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I N R E T R O S P E C T !!!

LOOKING BACK TO 1963 -

At the request of the Working Committee of Australian Church Women in December, 1972, the four women whose vision and endeavours brought "AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN" to reality, dipped into their memories to share, in the following pages, some reminiscences.

Deaconess Mary Andrews

AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN - -

ITS FOUNDATION



As a missionary in China, I found the ecumenical spirit very strong among missionaries in the cities in which I served. The last Christmas in China, I preached in the largest Baptist Church in East China to a congregation of people from all the churches in the city.

Much of our work and witness was done by the Churches together. On my return to Australia in 1951, I found that the unity in Christ was sadly lacking in the churches in Australia. I longed and prayed that something might be done to unite women in a common loyalty to Jesus Christ. On one occasion I received some information from Rev. Winifred Kiek, which sparked off some glimpses of hope. Because of deep involvement in building and training of students at Deaconess House, there was not very much time to discuss my concern with others. Then one day after the meetings of the Australian Council of Churches, I received an invitation to join a small committee to consider bringing women in the Churches together. This invitation seemed at the time to me to be incredible, but it was with joyful expectation that I joined the Committee under the leadership of Mrs. Mabel Wyllie.

This Committee considered its concerns to develop relationships with 'inter church', so on 8th October 1962, members of the N.S.W. Council were invited to discuss the Interim Committee's proposals. In November, 1962, a large consultation of N.S.W. people, including representatives of Denominational Women's organisations, Women's World Day of Prayer, Committees, and the Australian Council of Churches, as well as Women's Interchurch Council met to try and iron out difficulties. Finance seemed to loom large. Some feared a system of assessments might be levied on member organisations; others were concerned about the possible 'take over' of their organisation or concern.

- * In FEBRUARY, 1963, a NATIONAL CONSULTATION gave further consideration to the plan, prepared a proposed CONSTITUTION, and made plans for the "A.C.W." INAUGURATION. The aim to widen the horizons of women in local Churches ecumenically towards the whole world was strengthened by the invitation given by the South East Asian Christian Conference to send a delegate to Tokyo. The need to relate to overseas countries found expression in the plan for the Winifred Kiek Scholarship coming into being.

The gift of \$2,000.00 from the FELLOWSHIP OF THE LEAST COIN for WORK AMONG ABORIGINES' WOMEN in 1963, challenged the Interim Committee to make that Fellowship, coupled with prayer, one of its PRIORITIES.

- * By the end of the consultation in FEBRUARY, 1963, A CONSTITUTION WAS READY TO BE PRESENTED TO THE AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES. I, as A.C.W. Consultant that year, had the privilege of presenting the document to an Assembly that was not altogether convinced that a Women's organisation such as A.C.W. was a good thing. However, prayer and patience won the day.

I served as Convenor of the Winifred Kiek Scholarship under which MISS CONNIE TAN came to Australia. We were delighted by the way in which the Scholarship project was received. To me it gave further opportunities for fulfilling my missionary commitment.

It is interesting to note that all the projects have developed except the Study material, which the Interim Committee formulated, and very little in the way of change has taken place since.

It was a great privilege for me to join Mrs. A. Dougan in representing Australian Church Women at an International Ecumenical Women's Conference in FRANCE, 1967. It seemed then, that U.S.A., Canada and Australia were among the very few countries that had been able to find a 'unity' on a national ecumenical basis.

It was a thrill to represent Australia at the Triennial of Church Women United in Wichita, Kansas, U.S.A., when I really felt Australian Church Women had forged a link with international Christian women's organisations, which was going to be very enriching.

In 1972 while in U.S.A. attending the International Federation of Deaconesses' Meetings in NEW YORK, I

was invited to meet the Working Committee of CHURCH WOMEN UNITED in NEW YORK.

Being a member of Australian Church Women has also enabled me to challenge the Anglican Church to form a liaison on a national scale called Anglican Women.

- * I am very grateful for all the experiences God has enabled me to have in the formation and growth of AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN, and 1 Peter 5:10 sums up the situation as to the future as I see it -

"The God of all grace, who calls you to share His eternal glory in union with Christ, will Himself perfect you, and give you firmness, strength and a sure foundation."

