

AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN

WOMEN AT WORK



SEEKS:

- 1) To unite Australian women in their allegiance to their Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ;
- 2) To help Christian women to take a more effective place in the total life & mission of the Church.

AUGUST, 1978

Greetings!

There has been much talk about simpler ways of living in recent years. But why should we live more simply when the book of Genesis seems to say that we should be in charge of the earth and use it for our own purposes. Doesn't the New Testament record say that Jesus came to give us more abundant life? Why shouldn't we have every comfort and convenience modern science and industry can give us?

These are all good questions to which we must find answers if we are to take the expression of our faith seriously. Jesus gives a lead when He says "put away anxious thoughts about food and drink to keep you alive and clothes to cover your body. Surely life is more than food, the body more than clothes. Set your mind on God's kingdom and His justice before everything else and all the rest will come to you as well."

It is really a matter of priorities. It may cost us some of the comfort and luxury that we have come to accept as necessary, but how else are we to be able to release some of this world's limited resources for those who have neither the access to the necessities of life, nor the power to get hold of them? Our commitment to God's justice will support us in acting for them in spite of the cost to us. Isn't it?

really the meaning in John's Gospel when it quotes Jesus as saying, "I have come that people may have life, and have it in all its fullness?" Fullness of life is not in the things we possess or control for our own convenience, but in the attitude of caring that is shared between people for the quality of life of all. "Live simply that all may simply live."

Heather Stevens.
Convenor, Special Days.

SIMPLER LIFE STYLE.

Chosen by the NSW State Unit as their "area of concern"

The 5-weeks session took a look at the "Living in Australia" by Stuart Reid. What does it mean to live in Australia in 1978? In particular, what does it mean for the Australian Christian to live faith-fully in 1978?

As the age range was wide, incorporating University young people to grandparents, an extensive range of views was expressed. The older ones, more conservative, felt they had lived through a depression and a major war, and not grown up in affluence, and perhaps deserved a little comfort as they had worked hard to get what they had! Perhaps this report will reflect the thinking of the more radical younger ones who grew up in a different era. Each saw things differently, depending on the age now. This produced more provocative thinking than if all had been a similar age group. Young people are questioning why their parents have what they consider luxuries because of their affluence, and people's "wants are more than their needs". Peoples in other countries are starving. We are failing society if we don't provide some alternative to the poker machine - what a waste when people work hard for their money. Two-income families are very comfortable and just look for things in which to spend money. The 'dollar sign' motivates people. The accent is on the choice of a career which will earn a lot of money and be able to buy personal comforts. That's the important thing. The training to be consumers.

Young people are looking for something which is honest; they see the church as hypocritical... beautiful buildings, expensive cars in front, people well dressed.

When there is an election, the Church should tell politicians what our values are, what we consider important. Many of the young people are interested in community houses, and a different life style from what we have known. The Christian family is not showing clear guidelines to the community. We need a better solution; it was felt that Christians couldn't be capitalists based on exploiting others to make profits. The Gospel must provide our standards. First we have to change ourselves and draw a few people round us with the same ideals. If many people do it in a small way, it will add up to a big way. Our major role is to make people aware of simplicity. We ourselves must cease to think in terms of money, make a beginning to live a simpler life style, and accept a little less and aim for quality of life.

Dorothy Woodhouse, Leader.

CONFERENCE OF NSW SYNOD OF UNITING CHURCH - JULY 1978.

About fifty ladies gathered in Sydney for the week-end Conference. The weather was cold, but the warmth of the friendships grew as we gathered in discussion groups following addresses by our speakers on the theme "LISTENING!"

It was a great joy to renew friendship with the Rev Dorothy Wacker, past President of the Working Committee and the leader of the National Committee Meeting in Perth. Dorothy now of Pilgrim Church, Adelaide, talked to us on "Listening to God." We are the listening ear for Christ and the soil of life in which the Word is sown. But in the midst of action, there is contemplation. It is in the 'lonely' place where Christ's intimacy with the Father is born. It was an intentional act, purposeful, really to listen to God. We need 'lonely' places, solitude as well as community - these form the basis of the Christian life. We need 'space' to listen, it just does not happen; we need to be alone with God, even when we are with others.

NSW Moderator, Mrs Lilian Wells, former A.C.W Council member, led us into thinking about 'listening to each other'. She reminded us that 'no man is an island...' Listening may be the better part of communication. A passive listener takes it all in, being a listening ear, a sounding board - sometimes we are needed to be a listener and counsellor. We should listen with all we have: 'walk in the other person's shoes', identification with the other. We must respect

respect 'confidence', if the occasion demands it. Active sharing of joys and sorrows is a 2-way process, there being a response of mind, spirit and heart, for the active listener. Listening takes time, if someone wants to talk. Some times we have to hear what the other person doesn't say - unvoiced sensitivity. There is more involved than just words, it is a 2-way process - real communication. We were reminded of Keith Pearson's poem, "LISTEN" - "When you listen you affirm me, but your listening must be real" "Listening enriches the other with the priceless gift of intimacy."

LISTENING TO ANOTHER.

I know you believe you understand what you think I said but I am not sure you realise that what you heard is not what I meant."

Dorothy Woodhouse

HE KNOWS BEST.

