

Newsletter

NEW SOUTH WALES WOMEN'S INTER-CHURCH COUNCIL
State Unit of Australian Church Women

No. 8

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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I live in a predominantly male household. Now and then I raid various loughboys, collect old faded ties and invite all and sundry to decide which should stay and which be discarded. Horrified protests! "You can't possibly throw those out!" and the faded, stringy things are tenderly restored to their usual places. After the tumult subsided recently I stood looking at them with sympathy and new understanding.

There were old school ties, 'Varsity ties, Sporting and Club ties, some Clan Tartans, Grandfather's Chain with its Masonic fob. The ties that bind! Childhood memories; developing intelligence and expanding mentality; gregarious instincts; loyalty to family roots and pride in the record of regimental bravery; honorable respect for one's fellows and desire to render unselfish service. No - we couldn't really toss these faded symbols aside, rather should we so conduct ourselves that the best elements would be preserved and fresh insight developed.

My thoughts turned to our Women's Inter-Church Council. We have no visible ties but "your spirit speaks with my spirit" and our spirits in turn are renewed by our Lord through His gift of the Holy Spirit. All of us who have had opportunity of meeting and working with women of other denominations know the joy of this kind of fellowship and service.

May this year be one in which these precious experiences will continue to permeate the Council, upheld by prayerful pursuance of every opportunity for service with which the Spirit presents us.

Marjorie Stanhope

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A GREETING FROM THE PRESIDENT-ELECT

"In the fourth chapter of Ephesians, Paul's expression of Christian unity proceeds against the conspicuous background, not of identification with some earthly organisation, but of spiritual union with Christ. The Church is identified by the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Paul's exposition of spiritual unity, therefore, is primarily concerned, not with organisational cohesion but with the 'Unity of the Spirit', that is, a unity authored by the Spirit of God. As Christians are individually united to Christ, so are they to be united in positive communion with God, and to each other by the Spirit."

(from an Editorial in Christianity Today)

For me, this quotation reaffirms the solid foundation on which we are building our fellowship and service together.

Olive Carpenter

ANNUAL RALLY

Our New President, Mrs. Lt. Colonel G. Carpenter of The Salvation Army, will be installed at the Annual Rally, on Friday, 28th May 1971 at 11 a.m. in the Congress Hall, 140 Elizabeth Street, Sydney.

Miss Violet Sampa of Zambia (see Winifred Kiek Scholarship under the A.C.W. Report) will be flying down from Brisbane to attend the Rally and to meet as many of our N.S.W. church women as possible. We do hope that you will be there to meet her and to accept the hospitality of The Salvation Army ladies when they serve a buffet luncheon at the conclusion of the Rally.

PROMOTION

The Promotion Committee of the Council is anxious to give whatever help it can to establish and consolidate inter-church activity in local areas. Do write if we can help you - it may be possible to send a member of the Committee (or even a group of them) to talk with your Branch or to representatives from your local churches. Contact Mrs. Carpenter - she is remaining secretary of the committee in her presidential year.

The February Meeting of the Council again this year featured Branches' Day. Many representatives of our Branches chatted over a welcome cup of tea before listening in to an abbreviated Council Meeting, at which was appointed our new Hon. Secretary, Mrs. Audrey Bell of the Methodist Church. Mrs. Stanhope then handed over to the Promotion Committee.

Mrs. Lt. Col. Carpenter presented a most enthusiastic report on the Australian Church Women's National Committee Meeting, which is covered in pages 4, 5, 6 and 7 of this Newsletter.

Instead of the customary method of the reading of reports by representatives of many local branches, a new approach was tried out this year. By means of an informal discussion, during which members from four somewhat different branches chatted with Mrs. L. Wells about the significant activities of their groups, much information was presented to the meeting. Three metropolitan groups and one from a country area were thus given opportunity to report in a different way about worshipping together on the Special Days, study groups, service projects (caring for ex-mental patients in the Strathfield "day hospitals"), regular co-operation with an inter-church men's group (Kiama/Gerringong) social occasions and other facets of shared life in different circumstances.

Branches taking part in the dialogue, which was quite spontaneous and unrehearsed, were:- Hurstville (Mrs. Conibear), Lane Cove/Longueville (Mrs. Chambers), Strathfield/Homebush (Mrs. Mayne) and Kiama/Gerringong (Mrs. Johnston).

There followed an all-too-short time when many women from the "listening audience" took part in general discussion, either by asking question of the four panel members, or by sharing experiences of various kinds. In this way, all present were able to gain a comprehensive picture of the life, work, and witness of local branches of the Women's Inter-Church Council; and newer branches, as well as the more established ones, should gain from this informal sharing of ideas.

Branches Day concluded with Mrs. Olga Badger delighting us with a report of the Fourth Asian Churchwomen's Conference held near Djakarta in September last year (p.5). (Readers of the Presbyterian women's magazine, SPAN, will find a feature article on page 3 of the May 1971 issue, written by Mrs. Badger, under the title 'Life to Live'. Try to borrow a copy if you don't have one, to read this much fuller report.)

AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN

The Seventh National Committee Meeting of A.C.W. was held from 9-12th February 1971 at Deaconess House, Sydney. Representatives came from the State Units of Queensland, N.S.W., A.C.T., Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia, from the member denominations (Anglican, Churches of Christ, Congregational, The Salvation Army, Methodist and Presbyterian), from the Y.W.C.A., from the A.C.C. Executive and the Committee on Co-operation of Men & Women in Church, Family and Society. Member bodies and some not yet members appointed observers so that the total attendance at most sessions was about fifty.

At the first business session, reports were received from each member body and also from the Working Committee which manages the affairs of A.C.W. between National Committee Meetings. For the past four years, the Working Committee has been based in Melbourne, but for the next two years it will be based in Brisbane. Those elected were Mrs. J. Dennis (President), Mesdames C. Miller and C. Muschamp (Vice Presidents), Mrs. C. Connell (Secretary), Mrs. D. Eldershaw (Treasurer) and Mesdames B.A. Clarke, E. Dingle, G. Haigh, K. Pope and Brigadier Geddes. We congratulate these women and pledge them our support by our prayers and co-operation in the work they undertake on our behalf.

THE WINIFRED KIEK SCHOLARSHIP Committee reported that the 1970 Scholar, Miss Veronica Kafa, a teacher from the Solomon Islands, who sought training in the teaching of English as a foreign language and the new maths, studied with the Victorian Education Dept. and visited Tasmania, South Australia, N.S.W., Victoria, A.C.T. and Queensland to meet women's groups and youth groups both denominational and ecumenical. To quote the report "Miss Kafa's deep Christian commitment was apparent to all who knew her, and her application to her studies and growth in maturity and independence made her a worthy holder of the Scholarship."

The 1971 Scholar is Miss Violet Sampa, the first woman candidate for the ministry in the United Church of Zambia. Miss Sampa was nominated by the Congregational Council of World Mission and will undertake a course of study with the Joint Faculty of Theology in Brisbane. She will be visiting Sydney from 11th-17th May and will be present at our Annual Rally.

The Scholarship is financed from offerings on Fellowship Day (see p.5). If you are not able to hold the Day, you or your group might like to give direct to this worthy cause.

SPECIAL DAYS - The 1971 Fellowship Day theme is "Who is a Christian?" and the material has been prepared by the W.A. Unit of A.C.W. Please hold a service and encourage all women to attend. Send orders to Mrs. F.I. Down, 177 Copeland Rd. Beecroft 2119 as soon as possible.

1971 is the United Nations Year for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination and the World Community Day theme will be based on this. The offering will be for Asian Christian Service. On World Community Day, the "least coins" are collected.

If possible Fellowship Day is held on the fourth Friday of July and World Community Day on the fourth Friday of October, but choose another date if these are not suitable in your district.

The FOURTH ASIAN CHURCHWOMEN'S CONFERENCE was held near Djakarta in September 1970. Australians attending were Mesdames Strack & Bailey (reps), Mesdames Dingle & Ashton (observers) and our own Mrs. Olga Badger, who was the rep. at the 3rd Conference in Tokyo in 1966 and is now a member of the Working Committee of A.C.W.C.

125 women from 15 Asian countries and fraternal delegates from many other parts of the world, including the Pacific Islands, Carribean, Jordan and Africa gathered to discuss "Who is my neighbour?". The Conference administers the "Fellowship of the Least Coin", which indeed makes the Conference possible. Mrs. Shenti Solomon, the founder 14 years ago of the F.L.C. was appointed Executive Secretary at the Conference.

Australia was asked to recommend a project to receive a grant from the F.L.C. fund and the N.C.M. decided that this should be the Institute for Aboriginal Development in Alice Springs.

The sale of PENS & NOTELETS made it possible to help with the fares of inter-state representatives to the N.C.M. but these sales must continue and increase. Ball-point pens (20c ea.) & attractive notelets (25 sheets & 25 envelopes for 45c pkt.) are available from Mrs. Butler, 17 Woonona Rd. Northbridge.

On hearing of the proposal to cut Australia's aid to overseas countries, the N.C.M. sent a telegram to the Prime Minister deploring the news and asking for the decision to be recinded.

Interspersed between the nine business sessions, ran the Conference Theme - "Action for World Development", which was introduced at the opening worship by the Rev. E. Arblaster, Secretary of Australian World Christian Action (the new name for Inter-Church Aid).

He caught our attention with his opening remark "Let the Church go to Hell" and followed it up with an explanation of Hell as being love denied, life denied. The church will go to hell strangled by its institutions and structures, if not challenged by the plumbline of love. Sometimes caring (love) means that we must go to hell, to places where there is no love, and there be sensitive to what love really is.

