

Australian Council of Churches

(Affiliated with the World Council of Churches)

TELEPHONE: 61 4766
61 5224

TELEGRAPHIC:
"ECUMENICAL", SYDNEY



ROOM 2, 3RD FLOOR,
511 KENT STREET
(CNR. BATHURST STREET),
SYDNEY

INTERIM COMMITTEE of AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN

May 29, 1963.

The Interim Committee of Australian Church Women invites you to a conference in the Board Room, YWCA, 189 Liverpool Street, Sydney on Wednesday, July 10 from 10.30am to 2pm. The group will be the guests of the YWCA at morning tea at 10.15am.

The programme will include:

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| 10.30 - 10.55am | A Service of Worship |
| 11.00 - 12.15pm | Three short addresses on the Cooperation of Men and Women in the Church and Ecumenical adventure in the local Church. |
| 12.15 - 1.00pm | LUNCH. Served by the YWCA 2/6d per head. |
| 1.00 - 2.00pm | A panel discussion on questions raised by the recent statement on Australian Church Women. |

Now that individuals and groups have had time to think about the place and function of Australian Church Women we hope that this Conference will provide opportunity for further discussion and planning. We are inviting the Presidents and Secretaries of women's church organizations in Sydney. If you are unable to attend, we would be glad if you would appoint an alternate. I hope that you will be able to attend.

Yours sincerely,

RSVP
June 26

Member Churches:
Church of England, Methodist Church, Presbyterian Church,
Greek Orthodox Church, Churches of Christ, Congregational Churches,
Salvation Army, Society of Friends, Armenian Apostolic Church and
Antiochian Orthodox Church.

Mable G. Wyllie (Mrs.)
Convener.

AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN

The Interim Committee welcomes you to this Consultation of
women's groups.

- 10.30am SERVICE OF WORSHIP conducted by the Rev. Lilian Livingstone.

(at the conclusion of the service we will move quietly from the
Chapel to the adjoining Board Room.)
- 11.00am MORNING SESSION. Chairman: Mrs. Fred McKay
Addresses:
1. Department of Cooperation of Men and Women in Church, Family
and Society of the World Council of Churches.
 - Mrs. B. R. Wyllie
 2. Cooperation of Men and Women in the Australian Churches.
 - (a) Mrs. Maynard Davies, Congregational
 - (b) Mrs. B. H. Briggs, Society of Friends
 3. Ecumenical Adventure in the Local Church.
 - (a) Mrs. J.F. Dey
 - (b) Mrs. Harvey Perkins
- 12.15pm LUNCH
- 1.00pm AFTERNOON SESSION. Chairman: Mrs. S. McPhee
Panel Discussion:
- | | | |
|----------------------|---|-------------------|
| - Mrs. B. R. Wyllie |) | |
| - Mrs. S. M. Barrett |) | Members of the |
| - Deaconess Andrews |) | Interim Committee |
| - Mrs. F. McKay |) | |
- Questions and open discussion.
- 2.00pm CLOSING DEVOTIONS. Mrs. S. McPhee

The Interim Committee of Australian Church
Women expresses its sincere gratitude to
the Y.W.C.A. for their gracious hospitality
to us today.

Attendance, Shs

Attendance

Mabel G. Wylles
 Margaret M. McKay
 Isabel Clifford
 Ethel A. Bastoway
 Madys West
 Phyllis M. P. Antosh
 Ruth C. Daves
 Terena Saunders
 Keetal Day
 Ruby Dennis
 Jean Alexander
 M. J. Millikin
 Jean Coleman
 Rita Dickson
 Mary E. Esmore
 Eva Bell
 Aveline Lucas
 Edna Baker
 Blanche Mason (Y. W. C. A.)
 Edith Moore (Y. W. C. A.)

Name Only

Joanna Murray
 Isabel Rae
 Ettaice Tu. Vithe
 B. E. Montfomeine
 Lorna Lilley
 Alma Campbell
 Mary Miller
 A. Hall
 U. Schubert
 P. Smith
 A. Doratic
 L. Curran
 J. Gilbert
 Mabel Bell
 A. E. Thompson
 H. Olson
 Ed. Bugis
 Rose M. Water

In Thee
 Andrews.
 Barrett.

INTERIM COMMITTEE ON AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN

June 14, 1963.

Telephone:
51 2014

Mrs. Briggs,
13 Findlay Avenue,
ROSEVILLE.
N.S.W.

Dear Mrs. Briggs,

I am writing to thank you for agreeing to speak at the meeting of Australian Church Women on July 10. The enclosed invitation gives the programme for the day. We hope that there will be 50-60 women present representative of all the denominations in Sydney. Please telephone me if you have any questions on the programme or your part in it.

With kind regards.

Yours sincerely,

Mabel G. Wyllie (Mrs.)
Convener.

AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN

Suggestions for a more formal structure of Australian Church Women.

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1. THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN.

The basic composition of the NC of ACW shall be representative of:

1. Federal denominational women's organizations (appointed by the Federal body or by whatever means appropriate to the particular church).

| | | | |
|-------------------------|---|---------|----|
| Church of England | 4 | | |
| Methodist | 2 | | |
| Presbyterian | 2 | | |
| Congregational | 1 | | |
| Churches of Christ | 1 | | |
| Salvation Army | 1 | | |
| Other churches one each | | minimum | 15 |

2. State Councils of ACW (by whatever name they are called)
(see No.2 below)

| | | | | |
|------------|---|------------|---|---|
| Queensland | 1 | Sth Aust. | 1 | |
| N.S.W. | 2 | West Aust. | 1 | |
| Victoria | 2 | A.C.T. | 1 | |
| Tasmania | 1 | | | 9 |

3. Special interest groups: as will be named in the Constitution
e.g. Women's World Day of Prayer, YWCA 2
4. The Australian Council of Churches 4

2. STATE COUNCILS OF AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN.

The existing State women's inter-church groups (where their constitution provides for representatives to be appointed by the denominational women's organizations of the State) shall be invited to be the State Council of ACW.

3. STATE COUNCILS OF ACW shall have consultative status on the State Council of Churches or the Committee affiliated with the ACC.

(Consultants have the right to speak and move motions but not to vote.)

4. LOCAL GROUPS OF ACW in suburban and rural areas shall be affiliated with the State Council of ACW.

5. The LOCAL GROUP OF ACW shall become affiliated with the Local Inter-Church Council if that Council is affiliated with the State Council of the ACC.

6. Individuals may become corresponding members with the State Council of ACW if there is no local group to which they may belong.

7. When the invitation to existing State Women's Inter-Church Councils to become State Councils of ACW is extended the following points should be made:

1. That the present name of the State body may be retained but that the

organization function as the State Council of the ACW.

