



AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN NSW STATE UNIT

MINUTES of COUNCIL MEETING and ACWC CELEBRATION held at 222 Pitt Street, Sydney on Monday 17 September 2001 at 10.30 am.

President Jan Harrison welcomed back Arieta Filipino, and welcomed as special guests Uma David from India, and Diana Manson from Aotearoa New Zealand.

Psalm 14 - look into our own hearts

Hymn - I cannot tell

Prayer for US in particular, and the world situation following events of 11 September.

Margaret Hawkins has hip problem, Alwyn Warren is not well.

Overseas: Alison Todd, Mina Whybourne, Heather Reid

PRESENT: Members as recorded APOLOGIES: As recorded

The Minutes of Council Meeting of Monday 20 August 2001 were held over to be confirmed at November meeting.

It was noted that the position of President of Baptist Women was to pass from Beryl Kirkwood to Olive Edmonstone, both of whom are members of Australian Church Women. Prayer was offered for both ladies.

Uma David spoke of her delight to be in Australia, giving thanks to God. Uma is a member of the Church of South India, the oldest uniting church in the world.

What is the role of women in the church? The Christian woman's role in multi-cultural societies has to change as other things change. As the world shrinks, people throughout the world are touched as events take place.

Fellowship of the Least Coin is more familiar to people.

Asian Church Women's Conference representing 17 Asian nations - Cambodia was last to join and Laos and Vietnam have not yet done so - began in 1950 to enable all people to work for

- meaningful peace, justice and love
- women's rights
- empowerment in local churches
- leadership potential extended

beyond language, denominational and cultural differences. Meetings are held every 4 years - last General Assembly was in Chang Mai allowing women to share experiences, to take insights, learn from each other, break down isolation and impart strength.

Fellowship of the Least Coin is based on prayer being able to change anything - small coins - 'widow's mite' - supports 40 projects each year. A committee works out the grants, giving to those in need who have not received from others. Prayer cards.

Role of women: in church they are free to use gifts God has given them - diverse gifts, some insignificant but needed. Without women it would be a very little church, but the power of women is often under utilised. The strength that comes from women should be used more.

In a biblical sense women were the earliest members of the church - in a kitchen, supportive role - giving hospitality. In the contemporary world many women are financially independent and we must rethink women's role - go beyond the walls of churches.

In India churchgoing Christians are happy to be in church - sing, glorify God etc. When Sunday best clothes are put away and working clothes put on faith must go beyond the walls of the church. This is a great challenge. In India 2% of the population are Christian - how to bring more to faith whether in India or Australia?

It is important to remember God's realm is the whole world and creation itself. We do not need to go overseas to preach the gospel - there is plenty of work where we are. The church is not the end of Christian faith, but rather a starting point where we can pray for each other then go beyond, and in daily encounters faith stories must be told. If people can be convinced by stories of personal experiences of others as used in marketing techniques, surely they will be convinced by faith stories too. Share with anyone who will listen. Be prepared to respond to any whose faith journey has begun.

Live a life that is different from others. We are made in the image of God - a God of love, compassion and justice.

If we lived in imitation of Christ we would change the world. Be sensible to the needs of people around you - actions are much more powerful than words - laugh with those who laugh, cry with those who weep . . .

We may not know when we touch someone's life. Yesterday is history, today is a gift - the present, tomorrow is a mystery.

Jean Porteous prayed for Uma.

Diana Manson is the Asian Church Women's Conference Assistant Secretary and comes from Christchurch, New Zealand where Church Women United in Aotearoa New Zealand is based. There are 14 denominational representatives. Fellowship of the Least Coin is supported and World Day of Prayer observed. Active Christians are only a small percentage of the population in New Zealand. There is difficulty in attracting young women. Fellowship of the Least Coin is easier to promote than Asian Church Women's Conference, but gradually awareness is growing. Church Women United local groups usually meet bi-monthly for special days or coffee mornings.

Joan Tong prayed for Diana.

The ACWC Service was led by the President and Marie Majoor. Bible readings were read by Thora Thomas and Janet Lang. Beryl McLaughlin prayed for our link country Pakistan. The President gave some brief notices.

At the conclusion we enjoyed a shared lunch after singing grace together. Thanks to the Catholic ladies who were the hostesses on duty, and to all denominations supplying food for the luncheon.

Signed: _____

Date: _____