--

MARY M. ANDREWS

(Head Deaconess & Principal)

Mrs. Keelah Dey

SOME IMPRESSIONS OF THE EARLY DAYS OF AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN --

- In recalling the formation of Australian Church Women, there naturally comes to mind some of the possibilities which we foresaw and the purposes which we hoped to achieve through such a body.

At the initial meeting which had been convened by Rev. Harvey Perkins, then General Secretary of the Australian Council of Churches, we had the vision of Church women throughout Australia being united in a common purpose which rose above denominational divisions and differences. -

We envisaged a group which, without separating women from men in the work of the Church, would provide an avenue through which Christian women could demonstrate nationally their essential unity in the life and witness of the Church, whatever their denominational affiliations.

We hoped that AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN, which was the name we finally adopted after much deliberation and uncertainty, would be an instrument for providing inspiration and encouragement to local church groups and at the same time would be able to provide them with assistance in uniting at the local level in common projects.

This we foresaw as not only strengthening the ecumenical movement, but as being valuable in helping the local smaller and sometimes very isolated groups of women to feel the strength and support that could come from seeing themselves as part of a larger whole.

We saw the possibility of women in the local churches being equipped and inspired to become more involved in the life of their church, their community and the wider world, and being liberated, more ready to claim and take their rightful place with men in the councils of their churches and in society.

During the years of the Interim Committee's life, the initial ideals began to crystalise leading to the regular publication each year of a Study Booklet, the holding of Fellowship and World Community Days, the sponsoring of the Fellowship of the Least Coin and the Winifred Kiek Scholarship, and many other efforts to bring to Church women in Australia a sense of their potential and essential oneness and their power for good.

- It seems to me that the validity of the vision we had remains, but in this rapidly changing world each succeeding Working Committee has the exciting and demanding task of finding new, adventurous and appealing ways to make the vision a reality.

KEELAH DEY.

Mrs. Marjory Verco

MY PART IN THE BEGINNINGS OF A.C.W.

(Marjory Verco)

For me, it all began in 1958 when my husband and I visited U.S.A. for three months. The chief purpose of our visit was Education, but as well as this we took every opportunity to visit churches and especially Christian Education groups. We were particularly impressed by the reality of religion in the lives of most American families - they talked about their faith in general conversation, they went to church and Sunday School together as families.

I found the Churches of Christ Christian Women's Fellowships were a vital part of the women's lives. But, more than this, I found these local fellowships were part of a much greater fellowship - United Church Women of U.S.A. Together, women from many different denominations were involved in intense and vital study programmes of current interest - e.g. the Middle East, South-East Asia. The fact was that, by pooling their resources, U.C.W. were able to call on the best brains to produce magnificent resource material for these studies. After visiting Friendship Press in New York, I returned home laden with samples and inspired to try ~~and~~^{and} enthuse Australian church women to enter into similar worthwhile study programmes.

On our way home, my husband and I resolved -

firstly, to extend our Christian experience to everyday activities - make our Christianity live! No longer must it be a comfortable family experience pigeon-holed for Sundays!

secondly, to seek every opportunity to work for the greater co-operation of Christians in Australia.

On arrival home we found a letter from the Billy Graham Crusade Office inviting us to train as counsellors for the Crusade of 1959. This we could not refuse in view of our resolutions,

My husband served as President of the N.S.W. Conference of Churches of Christ 1959-60 and I was given the opportunity of telling many women's groups of my experience with U.C.W. of U.S.A.

I was invited to serve on the Women's Follow-up Committee of the Billy Graham Crusade with dedicated women representing many denominations - a most enriching and inspiring experience!

At our last meeting (the Follow-up Committee, of necessity, had to be disbanded) there was a note of sadness, but I remember Major Jean Coleman saying "we could continue this experience if we were all to become involved in the Women's Inter-Church Council."

I knew of the Council's **existence** through my Mother's involvement, but thought no more about it until, in 1961, I was invited by the Churches of Christ Christian Women's Fellowship of N.S.W. to accept nomination as President-Elect of the Women's Inter-Church Council. This was a surprise as I was only 46! The members I knew were Mother's contemporaries! Then I recalled Major Coleman's words and my resolves.

As an Executive Member, I mentioned my contact with U.C.W. of U.S.A. and asked if we might contact other states to see if we could set up some link among the church women of Australia. The response was not encouraging, but I did not accept this as final.