2. That the organization which functions as the State Council of ACW shall give priority to the promoting of and continuing assistance to local groups of ACW in suburban and rural areas.

3. That the State Council include all member churches of the Australian Council of Churches and such other churches as may desire membership. e.g. The Russian and Serbian Orthodox Churches are in the Inter-Church Aid in Australia but are not member churches of the ACC., the Baptist Federal Board of Christian Education is a member of the Australian Council of Christian Education and the Australian Christian Youth Council, but the Baptist Church is not a member of the ACC., the Baptist Unions in Victoria and Tasmania are members of the Victorian and Tasmanian Councils of Churches affiliated with the ACC., but the Australian Baptist Union is not a member of the ACC. The basis of membership shall be that which governs admission to the Australian Council of Churches:

"A fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit."

4. That the State Councils of the ACW determine their ratio of representation from their member groups.

5. That special interest groups which have membership on the National Council of ACW shall be invited to the members on the State Councils.

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INTERIM COMMITTEE OF AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN

Minutes of Interim Committee of Australian Church Women held on Wednesday, September 4 at 10 o'clock at the ACC offices.

OPENING: Mrs. J.F. Dey led the meeting in opening prayers.
PRESENT: Mesdames S.M.Barrett, F. McKay (in chair), J.F. Dey, L.Lilley, the Revs. H.L Perkins, J.R. Neal and C.H. Norton.

APOLOGIES: Apologies were received from Mesdames, B.R. Wyllie, S. McPhee, L. Williams and Deaconess Andrews.

MINUTES: Minutes of the previous meeting having been duly circulated were taken as read and confirmed.

BUSINESS ARISING:

Constitutional Relationships: It was resolved that the suggestions for a more formal structure of Australian Church Women be circulated to all women's denominational groups, heads of churches and committees of the Women's World Day of Prayer and the Y.W.C.A. together with a covering letter and the original statement.

Visit of Dr. Madeleine Barot: The meeting had before it the suggestions of the last meeting and a tentative programme which had been made following investigation of these suggestions. It was resolved that the following be the programme to be pursued:

| | | |
|-----------|------------------|--|
| Wednesday | lunch | Theological students and teachers at Camden College. Rev. C.H Norton to arrange |
| | afternoon | Australian Council of Churches Executive |
| | evening | Approach to be made to the French Embassy by the Rev. H.L Perkins for a reception to which community organisations are to be invited (list as per suggestions received from Mrs. Wyllie). |
| Thursday | morning | Meet with Miss Needham ^{NMCA} re single women migrants and their needs. |
| | lunch | National Council of Women. Miss Arnot has agreed to arrange a luncheon. Mrs. McKay to suggest that University women and women in private law be also invited. |
| | afternoon | Meet with deaconesses and women theological students at Deaconess House; Deaconess Andrews has agreed to arrange. |
| | tea | Rev. and Mrs. John Garrett. |
| | evening (8pm) | Mixed gathering probably at CENEV Auditorium to which WCCF members to be invited - Rev. C.H Norton to arrange. |
| Friday | morning (11am) | Meet with Interim Committee of Australian Church Women; Presidents or representatives of denominational women's groups; YWCA and Women's World Day of Prayer committee representatives. To be held in the ACC meeting room and to include lunch. |
| | afternoon (1.30) | Wesley Chapel to meet with the women of the various denominations. NSW Women's Inter-Church Council to arrange. |
| | evening | free. |

It was agreed that the services of the Public Relations Office, Mr. Vaughan Hinton be sought for the publicity work needed.

NSW STATE COMMITTEE OF THE AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES:

The Rev. C.H Norton asked if the Interim Committee would be willing for one of its members to attend the next meeting of the Committee to speak about Australian Church Women. It was agreed that Mrs. McKay attend the meeting on September 17 to speak about Australian Church Women.

CORRESPONDENCE:

(1) A letter was tabled concerning the difficulties arising in South Australia and a reply drafted was read to the meeting. It was agreed that this letter be forwarded urgently to help to clear up the apparent misunderstandings over finance which had arisen there.

(2) A letter received by Mrs. McKay from the Presbyterian women in Victoria was also tabled. Mrs. McKay sought the assistance of the committee in order that she may adequately represent the view of Australian Church Women when she meet with the committee in Melbourne on October 1.

WORLD COMMUNITY DAY:

It was reported that orders had been received for the observance of World Community Day on September 27 from Mangrove Mountain (Gosford district) and Alice Springs.

Mrs. Lilley reported that she had been disappointed at the response so far from N.S.W. but that she was including publicity of the day to all Methodist ministers' wives which was being sent out in the near future. The plans were well in hand for the Sydney observance at the CENEF Auditorium on September 27.

It was agreed that a circular be prepared to advertise the Sydney observance of World Community Day and the visit of Dr. Madeleine Barot for distribution wherever possible. One suggestion was at the Women's World Day of Prayer rally to be held on September 12 - Mrs. Lilley to follow up this suggestion. Mrs. Barrett requested 100 copies for her use at Kingsgrove.

STUDY MATERIAL:

It was reported that the study material had been received from the committee in Melbourne. Three different studies had been sent and they were being studied by the various members of the Interim Committee. A discussion will be held at the next Interim Committee meeting on October 2.

Mrs. Dey reported that the Congregational Women's Fellowship were anxious to use part of the study in their 1964 programme (the other sections having been already covered in their studies over the past two years). It was agreed that the Interim Committee cooperate with them. Mr. Perkins also agreed that the ACC would cooperate in the producing of the study.

CLOSING: The meeting closed with prayer led by the Rev. H.L Perkins.

CONFIRMED: _____

DATE: _____

PLEASE NOTE THE NEXT MEETING OF THE INTERIM COMMITTEE WILL MEET ON WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 2 at 10 O'CLOCK in the A.C.C. MEETING ROOM, 511 KENT STREET, SYDNEY.

