

Chief Statement of Mrs. Winifred Kiek's association with the Australian Council of Churches and women in the Church.

* * * * *

The Reverend Winifred Kiek, B.A. B.D., is the widow of Dr. E.S. Kiek, who was Principal of Parkin Theological College, Adelaide, for 37 years.

Mrs. Kiek was born in England and, prior to her marriage to a Congregational minister, was a Quaker. After coming to Australia in 1920 and when her family had grown up she studied for the ministry and was ordained as a Congregational minister in 1927.

Her earliest association with the Australian Council of Churches was in 1946 when she was asked to undertake a questionnaire in Australia (also being conducted in 50 other countries) on Women in the Church, in preparation for the World Council of Churches Assembly in Amsterdam in 1948.

Mrs. Kiek was later appointed by the Australian Council of Churches as Liaison Officer for work among women and in 1950 was appointed a member of the World Commission (set up in Amsterdam) on Life and Work of Women in the Churches. This involved a great deal of correspondence and distribution of material to all States and denominations including the Women's Inter-Church Councils in all States except Tasmania.

Mrs. Kiek attended the annual meetings of the Australian Council of Churches at "Gilbulla" each year and in 1952 she represented Australia at a Consultation arranged by the World Council of Churches' Commission on Life and Work of Women in the Churches, held in Oxford, England.

In 1953 an Australian Commission on Co-operation between Men and Women in the Churches was set up and Mrs. Kiek was appointed convener.

From 1948 onwards efforts were made to form a Federation of Women's Inter-Church Councils but this was never achieved.

Mrs. Kiek resigned as convener of the Commission in 1956.

* * * * *

*Australian
Church
Women*

scholarship

AIM OF AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN

To unite Australian church women in their allegiance to their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;
to promote co-operation of men and women in the church, family and society;
to help Christian women to take a more effective place in the total life and mission of the Church;
to provide opportunities for Christian women of different churches to worship, study and serve together and to encourage fellowship and service across national boundaries.

PURPOSE OF THE WINIFRED KIEK SCHOLARSHIP

To offer supplementary training for a Christian woman who has already received her basic training. The scholarship is intended for those who give leadership in church life and for those who need strengthening as Christians for their work in the world.

It is anticipated that the scholarship will be tenable for 10 months (one academic year) and that part of the year will be spent in a training school or university, part in practical work and observation in church and community institutions, and part in speaking to women's groups and church groups.

THE SECOND WINIFRED KIEK SCHOLARSHIP HOLDER

Miss Sabita Devi Swarup tells her story

"Although I was born in a Hindu home, the very first few years of my school life were spent in a Methodist School but owing to inevitable circumstances my parents had to shift to another district, and that to me meant leaving the school which I began to like. This also meant, an end to the Christian teaching that I was having. My next school was a very strict, Hindu one where the children spent about thirty minutes daily in singing and prayer, besides an hour's "puja" (acts of worship) once a week.



After three years at this school I was fortunate enough to be selected as a first year student at Jasper Williams Secondary School, as it was called then. For the first time in my life I had to leave home for a hostel-the very thought of leaving home for a hostel, at the time, was by no means a happy one. However, the case proved contrary to what I had thought as the environment at this Christian school was quite different from that of my former school.

At this school students were given religious instruction daily in the morning, and morning and evening devotions in the hostel, Christian Endeavour on Fridays. At the time this teaching did not mean anything to me and I felt that I was having more lessons on the Bible than on History, Geography, Arithmetic, English for which I was really there. Church services, Sunday Schools were compulsory and I dreaded going to these, as to me all these seemed boring. In Sunday School, while others concentrated on lessons I used to think of excuses in order to get away from going to Church - excuses which to me, now, seem feeble.

The Christian way of life of the staff of this school, particularly in the hostel, influenced me a lot. But the lessons on Easter really made me think. Although I had heard and read about Jesus dying on the cross and then rising again from the dead, it just sounded like another fairy tale.

I started reading the Bible daily, both morning and evening and praying, began to pay more attention in the scripture lessons in the school. I had many doubts, nevertheless the prayers gave me peace. During that first year at this High School I accepted Christ and after having been given permission by my parents, I was baptised.

After only two years of secondary education I had to leave school and take up a job in order to help my father support my younger brothers and sisters.

In 1959 I was given a job in the office of the same school and have been working there since. I had a break of four months in 1963 (October '63-January '64) when I worked for the Bank of Baroda Limited. I had to leave the bank because of home trouble and also because I felt that at the school I would be doing my Christian service, although in a very small way.

The work at the school includes taking scripture lessons of one of the primary classes and this has helped me a lot. While preparing the lessons I come across things which I have not heard before and I feel that as I give out the gospel to others, I learn a lot at the same time.

In 1959, with another helper, I started taking a Sunday School in which we had about a dozen children whose ages ranged from three to eleven years. This was held in a Christian home where only a couple of women were Christians besides the grandmother. Often the older members of the family joined us in the worship and there again I had a very good opportunity of witnessing for Christ. Sometimes we returned, discouraged, because of low attendance or lack of response from the children. However, as the Sundays passed both old and young became more eager and interested. After three years at Vitogo (the name of the village) I started taking a group of primary school children and since last year I have been taking a group of junior high school students.

In August 1965, I attended the Pacific Island Christian Education Curriculum Conference. The lectures, demonstrations and discussion groups helped me to see why my teaching was not as effective as it might have been and how I could improve myself as Sunday School teacher. The Christian way of life is, not in the least, an easy one especially when the rest of the members of the family belong to an entirely different religion. My parents have tried to force me into a Hindu marriage but I have been strengthened to remain firm on my decision.

I feel that this study and training would enable me to serve the church more effectively in a secretarial capacity.

.....

YOU CAN SHARE....

Contributions to the Scholarship Fund are urgently needed. Send your donations to the Women's Inter-Church Council in your State or Australian Church Women, c/o Room 2, 3rd. Floor, 511 Kent Street Sydney.