Then, in 1962, there came an invitation to the W.I.C.C. through the Australian Council of Churches, to nominate a woman to represent all Australian Church Women, to attend the Conference of Asian Church Women. This invitation had been forwarded to the W.I.C.C. of Victoria initially and they had replied "No money to send a representative". We agreed that this first invitation to Australian church women to share in this Asian Conference must not be rejected. We, too, had no funds but we found Mrs. Edna Roughley who agreed to go at her own expense.

This incident emphasised the fact that distances were shrinking between states and countries. This invitation would be repeated and we must be more prepared and organised to accept such in the future.

Other younger women had joined the Council; among them, Reta Farr, who served as President, representing the Congregational Women's Fellowship and Edna Baker (Salvation Army) and ~~Edna~~ Lilley (Methodist) both of whom served as secretaries. Many of us were not only concerned with the extension of co-operation of church women at the national level, but also at the local level - many women knew nothing of the W.I.C.C. and were not participating in any inter-church fellowships in their districts.

This latter concern ~~was what~~ prompted Edna Baker (Secretary) and me (now President) to seek an appointment with the Revd. Clive Harcourt-Norton, Secretary, N.S.W. Committee of Australian Council of Churches, early in 1962. Our aim was to begin our local contacts through the few Inter-Church Councils set up by A.C.C. At this interview Mr. Harcourt-Norton told us that at the A.C.C. Annual Meeting in February, 1962, Mrs. Mabel Wyllie had been commissioned to investigate the possibility of linking the church women of Australia in some way. We were delighted and so contacted Mrs. Wyllie immediately. We agreed to meet Mrs. Wyllie and Col. Bell (Federal Liaison Officer of the Women's World Day of Prayer) to discuss further action. It was agreed to call a Consultation of Church Women immediately. A representative from each Christian Denomination, the Y.W.C.A. and the Women's World Day of Prayer in N.S.W. was invited and we were also delighted to have Mrs. Faichney, President of W.I.C.C. of Victoria present. Mrs. Wyllie explained her commission from the A.C.C. and, as President of the N.S.W. W.I.C.C., I had the task of expressing our concern to seek to promote the co-operation of church women at every level - local, state and national. I was also able to tell of my experience with U.C.W. in U.S.A. and prove that this co-operation was very worthwhile. Each member of the Consultation was then invited to speak and state the reaction of the group she was representing. The response was exciting and inspiring, the only disappointment being that Col. Bell stated she thought the W.W.D.P. Committee would prefer to remain independent. From my memory, Mrs. Commissioner Coutts supplied the necessary inspiration to go ahead. She reminded us of Christ's prayer "that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou has sent me".

At this Consultation it was agreed to set up an Interim Committee to work on the possibility of linking church women more effectively at every level. The members of the first Interim Committee were -

Mrs. M. Wyllie (Chairman)
Head Deaconess Mary Andrews (Vice Chairman)
Mrs. M. Verco (Vice Chairman)
Mrs. L. Lilley (Secretary) - later
Lt.-Col. H. Cross, Salvation Army (Secretary)
Mrs. K. Dey (Treasurer)
Mrs. H. McPhee (Y.W.C.A.)
Mrs. N. Barrett (Methodist)

Miss Thelma Skillen^y (Executive Secretary A.C.C.)

In March, 1963 my husband and I left for overseas again, visiting U.S.A. for six weeks. This time, as Vice Chairman of the I.C. of A.C.W. and President of N.S.W. W.I.C.C., I arranged to meet representatives of U.C.W. of U.S.A. at every stop - local, state and national. What an inspirational and beneficial experience!

The first task of the I.C. was to encourage all to participate in W.W.D.P. and to introduce Fellowship Day and World Community Day to all Australian church women - days set aside for inter-church worship, prayer, study and fellowship.

During 1963 the I.C. produced the study booklet "Saints Alive!". This was used widely by many study groups.

In March, 1964 the Interim Committee of Australian Church Women arranged a National Consultation which was held at Wesley College, University of Sydney. Representatives from Women's Inter-Church Councils of South Australia, Queensland, Victoria and N.S.W. and representatives from Church of England, Congregational, Churches of Christ, Methodist, Presbyterian, Greek Orthodox and Armenian Apostolic Churches attended.