VISIT OF Mlle Madeleine Barot

Programme (as at September 4)

WEDNESDAY
October 16

| | |
|-----------|--|
| lunch | Theological students and teachers at Camden College. Rev. C.H. Norton to arrange. |
| afternoon | Australian Council of Churches Executive |
| evening | Approach to be made to the French Embassy by the Rev. H.L. Perkins for a reception to which community organisations are to be invited (list as per suggestions received from Mrs. Wyllie). |

THURSDAY
October 17

| | |
|---------------|---|
| morning | Meet with Miss Needham re single women migrants and their needs. |
| lunch | National Council of Women. Miss Arnot has agreed to arrange a luncheon. Mrs. McKay to suggest that University women and women in private law be also invited. |
| afternoon | Meet with deaconesses and women theological students at Deaconess House - Deaconess Andrews has agreed to arrange. |
| tea | Rev. & Mrs. J. Garrett |
| evening (8pm) | Mixed gathering probably at GENIEF Auditorium to which WCCF members to be invited - Rev.C.H. Norton to arrange. |

FRIDAY
October 18

| | |
|---------|--|
| 11.00am | Meet with Interim Committee of Australian Church Women; Presidents or representatives of denominational women's groups; YWCA and Women's World Day of Prayer committee representatives; to be held in the ACC meeting room and to include lunch. |
| 1.30pm | Wesley Chapel - to meet with the women of the various churches. NSW Women's Inter-Church Council to arrange. |
| Evening | Free. |

News for Women

To Investigate Family Life In Pacific Area

A cheerful French woman who has seen "almost every country in the world" arrived in Australia for the first time yesterday.

She is Mlle. Madeleine Barot, of Geneva, executive secretary of the Council of Churches' Department of Men and Women in Church, Family and Society.

She arrived by T.A.I. to make a two-month investigation in the Pacific area of family life and the education and status of women.

She brought with her these preliminary opinions:

● Women in the Pacific area need a lot of help to develop a program of action.

● Missionaries in the churches, in the last decade have established a discipline concerning marriage and family life, based mainly on village life.

● The increasing number of Pacific women have not yet reached secondary education, and certainly not university level.

● Each of the ladies' auxiliaries was responsible for the decor of one table at the dinner which began the 101st annual festival of the Sydney City Mission at the Sydney Town Hall last night.

The Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Kenneth Street, attended the festival, which included a historical and dramatic presentation by the Australian Christian Theatre Guild of the rehabilitation work of the City Night Refuge, instrumental by the Christian Youth Fellowship, and songs by a combined choir of 250 voices conducted by Dick Shipway.

of working wives has life to answer the problems of today. When a husband moves from the village to a town other relationships establish themselves between husband and wife.

In former times, if a wife were not educated and working with a family group, in a kind of family economy, she was not at all independent. Now, if she is in a factory or shop, she has money of her own, is in contact with people—her attitude to her husband is not the same."



Mlle Madeleine Barot
Executive Secretary,
Department on Cooperation of Men and Women
in Church, Family and Society

Madeleine Barot was born in 1909 at Chateauroux, in Touraine, the geographic centre of France, and famous even among the French, as the province where the purest French is spoken. Perhaps she inherited an ecumenical outlook; her father, a professor of the classics at Versailles, came from a long line of Huguenots, while her mother was from a Lutheran family of Alsace-Lorraine.

Madeleine Barot studied history and archeology at the University of Paris, and after taking her degree in 1935, was awarded a fellowship at the Ecole Francaise d'Archeologie at Rome. During the next three years she acted as librarian for the Ecole Francaise while working on her thesis dealing with "Huguenot Persecutions and Human Rights".

During the years 1939-40 she lived at the French Embassy at Rome, and was engaged in giving talks on French culture to Italian audiences. When France was invaded, in 1940, by Germany, Italy's ally, she returned home, wondering what the future held in store for a cultural propagandist.

While studying in Paris, Mlle Barot had lived in an international student hostel of the University of Paris, founded by Sarah Watson, of the American YWCA, and run under the auspices of the Student Christian Movement. She was elected president of the SCM, Paris, and from 1935-36 served as programme secretary of the International Student Club.

In the meantime, she had also become a student of theology, though as an avocation growing out of her interest in the Protestant history of France, rather than with any thought of using such knowledge professionally.

In 1940 she asked Pastor Marc Boegner, president of the French Reformed Church and of the Protestant Federation of France, what the Protestant and Orthodox youth of France could do to help the victims of war. One of the first efforts undertaken was in concentration camps set up by the French government and in which disgraceful conditions prevailed. Mlle Barot went to one where 25,000 people were interned and asked the young commandant of the camp how she could help him, especially with children, who were dying daily. This offer was accepted and a request made for clothing and medicines. Finally, together with the help of a French pastor, she managed to enter the camp. Similar efforts were undertaken in other such camps in various parts of France, and the churches started giving support to this effort for which young teams of volunteers were recruited who were prepared to give up everything to live in the camps alongside the refugees, with whom they shared very hard conditions of life. From this work was organised CIMADE (Comite Inter-Mouvements aupres des Evacues).

In the years since then CIMADE has become the great service organisation of French Protestantism, though its members are not all Reformed and Lutherans. It groups together the youth movements of the churches concerned with the ecumenical idea, including the Orthodox. CIMADE has battled for persecuted Jews, for Spanish refugees, for Catholics, Protestants, and unbelievers in need. It has been supported by gifts of food, clothing and money from all over the world through the World Council of Churches. CIMADE teams have worked in the suburbs of the big industrial towns of Dunkirk and Marseilles.

Mlle Barot continued for some time to hold a responsibility in the directing team of CIMADE. In this capacity she received an honorary degree of Doctor of Humanities from Wilson College in the USA in 1954.

Madeleine Barot became a member of the executive staff of the World Council of Churches at the beginning of 1953, as Director of the Commission on the Life and Work of Women in the Church.

This Commission was set up in 1948 by the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam, its first Director being Miss Sarah Chakko of India, after which for a few months it was in the charge of Mrs Kathleen Bliss. The Second Assembly held at Evanston in 1954 changed its title to "Department on the Cooperation of Men and Women in Church and Society". The Third Assembly held at New Delhi in 1961 added the word "Family", so that the name of the Department is now the Department on Cooperation of Men and Women in Church, Family and Society.

This development in terminology already reflects the influence of Madeleine Barot. The emphasis shifted from the concept or "status" to the concept of "service" and especially to the idea of "cooperation between men and women"; it shifted also from preoccupation with the role of women in the Church to the contribution of women together with men in the family and in society. In other words, Madeleine Barot tried to lead the interest of the churches, and especially of the women's associations, away from the narrow and sometimes aggressive concept of women's rights to a rediscovery of full cooperation between men and women in every sphere of life.

It is partly due to her that Africa is included on the ecumenical map today. Since 1954 she has travelled all over the African continent, and has carried out a general enquiry and continuous consultations concerning widely-varied problems such as polygamy, the custom of the bride-price, the status of girls and young women in the service of the Church, legislation concerning marriage and divorce, the education of women on questions concerning sex and the family. Through the organisation of meetings and conferences in different parts of Africa, especially of two pan-African Conferences for women (at Ibadan in 1958 and at Kampala in 1963) her Department has been able to exercise considerable influence on Christian life. It is therefore not surprising that the newly-constituted All-Africa Church Conference plans to make cooperation between men and women one of its main concerns.

