

**** INFORMATION PAGE ****

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Denominational Groups:	\$25.00 per annum
A.C.W. Local Branches:	\$15.00 per annum
Organisations:	\$15.00 per annum
WCTU	
The Girls' Brigade	
The Bible Society	

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS' FEES due 1st March: \$10.00 per annum
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NEWSETTE

AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN -- NSW UNIT INC

A C W seeks:

- ⇒ to unite Australian churchwomen in their allegiance to their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;
- ⇒ to provide opportunities for Christian women of different denominations to worship, study and serve together.

Mission Statement

Australian Church Women believe that there is one God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit; one God, Three-In-One. We believe that Scripture teaches that salvation is only through faith in the atoning death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God's only Son.

PRESIDENT: Major Lyn Middleton Tel: 9529 6744

NUMBER 101

NOVEMBER 2004

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

My Dear Friends,

In my daily devotional readings over the past few weeks I have once again been looking at the various elements of prayer. Prayer is such an integral part of the Christian experience yet most of us are still learning how to pray - still learning how to plumb the deepest depths and scale the highest heights of communion with our Heavenly Father, as we seek to go deeper with God in prayer.

It is so easy to come to God with our cares and concerns, our needs and requests, and our God, whose love for and interest in us is such that even the 'hairs on our head are numbered', wants us to *bring Him our heartaches and bring Him our fears* and to 'let our requests be made known to Him in prayer.' But my thoughts have been focused on the need to make my first priority in prayer a time to just bathe in His presence in adoration and worship; to come before Him as did the Psalmist with the cry "O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth" (Psalm 8:1). In His model prayer Jesus taught us that the very first thing we

2.

should do when drawing near to God is to worship Him and give Him the honour due to His name. Approaching our prayer times in an attitude of reverential worship can transform these times for us. C S Lewis wrote *"It is in the process of being worshipped that God communicates His presence to men."* This is not because God needs our praise or affirmation but because He knows that in contemplating Him we complete ourselves

Selwyn Hughes says: *"I believe that the great problem with our prayer lives is that we are more concerned about getting things from God than giving Him the glory that is due to His name. Life, first and foremost is not about us but about Him - His glory, His honour, His power, His saving grace."* As we come to God in prayer we need to bring with us the words of the hymn:

*"My goal is God Himself, not joy or peace,
Not even blessing, but Himself, my God."*

General John Gowans of The Salvation Army wrote as a refrain to one of his songs the words:

*"We adore thee heavenly Father,
And we thank thee, heavenly Father,
And we praise thee, heavenly Father,
As we pray, as we pray!"*

As this year we celebrate the birth of our Lord may our prayer be *"O come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!"*

With every best wish for a happy and holy Christmas,

Sincerely, Lyn Middleton

ASIAN CHURCH WOMEN'S CONFERENCE:

This year's ACWC *Pleasant Sunday Afternoon* was held on October 10 at Punchbowl Baptist Memorial Church, and 105 came for the occasion. The host church's choir gave two 'acapella' numbers. The group from Sydney Korean Uniting Church was very professional. The atmosphere was heavenly when they sang. David and Joan Tong were wonderful. to contribute a couple of singing items. Our thanks go to Earlwood Salvation Army Band under Mr John Jurd who not only gave us the accompaniment to our hymns but also some welcoming melodies. We look forward to see you all again next year when we join our brothers and sisters in Christ from Asia and the Pacific regions. Thanks to everyone who helped me make the occasion possible.

Ramona Cowle, ACWC Convener

3.

NSW UNIT STATE CONFERENCE:

About 65 women took advantage of the opportunity to attend the Day Conference on 20th September in the Salvation Army Function Centre.

Setting the foundation for the theme *'Walk And Word'* Major Geanette Seymour led us in our exploration of the Word. Firstly from Psalm 119:105 we considered *"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path"*. For light to be effective it needs to surround - blinding light renders us useless - as illustrated by the strength of moonlight in isolated places enabling us to see the way when car headlights in our eyes cause us to stumble.

There is a reminder in Psalm 139 that we are God's creation and we can walk with confidence knowing that our forgiving God is everywhere present. If we read and take time to be consciously in the presence of God we can be alive to needs and how we can engage in response.

