALL: "May the words of my mouth and the thoughts of my heart be pleasing to you, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer."**

### CHORUS Be still and know His perfect ways.....

### Leader:

To know God is to be captivated by His beauty, enthralled by His splendour and willing to walk His perfect ways.

4. "O what a wonderful God we have! How great are His riches and wisdom and knowledge! How impossible it is for us to understand His decisions and His methods."
5. "For who can know what the Lord is thinking? Who knows enough to be His counsellor? And who could ever give Him so much that He would have to pay it back?"

**ALL: "For everything comes from Him; everything exists by His power and is intended for His glory. To Him be glory for evermore."**

### CHORUS: Be still and know the Father's love.....

### Short Talk

### Leader:

"This is the way to have eternal life – to know You, the only true God and Jesus Christ, the One You sent to earth"

**ALL: "Everything is worthless when compared with the priceless gain of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord....."**

6. "So that I may have Christ and become one with Him, I no longer count on my own goodness or my ability to obey God's law, but I trust Christ to save me. For God's way of making us right with Himself depends on faith."
7. "As a result I can really know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised Him from the dead. I can learn what it means to suffer with Him, sharing in his death, so that somehow, I can experience the resurrection from the dead."

### CHORUS: Be still and know the Spirit's power.....

**ALL: "We pray that Christ will be more and more at home in our hearts as we trust in Him. May our roots go down very deep in the soil of God's marvellous love. And may we have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, how deep His love really is. May we experience the love of Christ, though it is so great we will never fully understand it."**

**LEADER:** Now Glory be to God! By His mighty power at work within us, He is able to accomplish infinitely more than we would ever dare to ask or hope. My He be given glory for ever and ever. Amen



As you wait

Let the Lord of  
peace fill your life.

Let the Lord of  
love  
enhance your life

Let the Lord of  
grace  
direct your life.

# AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN

## ACT Unit

### Towards Community

Devotions - Friday 10 October 2003

Opening Australian Prayers by Bruce D Prewer page 76 This New Day

Hymn 61 AHB 77, 80, 91, 109, 207, 561

Reading James 2 v.14-18, 24

#### Prayer

Dear Father we give you thanks and praise.

You have been with us throughout this Conference surrounding us with your love.

May each and everyone of us be inspired by the thoughts and ideas we have heard.

As we return home may we be strengthened to carry your love into the Community with faith and love.

May all members of Australian Church Women become more recognised as your disciples, spreading the Good News with our actions of word and deed.

May the fellowship we have enjoyed these few days together be a strengthening of our faiths.

We ask your continuing love and guidance for each other as we journey home to family and friends.

Thy will be done

We ask this in Jesus' name who taught us the pray

'Our Father.....

Conclusion Australian Prayers by Bruce D Prewer Be with us p.135

Hymn 571 AHB 'A new commandment I give unto you'



**Leader:** Lord, hear our prayers and send us out to love and serve you in the world in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**All:** *Amen.*

*We will say together The Lord's Prayer.....*

**HYMN:** 'HERE I AM, LORD'

I, the Lord of sea and sky, I have heard my people cry.  
All who dwell in dark and sin my hand will save.  
I who made the stars of night, I will make their darkness bright.  
Who will bear my light to them? Whom shall I send?

**Refrain:** *Here I am, Lord, is it I Lord?  
I have heard you calling in the night.  
I will go Lord, if you lead me.  
I will hold your people in my heart.*

I, the Lord of snow and rain, I have born your people's pain.  
I have wept for love of them. They turn away.  
I will break their hearts of stone, give them hearts for love alone.  
I will speak my word to them. Whom shall I send?

**Refrain.....**

I, the Lord of wind and flame, I will tend the poor and lame.  
I will set a feast for them. My hand will save.  
Finest bread I will provide till their hearts be satisfied.  
I will give my life to them. Whom shall I send?

**Refrain.....**

*Daniel L. Schutte SJ*

**BLESSING:**

Go out into the world in the power of the Spirit: in all things at all times remember that Christ is with you: present your lives and worship to the praise and glory of God; and the blessing of God – Creator and Sustainer, Jesus – Son and Saviour, and the Spirit – Presence and Power be with you all.