At this point mention must be made of Madeleine Barot's work in Algeria. As a member of CIMADE (even when she was no longer one of its leaders) and as a Frenchwoman who is active in the ecumenical movement, the Algerian tragedy of 1954-62 made a very deep impression upon her. She was actively engaged in continuing CIMADE's work in Algeria, and helped to found the Committee for Christian Service in Algeria, which has been coordinating all the Christian relief projects in Algeria since the war ended.

In her capacity as Director of this Department of the World Council of Churches, she has directed her attention especially to the emancipation of Algerian women today and their preparation for life and work in society. At the same time this gave her an opportunity to investigate the problem of the position of women in Moslem countries.

A broad section of her work is concentrated upon the countries of Asia. She has travelled in Japan, Hong Kong, Formosa, Philippines, Malaya, Burma and India. She has organised consultations in Madras, in Thailand and Indonesia and has promoted the study of questions such as family planning, responsible parenthood, and practical problems facing working mothers, and the responsibility of Christian women in political life.

Her contacts with the United Nations form another aspect of her work. She devotes a lot of time to the United Nations' Commission on the Status of Women, which brings her in touch with many secular women's associations, and also gives her the opportunity to form contacts with governments which may sometimes be useful to national churches, if they wish to take up contact with their own government.

With regard to the permanent problem of the ordination of women to the ministry, Madeleine Barot says that no initiative is required in this connection at the moment. Things are moving, and the only thing needed is to keep informed about the many simultaneous developments in the different confessions and countries, in order to be able to supply adequate documentary material to churches which are seeking a new approach to this question.

Madeleine Barot's Department is in permanent contact with at least 2,000 people all over the world. These are not all representatives of the member churches of the World Council of Churches, but also include many Roman Catholics. For many years she has fostered personal relations with Catholic groups, kept in close contact with the Roman Catholic Orders and with lay groups within the Roman Catholic Church which are concerned with the ordination of women. She also has many contacts with non-Christians - members of secular occupational associations in the West, or of the Association of Moslem Women in Africa, or with groups of communist or Marxist tendencies.

She says that the secular women's organisations are trying to understand the Church's attitude to their problems. They realise that it is largely due to the Christian faith that women are recognised as personalities and that they receive opportunities for education. But they also say that the attitude of the Church is extremely conservative (not to say reactionary) in regard to marriage, the family and other problems which concern women. They are asking how these two attitudes can be reconciled.

In 1955 the WCC adopted a statement outlining the task of the Department. This begins:

"The basic concern of this Department, as of the entire World Council of Churches, is the wholeness of the Church. This wholeness can be achieved only when every part of the membership of the Church is enabled to participate fully in its life. Effective participation includes working together with others who have different gifts. The special concern of this Department is the cooperation between men and women. It is inherent in our Faith that men and women are called and sent together to do God's will in the Church and in society. God created men and women and set them together under His blessing and His order. Christ came to save men and women and called them together to His discipleship. The Holy Spirit was given to men and women as members of the new community to witness together for the sake of Christ in the world.

"This emphasis on "togetherness" implies recognition of the incompleteness of man and woman when taken separately or in isolation from each other. For this reason the cooperation of men and women is not a special doctrinal issue nor yet a single feature of church life or organisation. Still less is it an emphasis on the interests or rights of a single group in the Church. It touches nearly all doctrinal and practical issues with which the Church is concerned."

For the information of Presbyterian members of the Australian Council of Churches.

AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN

Since receiving the initial information regarding the formation of Australian Church Women at the Annual Meeting of the Australian Council of Churches, the Executive and Council of the Presbyterian Women's Association of Australia, Victoria Unit, have given much thought to the suggestions sent by the Interim-Committee. As there was a good deal of confusion the P.W.A. brought Mrs. McKay, a member of the Interim-Committee, to Melbourne to address a meeting of Presbyterian women and to answer questions. Following this meeting, as it appeared clear that no major change in the Interim-Committee's original plan was likely, the P.W.A. executive made the following recommendations to Council:

The P.W.A. does not really favour setting up a separate women's organisation, but because the Australian Council of Churches feels the need of some such women's organisation we feel we should support Australian Church Women.

We do not favour any organisational representation at National level, but rather, that representation should come from State Inter-Church Councils plus Australian Council of Churches representation.

We feel that at this stage State Inter-Church Councils should not be expected to change their present set-up unless they are willing.

We feel that at all levels there should be some provision made for men and women to work together.

However at the Council meeting in November strong opposition to the plan in its present form was expressed by Council members representing both organisations and congregational units, especially by representatives of the latter who had had an opportunity to discuss in their local groups the possibility of implementing the A.C.W. idea in their local situations. The Council declined to vote on the Executive's recommendation and appointed a very representative sub-committee to report to the Council at its next meeting in March.

The President of the P.W.A. of Australia was present at this meeting and shared in the discussion. It was then thought that there would be an opportunity for adequate discussion at the Federal Conference in September, 1964 for a possible request to the Australian Council of Churches to reconsider the same matter. Another state has asked the P.W.A. Federal Executive for guidance about A.C.W., but the Federal Executive has informed states that it does not feel able to give any guidance until the Conference in September.

Since then a news sheet has been circulated by the Interim-Committee indicating that a federal consultation will take place in March to determine the future development of Australian Church Women. Organisations will not be represented at this meeting although it is proposed that they shall be represented on the Australian Council of A.C.W. Presbyterian women have not yet had an opportunity to discuss the matter at their Australian level, nor will they have until September 1964 by which time apparently the whole pattern will be determined.

The fundamental matters which have caused most difficulty appear to be:-

1. Confusion about the formation of a women's organisation in view of the World Council of Churches' decision to abandon a separate women's commission.
2. Delegates of the churches to the Australian Council of Churches Annual Meeting committed the women of their churches to a women's organisation of a particular pattern without the women having any opportunity to consider the desirability of a women's organisation or the form that such an organisation might take.
3. This put the women of the churches in the position of accepting, without an opportunity to modify its pattern, an organisation planned by a small group of women in one state, or of standing out of a new ecumenical venture.

Other difficulties raised are:-

1. The danger of encouraging a strong women's organisation to develop alongside the Australian Council of Churches.
2. The inclusion of organisations, either church or "special interest", in an organisation of Church women who should be members by right of their membership in their own churches.
3. (a) Encouragement of local inter-church women's groups could compete with, or hinder, the development of inter-church councils (men and women) associated with the State Councils of Churches.

(b) It could also cut across present work involving men and women at local congregation level.
4. It would have been better to have authorised the Interim-Committee to see what sort of organisation would be acceptable, and then to wait until all Australian women's organisations had had an opportunity to speak before a definite pattern was decided on.