Malachi as a young man was told by God to tell the children of Israel that they were doing right but with the wrong attitude. We should not limit what God can do but maintain an essence of hope. We have a God who is giving, guiding and guarding.

If we come into God's sight there will be change and development. Luke suggests we should be dressed ready for service, living in the light with a sense of readiness. As with any relationship, we must foster our relationship with God or it will be limited. Expect God to be there - there will be demands - expect God to be.

The Rev Colin Scott of HopeStreet Urban Compassion gave an overview of the ministries undertaken in the Woolloomooloo area and the staff who facilitate them. The *Opportunity Shop* serves as a point of first contact for many. The outreach program is on a person to person basis, addressing the physical and spiritual needs of people and helping them to set attainable goals.

Kairos - God's special time - for those imprisoned in Kronos, actual time. With a background in nursing and chaplaincy, Jan Corbett-Jones spoke particularly of the ministry of Kairos to women in prison. Kairos is international and interdenominational. It has been found that many of the women in prison have never known unconditional love and know little of forgiveness. Most have been sentenced as accomplices, have suffered abuse, and many have been treated for mental illness. Poverty, drugs and fraud all feature.

The selection of people to undertake a Kairos course while in prison is made by the chaplains, generally targeting negative leaders who can

4.

help transform the prison in unexpected ways. A team of 35 supports each program: silence, discussion, letters, posters and banners are all used to help achieve the goals set. 'Table families' pray for one another and the Kairos team is supported by people on a prayer roster. All this to demonstrate the promises of God for all people, to save people from their 'inside misery' and give freedom to live, even while confined.

Each of our speakers left us with much to ponder, challenging us to consider what we are called to do, and to do it. We are grateful to all who participated and to all who made it possible, especially our President, *Major Lyn Middleton* who spared no effort in organising the day and in ensuring that all went according to plan.

Reported by Isabel Hewitt, State Secretary

FELLOWSHIP OF THE LEAST COIN:

"Be one, that the world may believe." (John 17:212b)

Familiar words? Most definitely, particularly to all of us who attended a *World Community Day Service* during October. By the time you receive this Newsette the Services for 2004 would have been held in many areas across Australia, and many times the FLC Prayer would have been prayed. This wonderful prayer which binds us together around the globe, calls us to be one in spirit, not only with one another but also with Jesus, and reminds us that there is one God, one Lord and Father of us all.

As you know, I have taken over the job as convener from *Nancy McLaren*, so that she would be free to take on the position of Publicity Convener for NSW. Thank you, Nancy, for your three years of positive and enthusiastic input as convener for FLC. May God continue to bless you, in your new task in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. In addition to your current important responsibilities as National President.

It is very exciting, being convener of the Fellowship of the Least Coin. Wonderful prayers, messages of support and contributions keep coming in. Many people have caught the vision of *Shanti Solomon*, the founder of FLC, and as a consequence, it has reached out to so many people through a very simple but powerful act, a prayer, as women around the world set aside the least coin of their currency, for peace, justice and reconciliation. The FLC Budget for grants for 2005 is \$3,344,000!

Janet Lang, FLC Convener

5.

WINIFRED KIEK SCHOLARSHIP:

Recent correspondence from Joan Tong, our WKS National Convener begins with "Good News! Mereani has arrived!"

Our 2004 Scholar, *Mereani Dinacika Ragueu* from Fiji, arrived in Melbourne on Saturday September 11th. The Uniting Church Fijian congregation at West Footscray are looking after her for the first months, then the minister and his wife, on their return from Fiji, will take care of her accommodation.

The Victorian Unit have met with Mereani and provided her with immediate needs. She was due to commence her course on September 21st. Keep praying for her, and her time with "Project Respect", and for the ACW Victorian Unit as they support and assist her over her six months in Australia.

Joan also sent a copy of a letter and brochure from *Doreen Tie*, our 1990 Scholar from Malaysia, which notes that she is always encouraged that ACW continues to strive forward in their mission, especially by offering scholarships so that others like her continue to learn and use new skills for change. She still has wonderful memories of her time in Australia.

Doreen tells of her work as Principal of the School for Mentally-Retarded Children at Sarawak. This year she has attended the 8th World Down Syndrome Congress, where she needed to see things from a management level, as often this is where the challenges lie. With more congresses and workshops coming up, she will assign different staff to attend for encouragement and sharpening of skills, so together they can make a difference in the lives of the intellectually disabled in their care.