In our three periods of Bible study, our thoughts were compelled to travel down untrodden paths as we gained insights to the Genesis story of Creation, which subtly led us to one of the main emphases of the Conference - The Dignity of Man. Man is a person, created in the image of God, this gives him dignity but also implies his dependence on his full personhood found only in God. It is not for man to plunder at will for the present generation, but to put back what is needed to sustain and benefit succeeding generations. Man - God - environment are permanently linked together.

Study of Ephesians led us deeper into our relationship through God to involvement with the breaking down of walls between our fellowmen. The New Man is a single humanity through Christ, which is a personal relationship to God, not a process of action. Real peace, individual, social and national, is possible only in a single humanity. The mission of the New Man is to proclaim Jesus Christ to the whole world. God will not be defeated because the Church falls on hard times. Man needs to be constantly renewed after the image of Him by whom he is created.

The Rev. Dr. D'Arcy Wood who led our study gave us a fully rounded picture, beginning with Genesis and culminating with hope in the new creation found in the New Testament. His prayers reminded us of the constant prayer support we must give the scientist for integrity and judgment and for the public speaker that he might be God centred, not man centred.

An interesting group of people formed a panel under the chairmanship of Mr. Arblaster to discuss Racism. Each member of the panel spoke on aspects of racial discrimination within Australia or South Africa. This stimulated lively discussion as delegates were challenged to be practising Christians, for Christians are sometimes 'fair weather friends'. It was suggested that a similar panel could be arranged in local areas.

Mrs. Jill Perkins, a free-lance journalist who works with Asian Christian Service, gave us a background of the Asian countries and the wealth of their culture. She saw as part of one development our need to become sensitive to the dignity of these people and to learn more for ourselves through reading. Western

culture did not go out into the world and discover under-developed countries - it created them. We must look at what we can share with a person made in the image of God - not what we can give them. Let us wear their shoes and find out how they walk. For man does not live by bread alone but by love, hope and expectation. Mrs. Perkins' book "Fragments of War" illustrates the work of Asian Christian Service and is available from the W.I.C.C., from church bookshops and the State A.C.C. office for 60 cents. The total proceeds from the sale of this book goes to Asian Christian Service (costs met by F.L. Coin fund).

The Committee on Co-operation of Men and Women in Church, Family and Society is one of the links we have with the Australian Council of Churches. Their session this year challenged us to apprise ourselves of the rapid development in biological studies and experiments and the possible threat to the dignity of man - to ask "what are people for?".

The National Committee Meeting ended as we participated in a service used at the close of the Asian Churchwomen's Conference. This highlighted the handing over of one working committee to the other by the symbolic use of lighted candles.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE LEAST COIN

In 1956, Shanti Solomon was a member of a fellowship team which visited and participated in Bible study with Christian women in Asia. In the Philippines she shared her concern that Christian women everywhere should become aware of their relationship with the world-wide family. So few could travel; but an act of remembrance would encourage women in isolated villages as well as in cosmopolitan communities to pray for other people in all parts of the world and to become ministers of reconciliation in a world of barriers and broken fellowship.

A tangible token of sharing in a world-wide fellowship of prayer was needed - one that would be the same for women everywhere, be they rich or poor, educated or illiterate, isolated or world citizens. The thought came to her that the "least coin" of each country could be such a token.

The Fellowship of the Least Coin, born in the heart of a woman, Shanti Solomon, has in the providence of God grown to involve tens of thousands of women around the world in prayer as they set aside a "least coin" each month.

The participation of women in the Fellowship, both in giving and receiving, has been a very inspiring experience. We can now say that it is a gift from the women of the world to the world. The coins are given to a common fund from which grants

are made each year for ministries of mercy on every continent and for opportunities for women to attend ecumenical meetings and experience international fellowship. In Australia, the "least coins" are gathered together at World Community Day services in October, or they may be sent to our Hon. Treasurer.

There is something that every Christian woman can do - to pray for peace in the heart, in the home and in the world. You in your small corner can be part of this world-wide fellowship of prayer, once a month putting aside one cent to show your concern for the human family.

If you would like to join this Fellowship of Prayer and concern, please contact our State Convener, Mrs. C. Butler, 17 Woonona Road, Northbridge 2063, telephone 95 2985. She will answer queries and supply literature. The devotional book "Circle of Prayer" Vol.4 will be available soon for 30c plus postage.

MONEY FOR THE W.I.C.C.

All cheques, etc. sent to the Council should be made payable to "N.S.W. Women's Inter-Church Council" or "N.S.W. W.I.C.C." On an accompanying note please describe or list what the money is for, i.e. Branch Affiliation (\$1p.a.) Fellowship of the Least Coin, donation for Winifred Kiek Scholarship, payment for pens, nctelets, etc.

WYBALENA MONIES

A report was received at the March Council Meeting that the proceeds of the sale of "Wybalena" Hostel now amount to over \$36,700. A ruling from the Equity Court is required before they can be applied to another project - either the Y.W.C.A. Hostel "Tremayne" at Kirribilli or the Dunmore Lang College at Macquarie University. The case will be heard on 26/5/71.

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