* I asked for strength to achieve; *
 * I got weakness to learn humility *
 * I asked for health to do great things; *
 * I got infirmity that I might do His will. *
 * I asked for riches to be happy; *
 * I got poverty to be rich in heaven. *
 * I asked for power to win prestige; *
 * I got weakness to let men see Christ's power in me *
 * I asked for many things to enjoy life; *
 * I got His Life to enjoy many things. *
 * I got nothing I asked for as I asked for it, *
 * Yet everything He knew was best for me. *
 * Despite myself, my unspoken prayers were heard; *
 * I am among men, most richly blessed. *

 AN APPEAL IS MADE TO CONVENORS OF THE F.L.C TO SEND US ANY
 SPECIAL PLANS OR IDEAS THEY HAVE WHICH WILL ENSURE A FIT+
 TING CELEBRATION OF THE SILVER JUBILEE OF THE F.L.C 1980.

Marjorie Stanhope
 National Convener.

AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN, S.A. STATE UNIT. WOMEN'S FORUM.

We liked the idea of the Women's Forums started in Perth by the National Working (Executive) Committee of A.C.W as these occasions were designed to appeal to women uncommitted to the usual church groups, or even to women uncommitted to the church.

A small sub-committee was formed, plans were made, a date set, and invitations duplicated. Soon each member found herself responsible for asking three guests; each denomination was asked to supply helpers and necessary equipment. A special speaker was invited, the former President of ACW under whose leadership in Perth, the idea was started.

On the day, members of the Executive and helpers and friends began to stagger in bearing burdens of flowers and food, soft drinks and glasses, an hour before we were due to start. By the official opening time, many women already made friends with others working alongside them.

Cool drinks welcomed the guests, the President, Miss Betty Crouch, and the speaker, the Rev. Dorothy Wacker, were welcomed and about 80 people ate abundantly; after dinner, the topic was introduced, "HOW TO BE CHRISTIAN IN AN AFFLUENT SOCIETY". Friends, guests and members found themselves in groups, thinking deeply as they discussed aspects of the speaker's theme.

There was a great spirit of friendliness at the first Forum, many guests wanted to know when we would hold another evening meeting. It has been decided to hold another dinner within a few months.

Alder Hall.

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*           People are self-centred           *
*           to a nauseous degree.             *
*           They will keep on                 *
*           about themselves                  *
*           while I'm explaining ME          *
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TRADING PARTNERS (AUST) LIMITED.

A new link between Third World Craft Creators & Austn Buyers.

Many Third World people who live in poverty are highly skilled creators. Many Australians would willingly pay a fair price for beautiful Third World Handicrafts.

TRADING PARTNERS is a new link between those two groups of people - so that craft creators can have a market for their products, and people in this country can buy excellent crafts at a reasonable price.

TRADING PARTNERS has been established jointly by the Austn Council of Churches, Australian Catholic Relief, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Community Aid Abroad and the Uniting Church Commission for World Mission. It is a non-profit organisation.

In establishing the organisation, the sponsoring agents had two major objectives in mind -

- i) to provide a market for Third World Craft producers who would not otherwise be able to sell their handicrafts;
- ii) To use the sale of handicrafts to Australia as a development education medium.

There are a number of guidelines which TRADING PARTNERS must follow; we pay a fair price for the goods - we don't beat the supplier down in order to get a bargain, but having established that we are being asked a fair price, we pay on that basis. We do not buy from Commercial operators but only small producers who have no other way or only very limited means by which to sell their craft. We try to avoid the possibility of a group of craftsmen being solely dependent on us for their livelihood - we can of course, buy only what the Australian market will buy. To maintain these guidelines, we have to be aware of what is produced in conjunction with a producer's other means of income and buy in smaller quantities. As far as possible, we buy only traditional crafts and art forms, adapted where necessary to meet Australian needs, but in no way encouraging the establishment of production facilities specially for Australian conditions.

We are currently buying from producers in the Pacific, the Gilbert Is., Tonga, Fiji; in Latin America - Haiti and Ecuador; in Asia - India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh,

Philippines, Thailand and Singapore. We hope to be able to have handcrafts from Africa very soon.

The handcrafts come from a variety of producers in these countries - some church based, some community based. The Producer stories are a very real part of the handcraft themselves and every item sold carries a swing ticket with a little information about the producer and his craft. For those involved in selling the craft, there is a kit available giving detailed information about each of the producers. Brochures and posters are also available.

TRADING PARTNERS handcrafts are available through a number of channels - principally through retail shops, always needing volunteer staff; through house parties, church based parties, or any group looking for a novel way to raise money, when a profit margin of perhaps 20% is usually added to the purchase price and represents the money advantage for the particular cause.

TRADING PARTNERS IS A NEW CONCEPT, possibly fairly idealistic but we believe doing. Certainly a great deal of interest has been expressed to date and the numbers of groups using the facilities increases daily. Dolls, tableware, Batic wall hangings, basketware, beautiful jute bags etc. and other quite lovely handcraft can be purchased at a just price from village people in developing countries.

Dinah Burnett.

P.O Box 128, 131 Eveleigh St.
Redfern.

FIRE ON THE EARTH. Ralph Martin. What God is doing in the world today.

A very readable book. It unfolds an exciting vision of Christians flowing together. It calls for radical 'repentance' and 'reform' to make way for the full 'restoration' of God's people.

He writes: "The fire that Jesus cast on the earth to blaze out in darkness has become sadly low. But God is moving now, today, to rekindle that fire and fan it into the mighty blaze He desires. He is acting now, across the world, to turn the hearts of His people back to Him, to heal the wounds of division, to baptise with the Spirit and with fire; He intends to restore the full vitality of His people. He is casting down His fire anew in order to draw all men to Himself."

