

Australian Church Women

WOMEN AT WORK



SEEK: To unite Australian women in their allegiance to their Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.
To help Christian women to take more effective place in the total life and mission of the Church.

November/December 1981

A friend has given me a 'Peace' rose and as I have enjoyed the beauty of this lovely rose with its petals shading from ivory to pale gold fringed with delicate pink, I was moved to read again Antonia Ridge's book "For Love of a Rose", the story of the creation of the famous 'Peace' rose.

This story seemed to bring together the thoughts I had in mind of the Christmas message of "Peace on earth to those with whom He is pleased", Jesus, the Prince of Peace and the gift he left with us - "My peace I leave with you" and then the theme of the Silver Jubilee Year of the Fellowship of the Least Coin - Prayer, Partnership and Peace.

Peace is something we all earnestly desire but it is not to be achieved easily. It requires much prayer, patience, effort and dedication by each one of us.

The creation of the rose called for infinite patience and perseverance - a long hard road with courage to overcome many set-backs. Then when success seemed close, the rose had to be tested and tried perhaps for years.

At last the rose, propagated in war-torn France, reached America and when it was launched the rose-growers of America said:

"We are persuaded that this greatest new rose of our time should be named the world's greatest desire - PEACE. We would use the word 'Peace' to preserve the knowledge that we have gained the hard way that Peace is increasingly essential to all mankind, to be treasured with greater wisdom, watchfulness and foresight than the human race has so far been able to maintain for any great length of time. Towards that end, with our hopes for the future, we dedicate this lovely new rose to PEACE."

At this Christmas season at the close of the Silver Jubilee Year of the Fellowship of the Least Coin, can we take notice of the words of Paulo Freire - "Peace has to be lived, and I cannot live my peace without commitment to men".

May this Christmas 1981 be a blessed and joyous one for each of you and may the God of Peace be with you.

Freda Morris
Secretary.

The Secretary of Australian Council of Churches has passed on to us a letter from Albert Widjaja, Associate General Secretary of the Christian Conference of Asia, expressing appreciation to the women of Australia for the contribution to the Conference's Christian Literature Programme.

They accept the donation as an expression of solidarity and sharing together the work of Christ.

Fran Downes, Convenor of the Fellowship of the Least Coin, would like to recommend to all participants of F.L.C. the special Silver Jubilee Edition of Circle of Prayer, it has meditations on the theme "Prayer - Partnership - Peace" used at the Silver Jubilee Celebration in Manilla.

At our workshop on peace the Third World delegates spoke about their concerns and horror of the arms race. They pleaded with the delegates from the western countries, when they got home would they ask their women to pray for peace.

I noticed in a report written by Joyce Kippax of Victoria, who attended World Federation Methodist Women 1981 Assembly in Honolulu, that members of that assembly drew up a series of recommendations and the main one was, that women around the world pray for peace at 7 a.m. daily, thus creating a continuous chain of prayer. May I suggest that we as A.C.W. take the challenge and join in this circle and pray daily for peace in our world and in the hearts of our leaders and others.

As Christians the suffering that underlies the arms race is also part of our shared reality. It is also part of what is going on. We are, in truth, ensnared in madness surrounded by suffering, but we are not ready to despair, in fact we have good reason to be confident.

The vision of Jesus' sermon on the mount, manifests the new realism.

May the peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

THE RISK

I thought He came to take more of my time.
(Days are so full, and life too short for me!)
I let Him knock with patient, pierced hand;
I did not know - how could I understand
He brought eternity?

I thought He came to burden me with blame
For all the sin which lies upon my soul.
He knocked. I did not dare to see His face.
I left the door shut, though He brought the grace
That would have made me whole.

I thought He brought demands too high for me.
He knocked. I opened just a crack at length;
And I was right! He asked for all I was,
And more than I could ever be, because
He also brought His strength.

But shall I let Him really enter in?
Of my own will fling wide the creaking door?
Shall I then be love's hostage, or will He,
To risk its glory and its agony
Now and for evermore?