**All:** *Amen.*

## AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN

### CLOSING DEVOTIONS FOR NATIONAL CONFERENCE

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE - 2001-2003



**HYMN:** 'JOYFUL, JOYFUL'

Joyful, Joyful we adore thee, God of glory, Lord of love.  
Hearts unfold like flowers before thee, hail thee as the sun above.  
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness, drive the clouds of doubt away;  
Giver of immortal gladness, fill us with the light of day.

All thy works with joy surround thee, earth and heaven reflect thy rays,  
Stars and angels sing around thee, centre of unbroken praise;  
Field and forest, vale and mountain, blossoming meadow, flashing sea,  
Chanting bird and flowing fountain call us to rejoice in thee.

Thou art giving and forgiving, ever blessing ever blest;  
Well-spring of the joy of living, the ocean depth of happy rest.  
Thou the father, Christ our brother – all who live in love are thine.  
Teach us how to love each other, lift us to the joy divine.

Mortals, join the mighty chorus which the morning stars began;  
Father-love is reigning o'er us, brother-love binds man to man.  
Ever singing, march we onward, victors in the midst of strife.  
Joyful music lifts us sunward, in the triumph song of life.

*Henry van Dyke (1852-1933)  
Salvation Army Songbook*

**Leader:** As we conclude our National Conference of Australian Church Women let us celebrate and pray for our freedom, our environment, our people. But we also need to respond to the call for justice and forgiveness so that, through reconciliation and respect, we may find Jesus in the heart of all. Now as we gather, we call on God's Spirit to protect and enrich us and to bring us together as one people.

**PRAYER:** Let us pray.  
Loving God, you have blessed us with prosperity, freedom and a sense of fairness and justice. May we search our hearts as a nation to ensure that all people share equally in the prosperity and hope we are blessed with. We ask this through your son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever.

**All:** *Amen.*



**READING:**

*A reading from St Paul's letter to the Colossians 3:12-16*

You are the people of God; he loves you and has chosen you as his special people. So be gentle, kind, humble, meek and patient. Put up with each other, forgive anyone who has done something wrong to you, just as the Lord has forgiven you. To all these qualities, add love, for it is more important than anything else. It ties everything together. So let the peace that Christ gives you, guide all your decisions. And be thankful! Christ's message, in all its richness, must live in your hearts.

The Word of the Lord.

**All:** *Thanks be to God*

**Leader:** God calls us here at the Conference to search our lives, our actions and our hearts so that, through reconciliation with one another, we may again be known as a compassionate and just community. We are called to journey to the heart of our community to find Jesus, our Saviour, at its centre.

**Reader 1:** That all answer the call to search our hearts to find respect and acceptance for one another. Lord hear us.

**All:** *Lord, hear our prayer.*

**Reader 1:** That all people will answer the call to search their hearts to find compassion and generosity for those members of our community who suffer. Lord hear us.

**All:** *Lord, hear our prayer.*

**Reader 1:** That all those who are victims of violence, poverty or prejudice will answer the call to search their hearts to find courage and hope. Lord hear us.

**All:** *Lord, hear our prayer.*

**Reader 2:** That all the members of our community will listen to the needs of each other, respect each other's culture and work towards partnership with each other. Lord hear us.

**All:** *Lord, hear our prayer.*

**Reader 2:** For those who have not heard the message of Christ, that the Gospel may touch their lives. Lord hear us.

**All:** *Lord, hear our prayer.*

**Reader 2:** That all the people throughout the world will answer the call to bring peace, justice and reconciliation to their community, regardless of race, religion, age, wealth or gender. Lord hear us.

**All:** *Lord, hear our prayer.*





## Asian Church Women's Conference

### The Sisterhood of the Asian Church Women's Conference

The Asian Christian women, being part of the church and society, and believing in the guidance and empowering of the Holy Spirit, shall work together in upholding the dignity and the integrity of all God's creation. With this purpose and intention the Christian women of Asia united to organize the Asian Church Women's Conference (ACWC). ACWC was founded in 1958. Currently it has 19 member countries. So far, we have the following programs and projects: 1. The Prayer Partnership Program/ 2. The ACWC Scholarship Project/ 3. The ACWC Grant Assistance/ 4. Training Programs for Leadership/Women's Economical Independence/ Educating & Empowering Young Women /5. Promoting Attention to Gender Issues and Violence Against Women/ 6. ACWC Day/ 7. Signature Card/ 8. The Quarterly Newsletter/ 9. The Cooperation with the Fellowship of the Least Coin.