Doreen's children.....daughter *Heather Ashley* (8) is doing well at school and in music exams; son *Jordan* (3½) is in pre-school; husband *Philip* was extra busy with music students sitting for piano exams. Doreen expresses thanks to God for His goodness and provision as she looks back on her life, and now as He continues to guide her.

As Joan comments, "This continues to affirm that the ripple effect of the Winifred Kiek Scholarship is more than we can ever imagine." Continue to pray for *Mereani*, and our past Scholars, including *Doreen*.

Judith Cayzer, WKS Convener

WINIFRED KIEK SCHOLARSHIP -- BACKGROUND:

Australian Church Women sponsor the Scholarship which is named after *Rev Winifred Kiek*, who in 1927 was the first woman to be ordained in

6.

Australia in the Congregational (now Uniting) Church. Winifred worked for peace in local, state, national and international organisations attending many world conferences. She was influential in founding the Scholarship and it was first awarded in 1965, so next year will be its 40th anniversary. The offerings received at the ACW Fellowship Day Services held each July around Australia are invested and the interest used to finance the Scholarship.

HISTORY FROM STRATHFIELD/HOMEBUSH BRANCH:

On reading the old Minutes of this branch of Australian Church Women I was surprised and delighted to find that it was due to the persistence of some of the women from the branch that Meals On Wheels began in the Strathfield area as early as they did.

Some valued women, notably Mrs Mullan (St David's Presbyterian Church), Mrs Kay and Mrs Firth (Congregational) began talking about the need for such a service at the branch's third meeting, and the Ministers' Fraternal was advised of their wish to do something. This was in March 1965, and for the next 2 years they continued their efforts. At one stage meals were served to a married couple for 2/6d per meal and a cheque for £5 was received from their daughter with a letter of thanks. Burwood Rotary Club offered to equip a kitchen for a year if they were assured the scheme would not lapse after that.

A public meeting was called with the expectation of support from the local Councils. However, this was not forthcoming, both Strathfield and Burwood Councils being of the opinion the need did not exist in the area for such a scheme. (Can't you just hear the sniffs of disapproval at such a suggestion?) Nothing daunted, our brave pioneers joined by a Mrs Humphreys (Baptist) and Mrs Groat battled on with the support of the Ministers' Fraternal, and decided to offer meals and help with shopping, ironing and transport to doctors. Country Women's Association, Inner Wheel and other district organisations were invited to participate and by March 1967, meals were being served by the 'ACW Emergency Service'. The Bank of NSW offered an overdraft of \$200 and the Homebush RSL said they would provide up to 12 meals a day at a very nominal cost, which they did for over a year until increasing numbers became too much and the meals were provided by Loreto Nursing Home.

In September 1967 Strathfield Lions Club donated equipment to provide 10 hot meals plus a soup container and so the service began, with the RSL charging 2/6d per meal and the recipient paying 3 shillings. In the beginning most of the volunteers were supplied by the different churches,

7.

with each church staffing their own day. Thus began an extremely valuable service run at very low cost entirely by volunteers until the mid-nineties, when the Government stepped in and took over. As in many fields it was the women from the different churches who provided the inspiration and did the work.

(Contributed by Anne Burton, Secretary Strathfield/Homebush Branch)

PAN PACIFIC & S.E.ASIA WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION:

The speaker at a recent meeting was *Rev Helen Richmond*, Interfaith Relations Co-ordinator for the Uniting Church. Helen is part of an inter-faith group with members of 8 different religions (not denominations) which meet monthly. One of the things she said was "We need to build inter-race trust and inter-faith trust." She is a very good speaker and I recommend her to any groups wanting to have an up-to-date report on what is happening in this area.

At another meeting, two speakers focussed on the International Year topics of *Rice* and *Anti-Slavery*. Rice was first grown in India in 3000BC. Much later, in 1924, the first rice in Australia was grown in the Riverina. Now 80% of the best of our crop is exported to the Pacific Islands, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea.

The delegate from Country Women's Association spoke on Anti-Slavery. The Associated Country Women of the World has embarked on an Anti-Slavery Campaign. She said that in spite of the United Nations' Charter of 1999, the illegal trafficking of women and children and enforced prostitution is world-wide. It occurs in Australia, where 60 trafficking networks are known to operate. Australia has signed with Thailand a package to stop smuggling, trafficking etc. Dr Keith Suter heads an organisation to deal with this and the budget is \$24 million.