The P.W.A. would probably have unanimously supported a federation of state Women's Inter-Church Councils with a federal committee elected by the state councils, each state developing its council as best suited to its own situation as is now done within the P.W.A. of Australia.

There is at present some confusion about Victorian Inter-Church Council's exact present relation to the proposed Australian Church Women.

8/1/64.

Australian Church Women -

Three definite points put before the P. W. A. Council by its Executive:

- (a) Executive queries the setting up of a separate women's organisation; what part would it play in the whole life of the Church?
- (b) Executive is opposed to the organisational representation suggested in the proposed set up.
- (c) Representation should come from the bottom up, but care should be taken to preserve the denominational representation in some way.

Points raised in Executive + Council among other representatives Presbyterian women.

- 1) Is this not a retrograde step in view of the W. P. C.'s deliberate decision to replace the Commission on Women with one including men, & more broadly based?
- 2) There should not be representation at both state & Australian level. Australian representation should come from states. The suggested plan would be very confusing.
- 3) The organisational pattern varies so much & so many women are not in organisations that any organisational set up would be ~~be~~ unrealistic and would unduly limit the pattern of women work in the churches for the present at any rate. G'd to have someone to work out from
- 4) If the organisational set up is accepted some denominations, including the Presbyterians, would be involved in

- (How) decisions at these points - Interchurch Council, state P.W.A
 & Federal P.W.A and all these decisions could easily be different
- 5) Couldn't individual membership be the basis of the Association?
 - 6) We women are already so confused about organisations, church departments, interchurch councils, World Day of prayer, Victorian Council of churches, Australian Council of churches, World Council of churches, what to suggest something else could easily make them throw up their hands altogether.
 - 7) What does the W.C.C. think about A.C.W.?
 - 8) Couldn't a committee representing all states work on the suggested structure, we all belong to the women's interchurch council and they could choose a representative
 - 9) Couldn't each state suggest a structure and then everyone discuss them.

Member Churches at 2nd level.

State Councils.

*Invitations to
State Units*

ALSO TO: MRS. COL SAUNDERS - Vittoria
Mrs. B Thomson, S.A. *Arrangements*
②

INTERIM COMMITTEE OF AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN

December 18, 1963.

Mrs. H. J. Lilley,
Honorary Secretary,
NSW Women's Inter-Church Council,
206m Eastern Valley Way,
WILLOUGHBY. N.S.W

Dear Mrs. Lilley,

RE NATIONAL CONSULTATION.

Further to our letter of invitation to the National Consultation to be held in Sydney next March, we have pleasure in passing on to you the Interim Committee's suggested agenda for the Consultation.

- (1) Narration and discussion of the steps taken to establish ACW (this will include both structure and programme).
- (2) Where do we go from here in dewloping ACW?
 - (a) at national level
 - (b) at state level
 - (c) at local leveland the relation between a, b, and c.
(d) finance.
- (3) How do we develop our programme?
 - i. Fellowship Day
 - ii. Community Day
 - iii. Local Women's Inter-Church Groups
 - iv. Projects; scholarships, fraternal workers.
 - v. Cooperation of men and women in the Church.
- (4) Constitution of the Australian Church Women.

We would be very happy to receive any comments and suggestions that

- 2 -

your committee may wish to contribute, and look forward to hearing from you as to the name of your delegate for the Consultation so that we may arrange for hospitality.

Yours sincerely,

Mabel G. Wyllie (convener)

INTERIM COMMITTEE OF AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN

November 11, 1963

Mrs. H.J. Lilley,
Secretary,
N.S.W. Women's Inter-Church Council,
206 Eastern Valley Way,
WILLOUGHBY.
N.S.W.

Dear Mrs. Lilley,

At the meeting of the Interim Committee of Australian Church Women on Wednesday, November 6 a discussion took place on what the next steps should be in relation to the establishment of Australian Church Women, and the following resolution was passed:

1. That a national consultation be called by the Interim committee.
2. That the consultation be held from March 17 - 18 in Sydney.
3. That invitations be sent to the women's inter-church councils of South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales.
4. That the fare of one person from each state be paid by the committee (return rail fare from Melbourne and Brisbane, air fare from Adelaide), and that each state be invited to send one other at their own expense.
5. That hospitality be found in Sydney.
6. That Mrs. McKay, Mrs. Verco and Deaconess Andrews from a sub-committee to prepare a draft agenda to be submitted to the next meeting.
7. That there be three or possibly four sessions: afternoon and evening of March 17 and morning and possibly afternoon of March 18."

This is to invite the N.S.W. Women's Inter-Church Council to this consultation with other women's inter-church councils who have accepted the invitation to cooperate with the Australian Church Women.

As you will see from the resolution of the last meeting the draft agenda will be discussed at the next meeting and will be forwarded to you later.

We think that within the last year we have travelled a great distance and we feel that that this consultation will be a means of bringing us closer together in the fellowship of the Christian Church, and helping us to establish the work we feel needs to be done in our women's groups in bringing to them a truly ecumenical experience.

The consultation is being made possible by the Australian Council of Churches who are cooperating with us in this next step and is being planned at a time when we have the counsel of the President and the General Secretary of the Council.

We trust that you will accept this invitation and we will look forward to hearing who your representatives will be.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. M. G. Wyllie,
Chairman.

Also sent to: Mrs Colonel Saunders, Victoria; Mrs D D Thomson S Aust

Women's Inter-church Council of Victoria

PRESIDENT

Hon. Secretary:
Mrs. Colonel Saunders,
40 Middleborough Road,
Burwood, E.13
Telephone: 28 5702.

Mrs. O. Keen.....

Hon. Treasurer:
Mrs. T. G. Grieve,
9 Serpentine Street,
Mont Albert, E.10
Telephone: 89 4505.

7 JAN 1964 5.1.64

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|--------------------|------|
| <i>Mrs. Grieve</i> | SEC. |
| GEN. SEC. | |
| EXEC. SEC. | |
| MEMBERS | |
| PROG. | |
| AREA | |
| FILE | |

Mrs. M.G. Myllie
511 Kent Street
Sydney

Dear Mrs. Myllie,

Thankyou for your letter of November 11th.'63. Will you please forgive my delay in replying- my correspondence is in arrears I fear.

Unfortunately our final Council meeting for the year had been held, and our year's work concluded before your letter came, but Mrs. Keen has conferred with each member of the Executive, and I am now able to reply to your queries.