At this Consultation, Mrs. Joan Coates presented the Fellowship of the Least Coin and told of the gift of \$1,000 received in 1963, from this fund for work amongst Australian Aborigines. The meeting recommended to the Interim Committee that the Fellowship of the Least Coin be introduced throughout Australia and suggested that World Community Day might be a suitable time to receive this money.

Other recommendations included the Aim of Australian church women and the Structure of Australian church women.

Then came the need for establishing a special project and the Winifred Keik Scholarship was set up - what faith the Interim Committee had!

The first meeting of the National Committee of Australian Church Women was held at Deaconess House, Sydney in February, 1965. The National Committee adopted the Constitution of Australian Church Women and appointed the Working Committee -

President	-	Mrs. Wyllie
Secretary	-	Col. H. Cross
Vice-President	-	Head Deaconess Mary Andrews
"	"	Mrs. M. Verco
Treasurer	-	Mrs. K. Dey
	and	
		Mrs. Stafford, Mrs. Lilley, Mrs. Dougan,
		Mrs. Gribble and Mrs. Doratis.

A dream come true - a vision realized! - Under God's guidance in a wonderful way. And yet, this was only the beginning of the vision of which we were reminded by Mrs. Commissioner Coutts at our initial Consultation "that they all may be one.....that the world may believe". What an inspiration! What a challenge!



Mrs. Mabel Wyllie

RECOLLECTIONS of the

BEGINNINGS of AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN

1962 - At its annual meeting in February, 1962, the Australian Council of Churches resolved to appoint a commission to examine the possibilities of establishing some kind of relationship between Women's Inter-church Councils in the various States and with women's denominational Commonwealth-wide federations.

The commission was also asked to review the constitution and activity of United Church Women in the United States, and its relation to the National Christian Council of U.S.A. The commission was to function as a committee of the Australian Council of Churches. It consisted of four women, four men with the power to co-opt. I had moved this resolution and was glad to have the support of the A.C.C. for a proposal which I felt was important for the life of the church.

For me the need for some kind of planned ecumenical interest and activity for the women of the churches in Australia had been underlined by my own ecumenical experience at the Samoan Conference of Pacific Churches in May, 1961, a World Council of Churches Conference in Madras and the Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches at New Delhi in December, 1961. These had been tremendous occasions for me and I came back with a determination to share this ecumenical adventure with church women in Australia.

There were a few privileged women who like myself had shared in the fellowship of the A.C.C. but for the majority of keen and faithful women working within their own churches there was little opportunity to meet and know women of other churches and countries. I had worked for years within the framework of the Methodist Women's organisations and had felt the need for a wider and indeed ecumenical basis for women's work. I therefore joined this committee of the A.C.C. with the hope that we could link the women of the Australian churches to each other and to the world wide fellowship of the ecumenical movement.

Very early in our work as a committee we discovered that the N.S.W. Women's Inter-church Council was also keen to develop relationships with inter-church councils in other States and to encourage the formation of women's inter-church councils in local areas. In October of that year, the A.C.C. Commission (usually referred to as the committee) met with representatives of the N.S.W. W.I.C.C. and drew up a tentative programme. To the aims of the N.S.W. W.I.C.C. were added the aims of the A.C.C., namely

- (a) to widen the horizons of women in local churches, i.e. toward the whole Christian church and the whole world,
- (b) to relate denominational women's organisations at the federal level.

In November, 1962, another consultation was called. This comprised denominational women's organisations (including the Greek Orthodox and Armenian Orthodox) and the Women's World Day of Prayer Committee. Mrs. Faichney of the Victorian W.I.C.C. and a Y.W.C.A. representative also attended. At this meeting some words of caution were spoken - Would the men in the A.C.C. want to dominate any new organisation? - Surely it was wiser to hasten slowly; - It would be unwise to develop a complex national organisation. The committee listened and recorded these warnings but persevered.