The \$720 raised at PPSEAWA's Spring Luncheon was sent to the Centre for East Timorese Studies.

(Reported by Edith Ridge, ACW Representative to PPSEAWA)

NEW GROUP AFFILIATED WITH ACW NSW:

We are very pleased that the Bible Society is now affiliated with us. Their representative is *Julie Bryant*, who is their director of Women's Ministries. We are happy to welcome Julie to our New South Wales Unit Council and that she was able to attend our State Day Conference in September.

SOCIAL ISSUES:

The continuing story of Violence Against Women and the Trafficking of Women is high on the agenda. Our Federal Government's willingness to fund stricter surveillance of this terrible trade is hampered by the drive to have legal prostitution in more States. Legal prostitution increases the demand for prostitution and therefore makes the trafficking more profitable. The direction of Sweden has been more successful than most places. There the government made the users of prostitutes liable for large fines and this has stopped the spread of prostitution and made a large reduction in trafficking. This needs to be canvassed in Australia, but there is little enthusiasm at State Government level and it is a State matter.

(From Presbyterian Women's Association Magazine SPAN)

MORE ON TRAFFICKING:

The Catholic Women's Network arranged an Open Forum on 23rd September, inviting representatives of the major political parties, in view of the pending election, to speak on their policy on trafficking of women.

- * 90% of trafficking globally is for the sexual exploitation of women.
- * Children, including babies, are trafficked for sexual slavery.
- * Men are trafficked for bonded work.
- * Most trafficked women in Australia....
 - *Cannot speak English;
 - *Are forcibly introduced to drugs;
 - *Are kept in isolation;
 - *Are too frightened to tell anyone of their situation.

Trafficked women are victims of crime, requiring special treatment not punishment.

(Contributed by Michelle Peterson of National Council of Women NSW)

COWBANK ???

Readers will remember the famous OzINDO Bike Ride of the 90's, when Fiona Collins, awardee of the National Council of Women NSW Youth Award sponsored by ACW NSW, cycled round Australia to raise support for a food project for the very poor of Indonesia.

Now Fiona is doing something crazy again!! This involves cycling, cows

and raising money for microcredit programs in Asia, specifically India, Indonesia and the Philippines. 'Cowbank' is an initiative that has emerged from the St James Ethics Centre's Vincent Fairfax Fellowship, a program focussed on ethics in leadership from which Fiona has recently graduated. Part of the Fellowship involved an Asia Project earlier this year. Those involved returned from the projects in Asia with a desire to provide some support - in whatever way they could - to impoverished families in some of the countries visited.

So COWBANK was born - www.cowbank.org

They are raising cows for existing microcredit programs in three target areas in the countries mentioned above. A woman is given a cow, which provides nourishment for her family and a source of income from the milk. She pays for the cow by returning its first two calves to the Cowbank, thus providing a continuing supply of cows for the program, after which further calves are hers to keep or sell.

The fundraising efforts in Australia for this project were to culminate in a 580km bicycle ride by 12 people between 3 and 10 October this year from Sydney to the top of Mt Kosciuszko. There is a secure online donations facility on the above website - donations over \$2 are tax-deductible - and if someone buys a cow, the fun bit is they get to NAME IT!

AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S COALITION:

AWC's GRANDPARENTING FORUM - Happiness & Heartache

That our country is in the best of hands for the future was proved in Canberra by the speakers at the special day in tribute to GRANDparents. It was inspiring to hear from the wide range of outstanding speakers. The youngest was 9 years of age, the next was 16 and they gave a young perspective on the influence their grandparents had on their lives.

Two indigenous guests, Charmaine Wilson and Barbara Wingard of South Australia (who confided they almost didn't come to Canberra out of shyness) spoke touchingly of the influence of their wonderful grandparents, and (better still) told how comfortable they felt with AWC by the end of the day and no longer shy at all.

Other speakers included Jan Backhouse from Southern Cross University, Yvonne Zardini from Australian Pensioners' & Superannuants' League, Joy Goodfellow from the University of Western Sydney and Margo Fitzpatrick from Council of the Ageing National Seniors.