"1. The Council thanks you for your invitation to 2 of our members to attend the National consultation called by the Interim Committee, to be held in Sydney on March 17-18th. We have pleasure in accepting your invitation, and the Executive have asked me to let you know that Mrs. T.H. Coates, and myself will represent the Victorian Council.

2. We shall be happy to pay the fare of one representative, and gratefully accept your offer to pay the 2nd.fare.

3. Thankyou for your kind offer of hospitality during the consultation.

With yourself, we feel we have 'travelled a long way this year' and we look forward to coming closer to each other, in fellowship and understanding during this year we have just commenced.

With kindest regards!

Yours very sincerely,

Florence Saunders
Florence Saunders,
Mon. Sec.

INTERIM COMMITTEE OF AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN

January 28, 1964.

Mrs. F. G. Dennis,
32 Coronation Road,
BARDON.
Brisbane, Q^{land}

Dear Mrs. Dennis,

We are happy to know that the Queensland Women's Inter-Church Council has accepted our invitation to become the state council for Australian Church Women and we look forward to the fellowship we will share together.

We now write to you concerning a consultation we are planning in March.

The Consultation will be held in Sydney from March 17 - 18 and invitations have already been sent to the women's inter-church councils of South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales who have also accepted the invitation to be the state council of Australian Church Women in their respective States.

The Interim Committee invites you to be represented at the consultation and is prepared to pay the return rail fare of one delegate from your council. Hospitality will be found for your delegate or delegates in Sydney.

We think that within the last year we have travelled a great distance and we feel that this consultation will be a means of bringing us closer together in the fellowship of the Christian Church, and helping us to establish the work we feel needs to be done in our women's groups in bringing to them a truly ecumenical experience.

The consultation is being made possible by the Australian Council of Churches who are cooperating with us in this next step and is being planned at a time when we have the counsel of the President and the General Secretary of the Australian Council of Churches.

The following is an outline of the proposed agenda -

- (1) Narration and discussion of the steps taken to establish Australian Church Women (this will include both structure and programme).
- (2) Where do we go from here in developing A.C.W. ?
 - (a) at national level
 - (b) at state level
 - (c) at local leveland the relation between a, b, and c.
(d) finance.
- (3) How do we develop our programme?
 - i. Fellowship Day
 - ii. Community Day
 - iii. Local Women's Inter-Church Groups
 - iv. Projects; scholarships, fraternal workers
 - v. Cooperation of men and women in the Church.
- (4) Constitution of the Australian Church Women.

We would be very happy to receive any comments and suggestions that your committee may wish to contribute, and look forward to hearing from you as to the name/names of your delegate/s for the Consultation so that we may arrange hospitality.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. M. G. Wyllie,
Convener.

Womens Inter-Church Council of Queensland

32 Coronation St.,
Bardon,
Queensland,
1st. February 1964.

The Convener,
Interim Committee,
Australian Church Women.

Dear Mrs. Wyllie,

Thank you for the welcome extended to our Council.
We look forward to developments of the Australian Church Women.

At our meeting held yesterday, the question of a delegate to the Consultation to be held in Sydney on 17th. and 18th. March was discussed. Unfortunately our President, Mrs Ashton, had another commitment thus preventing her from representing our Council, and it was agreed that the Secretary should attend. I therefore await further information as to time and place of meetings. I shall be glad of hospitality, and will meet my hostess at the meeting on Tuesday 17th. March.

Thank you for the copy of "Saints Alive" in which our members were interested. It was decided to order ~~36 copies~~ of the study booklet, and our cheque to cover cost and postage will be forwarded as soon as the postage is known.

I forgot to mention that our President intimated that should any member be visiting Sydney at the time of the Consultation she may care to attend with our official delegate.

Christian greetings,

Yours sincerely,



(Mrs. F.G. Dennis),
Hon. Secretary,
Women's Inter-Church Council of Queensland.

INTERIM COMMITTEE OF AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN.

February 24, 1964.

Mrs. E.A. Pitman,
8 Bolingbroke Grove,
TOORAK GARDENS.
South Australia

Dear Mrs. Pitman,

We are very glad that you are able to attend as a representative of your inter-church council the Consultation on Australian Church Women to be held in Sydney from March 15 - 18.

Enclosed you will find a form to be completed concerning your travel arrangements and an outline of the business to be discussed which has been suggested by the Interim Committee.

We will commence with lunch at 12.30pm on the 17th at Wesley College (within the grounds of the University of Sydney which is only a few miles from the Central Railway Station). If you are unfamiliar with Sydney and would welcome being assisted in finding your way please indicate on the enclosed form and we will arrange for you to be met.

We are looking forward to this Consultation together as we feel it will be of considerable help to us all as we seek the will of God in our work.

With best wishes:

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. Mabel G. Wyllie,
Convener.

Enclosed: Form re travel
Outline of business
to be discussed.

Sent also to: Mrs Joan Coates, Victoria

Mrs Colonel Saunders, Victoria

Mrs E P Playford, SA

INTERIM COMMITTEE OF AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN

OUTLINE OF BUSINESS TO BE DISCUSSED

CONSULTATION - March 17-18 1964

Sydney

(A) SHORT PAPERS WILL BE PRESENTED ON THE FOLLOWING TOPICS.

- (1) Relation of the Australian Council of Churches with Australian Church Women.
- (2) Relation of Australian Church Women to the Department on the Cooperation of Men and Women in Church, Family and Society of the World Council of Churches.
- (3) How to establish local councils and how to promote Community Day and Fellowship Day - report by the Victorian Women's Inter-Church Council.
- (4) The Fellowship of the Least Coin. Relation of Australian Church Women with regional councils of the WCC.
- (5) Ecumenical promotion within the local congregation - the "grass roots".
(Joint action for mission)
- (6) Report on the Singapore Situation Conference.
- (7) Statement of the steps leading to the calling of the consultation.

(B) GENERAL DISCUSSION

- (a) Where do we go from here?
 - in developing at national level
 - state level
 - local level
 - relation between these three
 - finance
- (b) How to develop our programme
 - Fellowship Day
 - Community Day
 - Local groups
 - Projects - scholarships, fraternal workers
 - Cooperation of men and women
- (c) Main points for the drawing up of a Constitution.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS:

State Units:

Mrs. E.A. Pitman - South Australia (Methodist)
Mrs. E.P. Playford South Australia (Presbyterian)
Mrs. F.G. Dennis Queensland (Presbyterian)
Mrs. T.H. Coates Victoria (Methodist)
Mrs. Col. Saunders Victoria (Salvation Army)
N.S.W. (to be nominated)
N.S.W.