By early 1963, the committee was able to present a report to the Annual Meeting of the A.C.C. As I have re-read this report I am amazed to discover how much had been accomplished in one year. In the report there were suggestions for Community Day, Fellowship Day, a Scholarship, the Fellowship of the Least Coin and Study Material. At this annual meeting the A.C.C., after strenuous debate authorised the establishment of A.C.W. With the addition of a number of names, the original committee on women's work became the Interim Committee of A.C.W.; the following are names of persons comprising the

committee - Mrs. B. R. Wyllie (Convenor), Mrs. L. N. Williams, Mrs. F. McKay (Presbyterian), Deaconess Andrews (Church of England), Mrs. S. M. Barrett (Methodist), Mrs. J. F. Day (Congregationalist), Mrs. Dofatis (Greek Orthodox), Mrs. S. McPhee (Y.W.C.A.), Revs. B. R. Wyllie, E. H. Parker, H. L. Parkins. Mrs. M. Verco, from N.S.W. W.I.C.C., joined the committee.

During the two years in which the Interim Committee functioned, we were all conscious of a growing fellowship and a joyous working together. I am sure that I speak for all members when I say that planning together was a privilege for which we will always be grateful. Thelma Skiller, the administrative secretary of the A.C.C., gave us wonderful assistance; she took a personal interest in the Committee from the beginning. We could never have done our work without her expert secretarial skill. The Rev. Harvey Perkins also gave us wise guidance particularly on constitutional matters.

There was much to be done in 1963. The Committee

- (a) informed all the heads of the member churches of the A.C.C. and their federal women's organisations of the plan for the establishment of A.C.W.
- (b) arranged for speakers in each State to introduce A.C.W. at denominational and inter-church meetings,
- (c) planned the itineraries of overseas visitors - Madeline Barot and Janet Lacey. These women of wide international experience and with many years of responsible leadership in the World Council of Churches, quickened our sense of direction and emphasised the goals to be achieved.

The Interim Committee then began to wrestle with suggestions for a more formal structure of A.C.W. An attempt was made to define relationships between all the groups involved in A.C.W. There were problems and complications here: there were some States e.g. W.A. and Tasmania which had no W.I.C.C.: there were some denominations which had no federal women's organisation e.g. Church of England. The Interim Committee received with regret the notification that the Baptist Women's Board could take no part in A.C.W. because of its association with the A.C.C. The Women's World Day of Prayer Committee had earlier indicated that it could not for various reasons co-operate with A.C.W. This was a great disappointment to us as we had known from the beginning that the W.W.D. of P. was a major activity of Church Women United in the U.S.A.

Members of the Interim Committee travelled to S. Australia, Victoria and Queensland to speak at Women's groups and explain the aims and programme of A.C.W. By December, 1963, the Study Book, "Saints Alive", was published. This study was the product of the concerted efforts of a group of Victorian women and a small group from the Interim Committee in Sydney. The study was very well received and soon went into a second edition.

1964 - In March, 1964, another consultation was held. This consultation was widely representative. The State Councils of N.S.W., Victoria, South Australia and Queensland sent representatives, the federal denominational women's groups of the Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregational, Greek Orthodox and Armenian Orthodox churches were represented; the Y.W.C.A. was also represented and Deaconess Andrews represented the women of the Church of England in Australia.

1. This consultation in 1964, though a brief one, was characterised by stimulating fellowship and the growth of mutual understanding between women of different churches and different States. From it there emerged the conviction that A.C.W. was a strategic force in the life of the Australian churches. It was agreed that there was a need for ecumenical dialogue between the women of Australian churches. Most women were interested in and impatient for Christian unity and A.C.W. would foster this interest and deepen this sense of urgency. The renewal, the mission and unity of the church was the concern of A.C.W. It was hoped to achieve this not by building up a large national organisation, but by working through existing women's groups - both denominational and inter-church. A.C.W. would be a link between Australian women and the church in the world. It was never the aim of A.C.W. to segment church organisations into sex groups, but to encourage the full co-operation of men and women in the church.
2. This consultation made recommendations to the Interim Committee on constitution and programme.

2. (Contd.)

The decision of the consultation was reported to the A.C.C. Executive which authorised the Interim Committee to proceed with the drawing up of a constitution in line with the report.

And so we began the second year's work of the Interim Committee. It was a year of preparation for the first National Committee of A.C.W. The aims and objectives were defined, the programme of special days Winifred Kiek Scholarship, Fellowship of the Least Coin were planned and a constitution was drawn up.

By the end of the year, Councils in all States had become the State Units of A.C.W., and all denominations except the Baptist had asked for representation at the first National Committee meeting held on February, 1965. It was a remarkable achievement. Within three short years, what had been an enthusiastic dream had become a reality.