The 60 people who attended agreed it was a most valuable exercise in disseminating information on the many and varied roles of grandparents.

(From Australian Women's Coalition Newsletter)

BIBLES@WORK IN THE HUNTER - LIVES TOUCHED:

UPDATE on the Bible Blitz in Newcastle mentioned in May Newsette.

The display of Bibles, which attracted more than 8,500 people, included the second Bible printed after the 'Gutenberg Bible'; original 16th century Bibles by William Tyndale, even William Shakespeare's own personal Bible. It was visited by people from all walks of life, including school and church groups, a surprisingly large number of non-believers - even a group of 'gothic' teenagers. Originally intended to last for 6 weeks, it was so popular it continued for a further 6 weeks.

There are many moving stories of lives touched. One man who visited the Bible Display had not been to church for many years after leaving his home town. He was so touched by the display he requested the address of his nearest church so he could start attending again.

A young Chinese man came to the exhibition and was seen looking intently at Ken Duncan's picture of Jesus in 'The Passion' carrying His cross. He asked a Christian woman what the picture was about. She explained the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus and sent him away with a Bible of his own.

Another major drawcard for believers and unbelievers alike was a day of presentations by leading Christian figures and scholars on issues relating to the relevance, validity and authority of the Bible. Speakers included Dr Keith Suter, Dr Phil Pringle from Christian City Church, Rev Dr Ross Clifford of Morling Theological College, Anglican Bishop Graeme Rutherford, Geoff Youldon from the Seventh Day Adventist Church and Dr Don Batton from 'Answers In Genesis.' One man, an atheist, who attended these talks said it was the first time he'd heard valid evidence on why the Bible and Christianity were rational choices. He said he was going to follow up on the Christian faith.

A wide range of other activities was held highlighting the Word of God and Bible Society's work, including financial seminars, a golf day, business and ladies' breakfasts, youth programs, a Hymnfest and a Bike For Bibles ride.

Volunteers reported people often moved to tears. Others recommitted their lives to Christ. Still others with no Christian faith went away clearly affected by what they had seen and heard.

Bible Society's next 'Blitz' was planned for August/September under the title of 'PASSION AND PARABLES FOR ALBURY' with the Bibles Exhibition and similar activities.

(From Bible Society Magazine Bibles@Work)

HOW CAN GOD LET ATROCITIES HAPPEN?

Anne Graham gives clues as to the cause of atrocities around the world.

Billy Graham's daughter was interviewed on the Early Show in America and asked "How could God let something like this happen? (regarding the attacks of September 11). Anne Graham gave an extremely profound and insightful reply.

"I believe God is deeply saddened by this just as we are, but for years we've been telling God to get out of our schools, to get out of our Government and to get out of our lives. How can we expect God to give us His blessing and His protection if we demand He leave us alone?

In light of recent events...terrorist attacks, school shootings etc I think it started when Madeleine Murray O'Hare, (who was murdered recently) complained she didn't want prayer in our schools. We said OK.

Then someone said you better not read the Bible in school...the Bible says thou shall not kill, thou shall not steal, and love your neighbour as yourself. And we said OK.

Then Dr Spock said we shouldn't spank our children when they misbehave because their little personalities would be warped and we might damage their self-esteem. (Dr Spock's son committed suicide). And we said OK.

Then someone said teachers and principals better not discipline our children when they misbehave. And we said OK.

Then someone said, let's let our daughters have abortions if they want, and they won't even have to tell their parents. And we said OK.

Then some wise school board member said, since boys will be boys, let's give our sons condoms and they won't have to tell their parents they got them at school. And we said OK.

Then someone said let's print magazines with pictures of naked women and call it wholesome appreciation for the female body. And we said OK.

Then the entertainment industry said let's make TV shows and movies that promote profanity, violence and illicit sex. Let's record music that encourages rape, drugs, suicide, and satanic themes. And we said it 's just entertainment.

Funny how simple it is for people to trash God and then wonder why the world's going to hell. *Funny* how we believe what the newspapers say, but question the Bible. *Funny* how lewd, crude, vulgar and obscene articles pass freely through cyberspace, but public discussion of God is suppressed in the school and workplace. *Are you laughing?"*

(From Woman's Christian Temperance Union White Ribbon Digest)