

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE N.S.W. WOMEN'S INTER CHURCH COUNCIL, 17TH APRIL, 1972.

Although the Annual Meeting of this Council is held in April, the President is installed at what, over the years, we have called an ANNUAL RALLY. This is held in a Church or Meeting Place of the denomination from which the President comes. This time, of course, we must more correctly say 'from the ranks of the Army in which she serves. MRS. LT. COL. OLIVE CARPENTER came into office this last year with enthusiasm exuding from her. She is a woman who just doesn't HAVE to announce she loves her Lord. As she took her office in this Council, we could imagine she had on her lips the prayer of the Psalmist 'O Lord, my prayer to You is always out of a life that is full of need. I am Your servant; I am trying to represent You. I need Your support for every step I take.' We feel that the Lord has indeed been gracious to her; heard her plea; and used her every minute of the year. For this we cannot thank her, but be humbly grateful for her enthusiastic leadership in her dual role as President of Council and Secretary of the busy Promotions Committee.

WHAT A SPECIAL RALLY IT WAS! We were able to arrange to have MISS VIOLET SAMPA with us. To know Violet is to meet a gentle and serene friend and THEN to remember that she was our 1971 WINIFRED KIEK SCHOLARSHIP HOLDER. Violet is far from her homeland, ZAMBIA, where she is to become a Minister of her United Church there. Because of the value of another two years study at the Emanuel Theological College, Brisbane; an arrangement between the Church in her country and the Congregational Union of Australia has enabled Violet to be among us for yet another two years. Violet had her 21st Birthday last year and many were the expressions by party, gifts, and cards to indicate just how our hearts are with her heart.

ANOTHER PRIVILEGE for the women of N.S.W. was the fact that the WINIFRED KIEK SCHOLAR for 1972, MISS TERANI AIKASI's plane first touched down in Sydney, en route to Brisbane from Suva, enabling members of the Executive and others to greet and welcome her at the airport. TERANI is Head Deaconess of the Methodist Church in Fiji and comes to Australia to further her training at the Deaconess College, Kangaroo Point, Brisbane, so that she may then undertake the training programme of the deaconesses in her own country. The National Committee of Australian Church Women arranged for Terani to spend a day at the National Meeting here in Sydney, so, in February we had the joy of meeting this very beautiful and gracious Christian - and again, we experienced instant friendship!

LIFE MEMBERSHIP is not lightly conferred by this Council, but we have very valued Life Members. This year we were further honoured by the gracious acceptance by MRS. G. BRIGGS of Life Membership. Mrs. Briggs has filled many positions on Council; bringing to each situation wisdom and quiet confidence, which reflects so manifestly the quality of her personal faith and that of the Society of Friends of whom she is a representative. What a great listener and wise counsellor!

SEVERANCE OF TWO ORIGINAL LINKS in the history of N.S.W. W.I.C.C. has left us saddened and yet very proud to have known two ladies of such dedication and determination that Christian women should be able to enjoy fellowship together and share their religious heritages. We thank God for the remembrances of two of our foundation and Life Members, both well towards one hundred years of age, who remained till their death keenly interested in all Council seeks to do. MRS. A.E. WALKER and MISS G.A. ROSEBY - people of God we rejoice to remember!

WE WARMLY WELCOME ALL NEW REPRESENTATIVES TO COUNCIL and know that their presence with us will enrich the fellowship and bring new thoughts and insights to its work.

WELCOME, TOO, to the CITY BRANCH which has affiliated with Council this year!

WYBALENA: The Equity Court having instructed the Trustees of the Wybalena monies to use them (through the Y.W.C.A.) for the provision of extra accommodation at their "Tremayne" Hostel, Kirribilli, Council members were invited to attend the dedication of the "Wybalena Wing" on 22nd March, 1972. The Y.W.C.A. invited our President to participate in the ceremony and to offer the dedicatory prayer. We once again pay sincere tribute to the ladies of this Council, and in particular MRS. M. MILLAR, for their vision and outstanding service to girls through the original Wybalena Hostel.

INTERESTING VISITORS TO COUNCIL this year included MISS HO LAY KUM from Malaysia, who is a second year student at Deaconess House, and, as guest speaker, gave us much deeper understanding of "The Women of Asia" about whom she spoke. We were also very happy to welcome to an Executive Meeting MISS ANGELA BREEN of the Paulian Association.

ASIAN CHURCH WOMEN'S CONFERENCE. As MRS. OLGA BADGER, a Congregational Representative on W.I.C.C., is on the Planning Committee of the A.C.W.C., we are singularly fortunate to be able to learn more of the value and involvement together of the women of the Asian Churches. From her we hear of the people and activities of the Fellowship of the Least Coin. Also this year Australia has been invited to make a contribution to "ASIAN FOCUS." N.S.W. decided to send as its contribution pen pictures of REV. WINIFRED KIEK and HEAD DEACONESS MARY ANDREWS, two outstanding Christian Women of our country. Mrs. Badger and other members of the Asian Church Women's Conference are very conscious of the fact that we do not include Aboriginal women in our representation, and it is hoped that this can be effected before the next Conference, for it is certain that our Aboriginal women would make a significant contribution.

NEW ACTIVITIES AND OLD. MEETING DAYS: At present the Council meeting is held in the Assembly Hall at SALVATION ARMY HEADQUARTERS at 10.30 a.m. on the third MONDAY. This change of day is for a TRIAL PERIOD THIS YEAR. It will enable us to allow two of our major denominations fuller representation - Presbyterian and Anglican. We pay tribute to Mrs. Lt. Col. Carpenter and Mrs. Pfeiffer, who graciously offered to hold this trial period during their terms of office.