MABEL G. WYLLIE.

The following pages are a copy of a "PROFILE ON DEACONESS MARY ANDREWS"

by June Bosanquet.

"IN DANGER OFTEN"

A PROFILE ON MARY ANDREWS

(Head Deaconess of Sydney Diocese, Principal of Deaconess House) -

by June Bosanquet

When I said, "Tell me about your escape", Mary Andrews calmly asked, "which one?" and I realised that this woman has escaped with her life three times, twice from the Japanese and once from the Communists.

Her placid expression, her laughing eyes tell nothing of the loneliness and anger which were her lot while making her way from the secure world she had known to another world across firing lines. - a men's world without maps, often without organised help at the end. Mary speaks of the almost moment by moment guarding and guiding of God during experiences which would make the knees of strong men quail.

At the age of 9, Mary recognised herself as a sinner in God's sight and found Christ as her Saviour, but she had a difficulty. She thought that perhaps God may call her to be a missionary, and she was terrified He would send her to China. She had read of bandits and their plundering raids on foreigners, and she dreaded going to such a place. She told God she was willing to be a missionary but not in China. At 14 she gave in and told God that she would go as a missionary even to China if He wanted that. Her only stipulation now was that she would rather go as a pastoral worker than a missionary, but God had other plans!

Having finished her schooling at Hornsby High School in Sydney, she did some nursing and then went to the Missionary and Bible College. She completed the course there and was recommended to study at Deaconess House in Sydney where her superiors thought the training would "do her good!" She did the 2 year deaconess diploma course but was not ordained as she was too young, and she still wanted to be a pastoral worker rather than a deaconess.

Eventually she sailed for China to spend 12 months learning the language. She had been in Peking only 10 months when the Japanese came into the Second World War, invaded the place and she had to escape. A Chinese family kept her alive, in her house where she was completely alone, by leaving the day's food hidden under the back door step. She had to eat it all at one sitting in case the Japanese guards should come and suspect her friends who had been helping her. Mary says of this time that she knew no fear for herself, neither was she lonely, but she was anxious for her loyal Chinese friends, especially the 12 year-old boy who left her food every day.

One day she found a note under the back door step telling her to go to the sea coast. She is sure God was guiding her as she found the railway station deserted and thought perhaps the war was over as she never heard any news of the progress of the war. But it happened that the enemy was celebrating a victory somewhere and all the soldiers had been given leave. When she arrived at the coast another English woman was waiting for her, a doctor's wife, and they were smuggled away in a small boat.

She escaped to Linhai where she learnt the local dialect and taught in a primary school. She lived in the C.M.S. compound and ran a school for waifs and strays in her spare time. A building had originally been intended for a Bible school for women, but the war prevented them from coming, so Mary used it for the children. She taught them elementary reading and hygiene as well as the Christian faith.

In 1945 when the Second World War was nearing its end, the Japanese surrounded Linhai and news came through to Mary to escape with a New Zealand couple she would meet on the way, and get through the Japanese lines to Free China where they could find transport home. Everyone insisted that Mary must go. She heard at 8 o'clock one night and had to leave at 5 the next morning. She travelled for 3 days by herself before meeting the New Zealanders. She spent a night and a day on board a boat load of soldiers, the only woman on this primitive craft, but she never felt insecure or afraid. Then she spent 2 days on a river boat.

With the New Zealand couple, Mary trekked over mountains and through valleys avoiding the Japanese soldiers for nearly three weeks until they met up with the British Army. By this time both the New Zealanders had dysentery and Mary nursed them as best she could. They stopped at a vacated mission house and Mary dosed her patients with drugs the Army had supplied.

The next part of the journey was made sitting on empty oil drums on the back of a lorry and as they sat there for 2 whole days jogging and bumping over the poor roads, they were extremely sore and tired when they eventually reached an airstrip. Here there were waits, false hopes and many apprehensions, but eventually Mary flew out to West China near the Burma Road. From here she took a plane to Calcutta in India and then travelled for 3 days and 4 nights by train to Lahore. In all, her escape from Linhai to a settled place took several weeks.

In Lahore, Mary worked with a group of deaconesses among destitute women and girls. She was there for a year and caught the first boat home after peace was declared.

