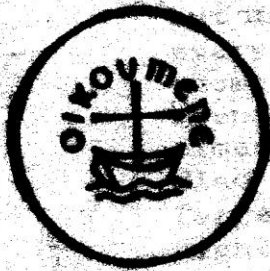


# Australian Church Women

## 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.

January/February 1983.

We trust that you had a good holiday! No doubt timely words for this first letter of the year. For some, perhaps a long trip, others at a resort, boating, fishing, swimming, but for us, this year, we spent a quiet week at home, resting quietly.

I guess this prompts us to ask the question, what constitutes a good holiday?

It cannot be called a true holiday if it does not bring rest to the spirit as well as to the body. In this connection the beautiful word-picture painted for us in Psalm 23 is pertinent: "He leadeth me beside the still waters; He restoreth my soul".

God does not always challenge us. He is not all the time seeking to spur us on; sometimes He calls us aside to rest. When nerves become tense and the body weary, before we come vulnerable to other influences that would take advantage of our human limits of endurance, then is the time for renewal. Renewal or restoration, is brought about chiefly through rest and quiet.

There is a wealth of meaning behind that four letter word "rest". For example, it means freedom from anything that tires, troubles, disturbs or pains. Listen to the words of Jesus: "Come ye apart into a desert place, and rest awhile". There is something very human, in the best sense of the word, in the way Christ treated His tired disciples. He knew the fundamental essentials of rest.

"He reneweth my strength and restoreth my soul".

Isabel Macintyre  
Vice President National  
Working Committee.

Asian Church Women's Conference Assembly -  
October 1982 - Bali

"CO-WORKERS IN CHRIST FOR RENEWAL"

BALI - unique arts, culture and ceremonies, a gentle, hospitable people, scenic beauty - all combined at the secluded Retreat Centre of the Indonesian Council of Churches, Dyhana Pura - a perfect setting for this Assembly of 100 delegates and observers from 16 countries and from associated World bodies.

QF 29 touched down at Denpasar at about 6 p.m. October 15, at last we were actually here - after all the fuss about visas, it was rather an anti-climax to be waved straight through customs - a relief to find a welcoming face and a mini-bus ready to transport us to the other end of the island or so it felt as we hurtled along crowded main streets then bumped along dusty unmade roads. By the time we

arrived it was pitch dark - all seemed confusion but I guess it was only us who were confused - everyone else had arrived and had been allotted rooms and had been having a rehearsal for the opening ceremony. The lights failed several times that evening so here we were trying to find rooms and have dinner - just my luck to forget to take a torch - it was only on the first night that we had problems with the lights. It was rather a shock to find no hot water or cooling and very basic accommodation in the cottages - the temperature stayed the same day and night - HOT - for a Melbournite used to rapid changes in temperature it was rather hard to take but all the difficulties were coped with and forgotten as the Assembly began and we were caught up in the inspiring experience of fellowship with our cottage mates, our prayer partners and women from all different countries. Excellent address, inspiring Bible study and great discussions in the Commission workshops - plenty of exercise both mentally and physically - walking between the assembly area, administration office, dining area and cottages carrying our bag of Assembly papers helped us to unwind after busy sessions. Days began early with family prayers before breakfast at 7.30 and finished around 10.30 p.m. - no wonder we slept very well.

There were four to each cottage and my cottage mates were from Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines. Asian women are used to rising early so it was a shock to be awakened on the first morning at around 5 a.m. - everyone but me was up and dressed and suggesting a walk to the beach before family prayers might be pleasant - it was very pleasant. I found that this time of family prayer was the most precious time of the day as we sat on our cottage porch, God's beauty all around us, we opened our hearts to each other -

our concerns and our joys - we became very close to each other.

Another special time was finding our prayer partners - according to the official list I was paired with Jane from Taiwan but the Taiwanese had problems with their visas and although they could remain at the Assembly they were not allowed to take part in the meetings, not even the opening ceremony. At first it was said I would be allotted someone else and Ranjini from Sri Lanka claimed me as she could not find her partner, but that was not to be as her partner came along just as we started to walk together. I finally met up with Jane and we were able to talk about her problems and mine and of how we could pray for each other during the next four years. I think the exciting part since the Assembly has been receiving Christmas cards from these special people.

So many highlights during the Assembly I feel I could go on for a long time but the Editor has put a limit to my article and I hope to share from time to time through Women At Work throughout the year. I will content myself with just one or two for now.