Interim Committee

Mrs. M.G. Wyllie - Convener.
Mrs. Brig. Baker (Salvation Army)
Deaconess Andrews (C. of E.)
Mrs. J.F. Dey (Cong.)
Mrs. S. McPhee (Cong.)
Mrs. S.M. Barrett (Meth.)
Mrs. H.J. Lilley (Meth.)
Mrs. D.J.A. Verco (C. of C.)
Mrs. L.M. Williams (Pres.)
Mrs. Doratis (G.Orth)
A.C.C.: Rev. B.R. Wyllie - President
Rev. H.L. Perkins - Gen. Sec.

REPORT ON AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN.

REPORT SUBMITTED ON 11/1/64.

Early in 1963 we first heard of a new federal women's inter-church group, an interim committee of which was set up by the Australian Council of Churches.

After discussing the proposed structure of this new group it was felt we should know more about Australian Church Women, its beginnings and its aims and a public meeting was arranged in Scots Hall on October 1st last, at which Mrs. Fred McKay - a Presbyterian representative from Sydney on the interim committee agreed to come and address the meeting. Mrs. McKay said that A.C.C. was commencing to bridge at federal level the denominational barriers existing between the churches, and to incorporate Australian Christian women in the world wide mission of the church.

After many hours of thought and discussion it was evident that P.W.A. was not really in favour of A.C.C. under its proposed structure, and Council appointed a sub-committee to submit a report. The report which stated that we were not in favour of a separate women's organisation, but rather, within the structure of the Australian Council of Churches, an organisation patterned upon the department of co-operation of men and women in church, family and society as exists in the World Council of Churches. This report has been submitted to the interim committee and the Australian Council of Churches. The latest information we have received states that the interim committee has been asked to hold proceedings until after the various women's organisations have discussed the matter at all levels. To enable P.W.A. to do this at the September conference Mrs. Christie-Johnston has formulated questions and executive has asked the sub-committee formed by the Council to deal with them.

Report on Australian Church Women – PWA Annual Meeting 1964

Early in 1963 we first heard of a new federal women's inter-church group, an interim committee of which was set up by the Australian Council of Churches.

After discussing the proposed structure of this new group it was felt we should know more about Australian Church Women, its beginnings and its aims and a public meeting was arranged in Scots Hall on October 1st last, at which Mrs Fred McKay – a Presbyterian representative from Sydney on the interim committee agreed to come and address the meeting. Mrs McKay said that ACW was commencing to bridge at federal level the denominational barriers existing between the churches, and to incorporate Australian Christian women in the world wide mission of the church. (Text of address follows)

After many hours of thought and discussion it was evident that PWA was not really in favour of ACW under its proposed structure, and Council appointed a sub-committee to submit a report. The report which stated that we were not in favour of a separate women's organisation, but rather, within the structure of the Australian Council of Churches, an organisation patterned upon the department of co-operation of men and women in church, family and society as exists in the World Council of Churches. This report has been submitted to the interim committee and the Australian Council of Churches. The latest information we have received states that the interim committee has been asked to hold proceedings until after the various women's organisations have discussed the matter at all levels. To enable PWA to do this at the September conference Mrs Christie-Johnston has formulated questions and executive has asked the sub-committee to deal with them.

Talk given by Mrs F McKay (Margaret) at PWA meeting Scots Hall Melbourne October 1963

I have not come here today simply to write up on the wall Australian Church Women for ever and ever, Amen – but to try and share with you something of the adventure crossing our horizon as this new ecumenical planet swerves into our ken.

Only fair to give you something of the background in the development. ACC set up a committee to investigate women's work in the churches – by invitation early meeting grew in numbers. Consultations Mrs Faichney.

We were convinced that there was a need to work across and to bridge denominational barriers. We believe that there is a desire among many women in the churches to have a deeper bond of fellowship with Christian women of all denominations and to know the strength which comes from such unity.

Christian unity has come to be widely recognised as an imperative for the effective work and witness of the Church in our times. We have all known and benefitted from the fellowship and inspiration and 'oneness' which comes to us on Women's World Day of Prayer. But it is often quickly nullified by the stark realisation that this happens to us for but one hour of one day in one year. There is no other channel whereby we can rise from our narrow local spheres of witness and service and find ourselves a part of the world scene – partners in the fellowship of the Church in the world.

So the recommendation to the Annual Meeting of the Australian Council of Churches in February of this year was that there should be set up, within the Council's Division of Ecumenical Promotion an organisation to be known as Australian Church Women. Its purpose is to unite Australian church women in their allegiance to their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: to provide opportunities for Christian worship, fellowship and service across denominational divisions; through the Australian Council of Churches to incorporate Christian women into the total life and mission of the church and to unite them for the building of a world Christian Community.

The name was chosen because it creates an image and suggests a fellowship rather than yet another organisation. We saw many openings for the influence of Australian church women, and movements such as Joint Action for Mission, Frontier of Mission, National Community Day come quickly to mind.

All this thinking and belief is not unique in concept or in Australia.

Lady Ibiam the wife of the Governor of East Nigeria who himself is a President of the World Council writing in the Reformed and Presbyterian World says:

"For over so many years in Nigeria and in the rest of Africa, the dignity of womanhood had been looked down upon by the menfolk of our country and our continent. But when women begin to organise themselves to protest against anything to which they strongly object, the men soon realise that there is force of strength and determination when the womenfolk are on the move.

The advance of women today is largely due to the influence of the Church, through the effective service of missionary bodies of all denominations from America, Britain and Europe.

The evidence of change is all around us. Each day we read about and see creative ideas being put into action. These ideas are necessary for us in order to face the very increasing complexities of life

and this life does not exclude the Church. If we have the proper motivation to be creative, are willing to be stimulated by other people and are ready to try new things in faith, much progress can be made.

At the Committee on Women's work at Kitwe, Northern Rhodesia, the need to unite women of all the Churches into a deeper understanding of their oneness in Christ and of their calling to participate actively as full members of the Body of Christ, was most felt. It was therefore recommended that a Commission on Women's responsibilities in Church, Family and Society be formed as a branch of the All Africa Church Conference during the Assembly in Kampala in April 1963.

Such a Commission would be a body through which Christian women and women's organisations could work together on matters of common concern, through consultation, pooling of resources of knowledge and of personnel, and initiate projects of service and promote leadership training at all levels.

It would represent the Christian women of Africa and also co-operate with international bodies such as the Department on Co-Operation of Men and Women of the World Council of Churches. Furthermore, it would help to promote the rethinking of the Christian faith particularly in the realms of marriage, family life and the status of women.