PUBLICITY. AT A.C.W. LEVEL we are kept up to date with news through "Women at Work" thus we are in touch with the wider work of the Church women of all States. A.C.W. Calendar diaries and bookmarks, notelets and pens, spread the news to Church women generally.

OUR PUBLICITY OFFICER FOR N.S.W. is Mrs. Joan Curtin, and, due to her efforts, newspapers and Church papers have been kept aware of news of the three Special Days, as well as the wider Australian Church Women scene. Our thanks to her for sometimes tiresome but tireless effort. (So that we may become better acquainted with each other, regular copies of denominational papers are very helpful to our President and the Executive.

FELLOWSHIP OF THE LEAST COIN. This Fellowship has spread quickly and with deep involvement throughout the State under the Convenorship of Mrs. Clarice Butler.

When we learnt of Mrs. Butler's move to the Central Coast area and her regretful resignation as Convenor, Council was very sad indeed. It recorded in its Minutes the extraordinary service given by Mrs. Butler and Council's appreciation of it. WHAT WOULD WE DO NOW? Our Past President, Mrs. Stanhope, who has been far from well this year, felt that she would gladly become our Convenor. HOW CAN WE THANK HER?

SOCIAL ISSUES: An increasing awareness of the various very dubious magazines, etc., published which are aimed at the teenage reader, inclined us to the thought that as Church women we should be watchful and critical when necessary. AND SO, we appointed somebody to become informed and to pass on to Council issues about which we should recommend action. That challenged Mrs. Stanhope, who volunteered her services in this position and we are more than grateful to her.

Following WORLD COMMUNITY DAY Services and Discussions, it was suggested that Council members feel a responsibility to write to both their State and Federal Members of Parliament, regarding the various acts of racial discrimination being practised against our Aboriginal people and communities.

Council sent a telegram to the N.S.W. Chief Secretary, Mr. Willis, commending his banning the play 'Oh Calcutta' and pledging our support in this type of action by his department.

STUDY GROUPS were decided to be held, for those able to participate, at the conclusion of Council Meetings. Under the capable leadership of MRS. LILLIAN WELLS, items of moment, far too complex for full research, discussion and decision in Council as a whole, will be studied and precis reports presented to Council. Such things as the important book "Don't Just Stand There" by Miss Jean Skuse; and other valuable studies of contentious issues will be dealt with in this way. Thus all Council members can be acquainted with the several facets of a problem and in a more informed way.

MEETING NEWS: Wichita Conference of Church Women United was a world conference of Christian women. Head Deaconess Mary Andrews attended and as she spoke of her deep spiritual involvement with the women of all parts of the Americas and other countries of the world, some of her excitement rubbed off on us. We realised that the Church women of the world were INDEED a tremendous force for peace and understanding and rejoiced that they were being led for the first time by a Negro woman, Mrs. Harvey. Although we have never met her, we feel we know Mrs. Harvey well, and she is remembered in our prayers as she undertakes, for all of us, this tremendous leadership role. Through Deaconess Mary we could just feel her great warmth, her humility, and her Christian experience.

Following the National Committee of Australian Church Women, a portion of February Council meeting allowed members, by means of personal interviews, to share some of the experiences and insights gained by our N.S.W. representatives.

Denominational Segments, given by a representative, each meeting help us to draw closer to each other in understanding.

Circle of Prayer is used at the conclusion of each meeting and we feel bound to the Christian women of each country of the world in those few minutes.

BRANCHES DAY this year began with the welcome fellowship of tea and homemade biscuits. Then the story of the vision, then reality of the birth of Australian Church Women was told, as only MRS. MARJORIE VERCO could! She not only made it an enthusiastic venture of past women of great Christian stature - but laid on us all the feeling of the joy of continuing service and handing on the torch we ourselves have received.

This was followed by colour slides and correlated tape recording, produced by Mrs. Joan Coates of Melbourne. They told in picture and story the history of the National Committee Meetings of A.C.W. and introduced us to the Winifred Kiek Scholars present at the meetings. All this culminated in a most meaningful explanation and history of the Fellowship of the Least Coin. We pay tribute to Mrs. Coates for this contribution.

APPRECIATIONS: To our retiring Secretary, Mrs. Audrey Bell, who is to leave for a period overseas while her husband undertakes some specialised studies, we say simply "Thank you," We have much appreciated your quiet and good humoured contribution to Council.

We would be remiss if we failed to express sincere thanks to our cheerful and most efficient Treasurer, Mrs. Perriam. Again "Thank you."

PLEDGE. To Mrs. Pfeiffer, who has been nominated by the P.W.A. Council, as our President-Elect, we pledge not only our prayers but our support in every way possible this coming year.

MANY AND VARIED have been Council's activities during this last twelve months. At all times we have felt the togetherness of fellowship in Christ Who crosses all denominational boundaries - for He IS Lord of all.

We have great plans for more fellowship; better use of meeting times; more personal involvement in Women's World Day of Prayer; Fellowship Day; World Community Day; more personal information and action in social issues: BUT unless we are wholly Christ-centred, this will just be a better organised Council.

It is by the quality of our combined and loving witness to a troubled and basically non-Christian society that we will reflect the Churches we represent.

Let us each pray most earnestly

"OH, USE ME, LORD, USE EVEN ME," for it is to be USED that we are sent as representatives to this Council.

WIN DOUGHERTY
Assistant Secretary.