Back in Sydney Mary was challenged to be ordained as a deaconess, and then was ready to go back to the missionfield. Her mother's illness kept her at home for a while, but all the time letters and cables came asking her to return to one of the vacant missions in China. Eventually she went to Shaohsing in Central China to work in the King Memorial Middle School and to assist in parish work.

It was here that she came to have a regular meeting on Sunday afternoon with the men in the local gaol. One of her students was the daughter of a prison officer and he saw the need of the men for something to reform their lives. The men would be gathered in the prison yard and no warders or guards would be present. She took Chinese posters about the life of Jesus Christ, talked of Christianity and handed out gospels for them to read. There was always a scramble for these, and when Mary went to visit they would wave their books at her through the bars. Some of the men were converted and began their own Bible classes within the prison.

After 18 months, the Red Army occupied the city and living became difficult. She was in charge of the parish by this time and was continually being cross-questioned by the authorities, about such things as finance. She had to account for the finances of the Church for the past 100 years. But for the tireless help of a young Chinese, she would never have had it done by the end of the 3 days allotted to her. One of the trying things she had to do was fill out her life history 5 times in Chinese and 5 times in English. Eventually she was tried by proxy on a charge of being an imperialist. Mary did not know what would happen or how the case would go, but because there were 2 boys present who had been to her school, the judge acquitted her and told the boys to be more careful in discerning good foreigners from bad ones.

Soon the situation became dangerous and all the missionaries made preparation to leave. Mary had been asked by the authorities to stay on in China, since she had been proved by the court not to be an imperialist, and she offered to the Bishop to stay, but eventually after much prayer they decided it

would be safer for Mary and the other Christians for her to come home.

So in 1951 she landed at Mascot airport to be told that Archbishop Mowll wanted to see her as soon as possible.

Although she was offered a position in Melbourne, the Archbishop was adamant that he wanted to make Mary Head Deaconess in Sydney which he did. Later she was made Principal of Deaconess House and has lived there ever since.

The oversight of Deaconesses studying to take their part in the work of the church is Mary's and she is intensely interested in seeing women used to their capacity. She is saddened that women in this country, trained though they may be, are not used as they were in China, taking their part as Bible women and lay teachers.

Mary's interests are interdenominational and wide. She loves entertaining and of course her favourite recipes are Chinese. She sews, making her own clothes when she can find time. She enjoys gardening and photography, but perhaps her greatest interest outside her "girls" of Deaconess House, are the overseas students, many of whom are Chinese.

She has never forgotten the Chinese language she learned and still reads her Bible in Chinese quite often, but always prays in Chinese as she finds that language has such a fine variation of meaning.

For everyday living Mary's favourite text is from Philipians 1.21, "For living to me means Christ. To die means to gain more of Him." (Phillips translation).

As a representative of her church, Mary Andrews has served the N.S.W. Women's Inter-Church Council with serene distinction and dedication, filling the role of President on the Archbishop's recommendation.

In the early 1960's Mary Andrews was one of the original group of women who conceived the vision of linking all States into Australian Church Women. Because of her great wisdom and understanding she was the original convenor of the Winifred Kiek Scholarship Committee until that Committee was well and soundly established and able to move from State to State with the National Working Committee.

AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN

MEMORIAL MINUTE:

At the request of MRS. J. DENNIS, president of AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN, the following MEMORIAL MINUTE was prepared and also read by MRS. E. DINGLE at the meeting of the WORKING COMMITTEE of AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN, held at P.W.M.U. office, Ann St., Brisbane, at 10.30 a.m., on MONDAY, 28th JUNE, 1971. -

"It is with a keen sense of loss that we record the death of the IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT of AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN, MRS. F. R. ASHTON of Melbourne. Her unexpected death came as a shock, though it was known she had returned to hospital following an operation.

MRS. ASHTON was taken from us at the height of her powers. A woman of grace and charm, with a trained mind, broad sympathies and an understanding heart, she brought to her office all the rich gifts of her whole personality. SERVICE was the keynote of her life. Her influence will live on and will surely be an inspiration to others.

She had a firm faith which had been tested in the fires of experience, an experience which few of her contemporaries were called upon to face. She could say with St. Paul, 'I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.'