Margaret L. Knauerhase
South Australian Unit

News from the Pacific Theological College of the Etina Havea Centre

In 1979 the offerings given at World Day services were designated to go towards the Etina Havea Memorial Appeal. In a recent newsletter from the College comes the news of the opening of the Etina Havea Centre in April 1981. In this magnificent Pacific style building, 40 children and babies enjoy the kindness of the staff - a

teacher, her assistant, a nurse and her helper. All are Pacific Islanders from Samoa and Fiji. Mrs. Gwen Deverell, the programme's co-ordinator, is steering its second year. There are teething problems, especially financial. Our friends of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) did not give the full anticipated support for the second year but once the program is fully publicized there is hope for better things.

This centre makes it possible for the wives of pastros studying at the College to take advantage of the Women's Extension programme. All flats for married couples at the College are occupied and the college are pressing for men whose wives can take advantage of the Women's Programme.

Report from Florence Marshall
U.C.A.

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WOMEN IN ISOLATION

- Di Johnson

The continent of Australia is BIG; but I had no idea just how big until my family and I moved to Darwin about two years ago.

On the map, Alice Springs looks to be just down the road and Roper River, just around the corner. The Alice is nearly 1600 km away; Roper River, 560 Km.

Many areas, especially in the Top End, are accessible only by light aircraft or four-wheel drive vehicle. During the Wet season, there are times when it is impossible to get to or away from some places.

Darwin is a cosmopolitan city; people of many races call Darwin their home. It is a modern city. Completely rebuilt after Tracey, it has most of the amenities that would be found in a southern city. It is a growing city. Some claim that, by the turn of the century, the population will have almost doubled, to 100,000.

"Growth" is the catch-word of those who have visions of Darwin taking its place among the big cities of Australia. But the growth of Darwin has already created many social problems that will not be swept under the carpet. Ironically, the cause of some of those problems is that, despite the population growth, many people feel isolated.

The Territory seems to be a place of young people. Children grow up not knowing the wider family relationships of grandparents, aunts and uncles, cousins etc. In times of stress or trouble, there is not the family support that is available to most people in the south.

In times of crisis, to get the needed family support means a massive outlay of money. Recently, a woman with two children, separated from her husband, told me that she would like to be able to visit her sister in Melbourne. The air fare for herself and two children - \$1200.

If some feel isolated living a city of 55,000 people, what about those who live in remote settlements and stations? A middle-aged woman who moved to an aboriginal community with her husband last year, told me, "It hit me when I got to ... on our own. What on earth am I doing here without my family? My daughter has just become engaged and I may not get to the wedding (in Sydney). I think twice before I use the telephone; our mothers are getting old and we are so far away. During the Wet, the only place I can go to is the airstrip".

Medical care for people in such communities is provided by a clinic or the Flying Doctor Service. White women I have spoken to seem to accept this part of their life; minor ailments can be treated locally and emergency cases can be airlifted to the nearest hospital (provided that the air strip is not under water and that a plane is available etc.)

For aboriginal women, though, the prospect of being hospitalised in Darwin, Gove or Katherine can be terrifying. Cut off from their natural support systems, their isolation comes from being in the larger centres of population.

Education is a problem in isolated areas. Most communities have schools that provide a good basic education. But children have to go to the larger population centres for high school, and anyone with university aspirations must be prepared to travel south.

There is also an intellectual and cultural aspect of isolation. News of National and international events is a rare commodity in many areas where there is no TV and where radio reception is poor or non-existent. Newspapers and journals published in the south cost up to three times the southern price - if you can get them.

So, why do people live here? Most women are here because they have followed their husbands, looking for job opportunities, for a new life, for some form of service - many simply love it!

Mrs. Betty Vawser, President of A.C.W. Northern Territory Unit, has told of the way Christians in Darwin are reaching out across denominational borders. During the month of August the young people of the Christian churches in Darwin held an outreach program through the Fisherman's Hut (U.C.A. Coffee Shop Drop in Centre); and the Lord blessed this with many folk coming into a new or deeper relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord of their lives.

(Extract from A.C.W. N.T. Unit)

Dr. Thelma Adair will be visiting Canberra in March 1982. It is hoped to have her as guest speaker at a luncheon following the Annual General Meeting.