I believe that there is a unique contribution which women can make and which has not yet been fully mobilised. In Nigeria, there is an organisation called the United Church Women which embraces all denominations. As an organisation made up of individuals, the United Church Women is unrivalled in its ability and capacity to reach into homes, industrial combines and civic groups. What is necessary and desirable is that the individual woman across the country should proclaim unceasingly that Christians have a moral obligation to speak relevantly and courageously to the great issues of our time. The United Church Women of Nigeria accepts the challenge to help solve problems of Home and Family Life, Church and Society, Youth and the aged.

There is an urgent need today for the education of African mothers. This will mean the existence of a sufficiently large number of African women potential leaders who can successfully cope with the taxing demands of this our twentieth century era. The strength of dedicated leadership from women in the Church in all parts of the world is unrealised. Nigeria still needs missionaries of the right type who understand the Africans and believe and respect their human rights and dignity, and that they are children of God our Father." *Eudora O. Ibiam*

(Refer to United Church Women of America order of service for Community Day)

Stress use of name in full – this is an initial happy world – if proud of it, name it. We as Presbyterians are culprits too – only denomination which uses initials for its women's organisations.

However as Presbyterian women there are certain facts which confront us. If the Uniting Church of Australia comes – and I for one sincerely pray it will – we are all automatically in a new ecumenical fellowship. I think it is quite wrong for any of us to be satisfied and complacent about our present compartmented type of Christian witness and service. God has been good to bless all the denominations in our own separate and sometimes arrogantly held divisions. But we lose so much by standing apart. Don't we need a bridge to closer co-operation with our Anglican women? Don't we need to embrace in our fellowship the women of the Orthodox churches too? Don't you think we need these other people of the Church and Family of God far more than they need us?

So far as its working structure is concerned, however, Australian Church Women cannot yet be taken as an accomplished fact. The word Interim has full significance and the documents which have been circulated are suggestions only for the formal structure. The Interim Committee and the Australian Council of Churches are not unaware of some weaknesses in

the suggested format. But we have tried to plan with the future in mind. For discussion to take place it was felt there must be something constructive to discuss.

Let me now make statements which might help some of your concern:

The Australian Council of Churches is as you know a Council whose members are churches and whose representatives are chosen by their denominational Federal Courts. But the ACC directs its activities and its impact out to the field through the State Councils within its own framework and to these State Councils the churches at state level make appointments.

Australian Church Women is part of the Division of Ecumenical Promotion in the Australian Council of Churches. It is not separate in the sense of standing alone and unrelated. It has its own identity because women's organisations in the churches have their own identity.

Australian Church Women seeks to work through them in the same way as the Australian Christian Youth Council seeks to work through youth groups. The work of ACW therefore is to be seen not as something apart but as belonging to a larger whole. A local branch of ACW will be an integral part of a local inter church council where such exists and it will act as a spearhead for ecumenical action where it does not yet exist. On the matter of study material the same principle applies. Material produced by ACW will be part of the whole range of ecumenical literature made available by the ACC and will be produced in the light of what is available and what is not.

The movement for ACW does not separate women from men any more than already happens in the churches. In fact it will seek to relate men and women by taking the initiative to develop work in Australia on the cooperation of men and women in church, family and society. (Madeleine BAROT)

There is a very challenging story which came out of the first East Asian Christian Conference held four years ago in Kuala Lumpur at which Australian delegates were present. Unity and Mission were the keynotes of that conference and on the first morning when all delegates gathered for Holy Communion this new and strange thing happened. Six Asian women in their national dress carried in the elements in the procession of clergy and handed them to the Bishop at the Holy Table. The service was conducted according to the usage of the Church of South India, Episcopal and free church members all partaking together.

The point I stop to emphasise is this. These Asian Christians showed this revolutionary example to the world of women by asking to be the bearers of the elements into the church. That is all they did. They carried with quiet reverence the wine and the bread and then they took their place in the congregation. They had prepared the elements with the love and care which are part of woman and they laid them on the Lord's Table as seemed most beatifically the part that woman was by very nature and by very hand able to do.

Am I right in saying that these Asian Christians are showing the way to the older churches. To me that very act, shattering the ecclesiastical form of the centuries where women took just that significant part in the service of Holy Communion is the perfect symbol of the togetherness of women with men in the life of the church. Strange irony is it not that out of Asia where woman traditionally has always been a chattel this revolutionary thing should come. My plain and simple question is 'How can a woman be a worker together in the Kingdom of God unless she has the opportunity of exercising side by side with men the very capacities which make her a woman?'

Maybe the day is not so far distant when ACW can seek out and provide these opportunities.

May I say at this point how grateful we are, as an Interim Committee, that the Victorian Inter Church Council has accepted the invitation to become the State Unit here. As such their suggestions and reactions about future organisational structures will be valuable when we come to the point at a national level where we discuss the proposals already submitted to you all.

But any National Council which would be set up could not have on it only representation from State Women's Inter Church Councils. As the Australian Council members are Churches, likewise Australian Church Women must have in its membership the women's organisations of the Church. The development of State WICCs is too uneven to be able to rely on it. All State Inter Church ladies are at present differently constituted. They do not even all bear the same name and Tasmania, as yet, has none at all.

Promotional work requires membership of both Church and Inter Church organisations because promotion means penetrating denominational programmes as well as developing inter church programmes.

Hence we must have Church representation and this must be from Federal bodies in the same way as are appointments to the Australian Council of Churches.

Denominational women's organisations at state level will make appointments to state women's inter church councils in much the same way as church courts – assemblies, conferences, synods, etc. – make appointments to state councils within the ACC.

My final word I say in utter charity and humility – and born out of an ecumenical conviction.

We all need to see ourselves not as what we are in the service of our Lord and of His Church but as what through God's spirit and by His will we can become. Are we being as courageous, as vital, as effective as we might be. Are we really in earnest about our desire to lose our souls in order to find them, to lose our identity in something bigger than ourselves? If this is not so then we are compelled with the same compulsion as Simon of Cyrene was compelled to bear the Cross, to rethink our way through we have just got to let ourselves be challenged, be disturbed into action, be involved in the rising tide of unity, ecumenicity and mission.

Let us all be quite sure that we never close up a channel whereby God's spirit can work through us to make something finer and more effective for all the activity, capacity and service which we as women can give to Christ and His Church.

We must use every endeavour to educate for the future, to give to the younger women and to the isolated woman a new awareness and vision of the magnitude of the Church's task and mission. Are we ready to be committed, in all the totality of our personalities, and with all our diversified talents, to this challenge of God's spirit in our midst? Do we cherish more dearly our membership in the world wide church of the Risen Lord?

If we fail, or go not forward, we do shame not only to ourselves, but to our common calling in Christ Jesus and to the whole meaning of Calvary where let us not forget there were present women whose hearts throbbed with a sense of togetherness with the Crucified One and whose blinding tears were later turned to joy.