For more information, please contact your ACWC National Representative:

Australia • Bangladesh • Cambodia • Hong Kong • India • Indonesia • Japan • Malaysia • Mongolia • Myanmar • Nepal • New Zealand • Pakistan • Philippines • Singapore • Korea • Sri Lanka • Taiwan • Thailand



## Asian Church Women's Conference

### The Statement of 13th Quadrennial Assembly of Asian Church Women's Conference

Sixty five delegates and one hundred and twenty-one observers from thirty countries, twenty guests and twenty one local visitors gathered in celebration for the 13th Quadrennial Assembly of Asian Church Women's Conference and 50th Anniversary of ACWC and FLC in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 08-13 October 2006.

#### We acknowledge:

- the inspiration and guidance we have received from God from the inception of ACWC and FLC.
- the selfless service and commitment of the founders of ACWC and FLC, especially Shanti Solomon who had the vision and courage to start fellowships and movements fifty years ago and the foremothers who led them.

#### We affirm:

- that women are created in the image of God and not less than men in any way.
- that women have been blessed with the strength and power of creation and transformation for reconciliation, peace and justice.
- that ACWC and FLC continue to act as a

platform for women, praying, supporting, encouraging and empowering each other.

- support and welcome the positive input and vitality of young women to lead us on through the next fifty years.
- all initiatives and moves to improve and value the leadership role of women in society and family; particularly in the worship and decision making of our churches.

#### We condemn:

- the degradation of women in any way particularly all types of violence, trafficking, physical mutilation, prostitution or any form of commodification.
- with horror the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS with its stigma especially from within the family and lack of access to medical treatment.
- conflicts in the name of religion, ethnicity, caste, race or gender.

#### We recommend to ACWC:

- to organize opportunities for interfaith dialogue among women for their mutual support.

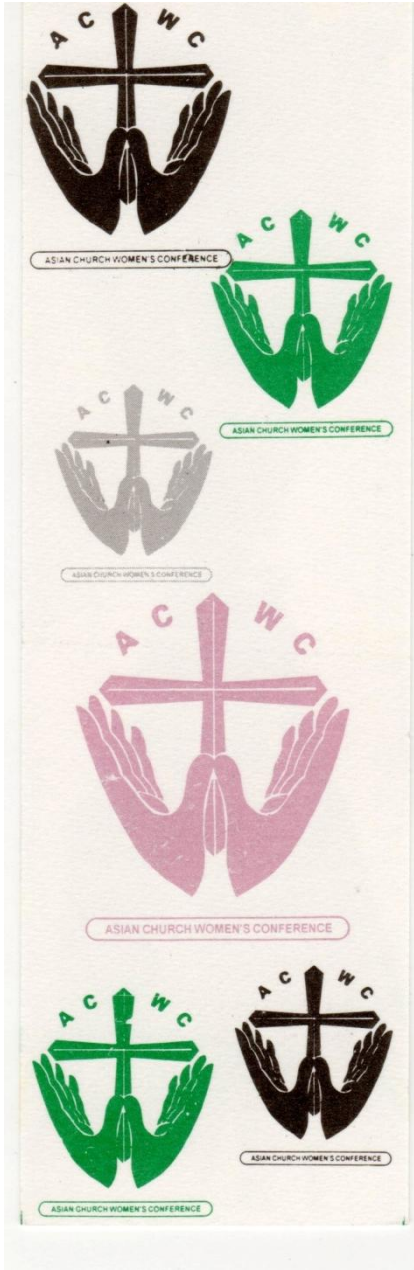
- the setting up of a Young Women's Committee within ACWC.

- to take an advocacy role and support women as they strive for gender justice.

#### We call upon member organizations from different countries to:

- re-read the Bible with women's perspective to seek Christ's liberating power against any exclusion.
- support education, awareness and mobilization of resources for disaster preparedness.
- initiate and support continuing education for protection of women and their families against violence in any form including HIV/AIDS.
- address poverty and seek alternative ways towards a just economy for women.

Being Christian women of Asia, we have the privilege and responsibility to fulfill the will of God in our part of the world. Let us commit ourselves to celebrate the legacy, live the Jubilee and vision the future with hope and trust in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.