Australia had to prepare Vespers for the Sunday night - after discussion among our delegation it was decided that because we had been talking and listening non-stop it would be better to prepare a time of quiet meditation and how right that proved to be. Sunday began early as the local committee had arranged for us all to be taken to local Balinese Churches so early breakfast followed by Bible Study, visit to the Church and an afternoon of Commissions and business sessions left all rather tired by

the evening. The evening was a Sharing on Peace which became a time of tension - Korean women are concerned because the Japanese Government are re-writing the History of World War II and some other Asian countries are concerned because of Japan's increasing militarism, so the vespers we had prepared helped to break the tension. After opening with prayers tapes of hymns sung by the Aboriginal Choir at Ernabella, brought by Bernice Mason, were played, Maria McCann led us in prayers for peace, Di Johnson read one of Bruce Prewer's Australian Psalms and then we led the Assembly in singing "A New Commandment". All joined hands for the Benediction and then quietly left.

I guess the final highlight for me was to be elected to the Executive Committee - a responsibility I accepted with great trepidation - with the support from Australian Church Women I feel I may be able to fulfil this role.

The four Commissions worked to produce statements and guidelines for action in areas of Social Renewal, Renewal for Peace and justice, Spiritual Renewal and Global Solidarity among Women and I hope to elaborate on these in later issues.

It was recognised that the Quarterly Bulletin of Asian Church Women is a means of communication and it should try to:

- (a) inform member countries of the needs and prayer concerns;
- (b) educate member countries on all aspects of social concerns such as Consumerism, Child Abuse and prostitution, Peace and Nuclear Disarmament;
- (c) offer guidelines for action where there are common problems;
- (d) encourage international understanding through emphasis on International Solidarity.

In order to fulfil this Eunice Kim the new Executive Secretary has appealed for contributions - news, prayers, articles to do with struggles and issues, snippets from magazines, reports of lectures or conferences. Here is an opportunity to share your experiences with women of Asia as you grow and struggle on your journey to wholeness in Christ. Any articles may be forwarded to me or you may send them direct to Eunice Kim.

Olive Ackland

ASIAN CHURCH WOMEN OFFICE BEARERS

<u>President</u>	Mrs. Boomee Julkiree	Thailand
<u>Vice President</u>	Mrs. Shirin Samuel	Pakistan
<u>Secretary</u>	Mrs. Eva Findlay	New Zealand
<u>Treasurer</u>	Mrs. Phyllis Wee	Singapore
<u>Executive Secretary</u>	Mrs. Eunice Kim, 91-175 Shin Soo Dong, Mapo Ku, Seoul 121 <u>KOREA.</u>	

At the World Alliance of Reformed Churches meetings held in Ottawa recently the theme was 'Thine is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory'. Delegates heard of inequalities in the use of the world's resources - heard that 'Give us this day our daily bread' has a different meaning to the people living in the third world countries than it does to those



of us who live in the developed world and Australian delegates were reminded that there is hunger and poverty in countries we call our neighbours. Delegates heard of political injustices, torture and imprisonment. We met with the wife of a political prisoner and a delegate who had had two members of his family 'disappear' off the streets in his country. We heard of the hurts and injustices of apartheid or separate development in South Africa and the cry of the Black South Africans who reminded us that, while consultation was continuing, it was their blood that was being spilt in the streets.

Women were less than 20% of the number who attended and in some countries there is still a lack of recognition of the gifts God has given to women which enable them to participate as members of the courts of His Church. A member from Sudan accused those present of being 'too European' in our outlook, for in the paper being discussed the word nuclear appeared fifteen times and the word hungry once - the people in his village experience hunger each day and do not know the word nuclear.

Delegates were reminded that when humans pollute, exploit and destroy, it is God's creation - His Glory we are destroying, and in our Church life we often do not reflect God's Glory, but show a weariness with life and a lack of vision for mission.

At the close of the meetings 25 delegates were elected to be the Executive Committee for the next five years. Mrs. Margaret Watson of the Uniting Church in Australia was one of those elected.

M.E. Watson

"Canberra Church women celebrated World Community Day with a morning service at Wesley Uniting Church. The former National Methodist Church was a fitting setting with its beautifully carved and polished wood.

Nearly 90 women from across the range of denominations gathered to share in a service which encouraged all women to go forward with confidence and faith, and included well-loved hymns.

As each representative moved up the sunlit aisle with her gift of the Least Coin and stood beside her neighbour while the dedication was read, the Fellowship of the Least Coin seemed to be reaching across Australia at that hour to the huge family of Australian Church Women.

The evening service was in the Tuggeranong Valley. The Valley is Canberra's pioneer district, populated by young families who help each other and work together in true community spirit.

The speaker at both services was Mrs. Margaret Reeson who gave us a practical and encouraging chart to follow in our determination to Dare and Share and Act. Mrs. Reeson is the wife of a Uniting Church Minister and has been a missionary in Papua-New Guinea."

Mrs. Audrey Sherwin  
Publicity Officer  
A.C.T. Unit