## THE GOSPEL of JESUS



*"...all are created in the image of God"...*

- The NCCA Gender Commission is inspired by the Gospel of Jesus who recognised and honoured the role and place of women in His society.
- The Gender Commission will reflect on and discern how the Gospel message is being lived out in our member Churches.
- The Gender Commission is challenged by the Gospel of Jesus to act with dignity and wholeness in all its decision-making.
- The Gender Commission, empowered by the Gospel vision will encourage dialogue between Churches and act to encourage the development of justice and equality.

Published by Kentigern Resource Centre - September 2003

## MEMBERSHIP OF COMMISSION

Religious Society of Friends	Ronis Chapman (Co-convenor)
Church of Christ	Glynthea Finger (Co-convenor)
Antiochian Orthodox	Moiria Kelly
Anglican	Philip Bradford
Catholic	Rosemary Breen Bernice Moore
Lutheran	Alicia Simpfendorfer
Uniting Church	Shehara Viswanathan Lisa Wriley
National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Ecumenical Commission	Elsie Heiss Graeme Mundine
General Sec. NCCA	John Henderson

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## NCCA



National Council of Churches in Australia



[www.ncca.org.au](http://www.ncca.org.au)

## ORIGIN



The National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA) Gender Commission was formed in 2001 as a result of a decision of the Forum of the National Council of Churches in Australia.

The Gender Commission grew out of the previous NCCA Network on Women and Gender Relationships which had been established in 1996.

This Commission was established in recognition of the ongoing struggle of women and supportive men within the various church traditions and structures to develop inclusive models of community, education and ministry.

The Commission has developed out of the awareness that the role and place of women in society and Church is often limited by oppressive structures.



## PURPOSE

The Gender Commission will work to develop and promote effective inclusive models of Christian life within and between member churches, NCCA, Commissions and Networks and other agencies as appropriate.



## ROLE

- To be a resource for the:
  - ♦ Executive
  - ♦ National Forum
  - ♦ Heads of Churches
 on matters pertaining to women and to relationship between women and men within churches.
- To develop, promote and engender ecumenical discussion on inclusivity in NCCA member churches.
- To contribute the perspective of women to official NCCA policy and to:
  - ♦ the internal life of the Churches
  - ♦ all NCCA Commissions
  - ♦ the networks
  - ♦ agencies
  - ♦ member churches
- To encourage:
  - ♦ exploration of inclusivity in ministry in all NCCA member churches
  - ♦ women to access theological education

- To consult with the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ecumenical Commission on gender issues.
- To foster inter-faith discussion with women on gender issues.
- To facilitate wider ecumenical relationships by:
  - ♦ maintaining communication with the Women's Unit of the WCC.
  - ♦ building and maintaining effective relationships with Christian Conference of Asia and the Pacific Council of Churches.

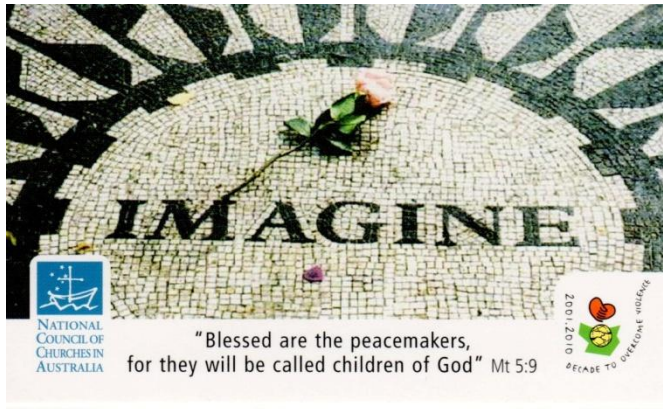


## RATIONALE

**INCLUSIVITY** - women's perspective needs to be promoted and valued.

**DIVERSITY** - the rich diversity within denominational traditions re women's issues needs to be recognised, honoured and valued.

**CREATIVITY** - the creative gifts evident in the community need to be embraced in the NCCA.



We pledge that from this moment on we will do all that we can to make peace.

We will speak out against violence, reminding all to love one another.

We will respect each other and ourselves,

We will seek forgiveness and forgive freely.

We will remember those who live with war, those who are poor,  
those who are sick and those who are brokenhearted.

We will thank God for our blessed lives and pray for others.

We will pray for world peace and the freedom of all people.

Blessed are the peacemakers,  
For they will be called children of God.

In Jesus name, Amen.