As BETTY PATON, a graduate in Arts of the University of Melbourne, she went out as a missionary to teach in a school at Hong Kong. A DAUGHTER OF THE MANSE, she and her brothers and sisters grew up in an atmosphere of dedicated service and all have made worthy contributions to the life of the Church and the community. Her parents were the REV. and MRS. FRANK PATON of Victoria and both her grandfathers were ministers of the Church.

In Hong Kong she met Dr. F. R. ASHTON, an Englishman serving with the London Missionary Society at the Nethersole Hospital. They were married in 1941 just prior to the Japanese occupation and were both imprisoned in Stanley Prison from 1941 to 1945, where they both worked for the welfare of the prisoners. Of her grim experiences through those years she spoke little. The hardships and privations did not embitter her, rather was her spirit refined and her faith intensified. After their release from prison they came to Victoria to regain their health and vigour, then returned to Hong Kong to serve the London Missionary Society until their retirement in 1966 when they settled in Melbourne.

In 1967 Mrs. Ashton was elected SECRETARY of Australian Church Women on the nomination of the Young Women's Christian Association, but again Dr. Ashton was asked to do further work in Hong Kong so she had to relinquish the position to accompany her husband. However, after a year, they were back again in Australia, and it was then Mrs. Ashton became PRESIDENT of Australian Church Women (1969), a position she filled with dignity, grace and efficiency until the beginning of this year when the Working Committee moved to Queensland, and all office bearers had to be Queenslanders.

Also in 1969 Mrs. Ashton became NATIONAL PRESIDENT of the Y.W.C.A. which position she held at the time of her death; indeed, she was preparing to attend the World Convention of the Y.W.C.A. to be held in Ghana this year, as the representative of the Australian Association.

Mrs. Ashton was one of a delegation of five who attended the ASIAN CHURCH WOMEN'S CONFERENCE at Sukabumi, Indonesia, last year, where her participation was much appreciated.

As we pay our tribute to one who early committed herself to the Christian way of life, served sacrificially and finished the course with honour, we are confident that she had a triumphal entry into the Kingdom and received the accolade, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

*** SPECIAL NOTE: Following the recording of the above 'minute', advice was received from Dr. F. Ashton that the period referred to in Stanley prison was, in fact, "internment" not "imprisonment".

**AUSTRALIAN PRESBYTERIAN
LIFE — JULY 1971.**

Mrs. Elizabeth Heyer Ashton who died recently in Melbourne was the second daughter of the Rev. F. H. L. Paton for whom the Frank Paton Memorial Church at Deepdene was named. She graduated B.A., Dip. Ed. from Melbourne University in 1934 and three years later went to Hong Kong as a teacher at Ying Wa Girls' School. While there she did an auxiliary nursing course at Nethersole Hospital where Dr. Frank Ashton was superintendent. They married in December, 1941, just before Hong Kong fell to the Japanese, and were interned together at Stanley Camp for the duration of the war. After brief leave they both returned to Hong Kong where they worked till 1964. Since then they have lived in Melbourne. In February this year Mrs. Ashton ended a two year term as president of the Australian Church Women and at the time of her death she was president of the Y.W.C.A. of Australia.

NATIONAL COMMITTEE MEETING 1971

WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

We Must Understand Asian People If We Are Going To Help

By Ilma Rogers

JILL Perkins told Australian Church Women at their National Committee meeting in Sydney last month that there must be a revolution in our attitudes.

There must be a complete change in our personal lives, a critical assessment of our comfortable way of life, compared with the meagre existence of our near neighbours in Asia.

We must recognise these people as human beings — made in the image of God, all diverse, all unique.

We need to read and learn about their cultures, their heritage, their beauty — to realise that there is no one type of people called "Asian". We need to see the potential and the dignity behind the intense bitterness of life, the distress of underprivilege, the ugliness and devastation of war.

There is no dignity for these people in wearing second-hand Western clothes — there is dignity when they remake them into their garments on a second-hand sewing machine.

Mrs. Perkins was describing, with poignant examples from personal experience, the work being done by Asian Christian Service, an arm of the East Asia Christian Conference. Team members are recruited primarily from Asia. There are Indians, Japanese, Filipinos, Indonesians, Ceylonese; there are volunteers from Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, Hong Kong and Pakistan.

She spoke of right and wrong ways of giving aid. Sometimes it is given as political blackmail.

Some nations help only when revolution looms. Others help when it is "safe" to do so. We give aid because it makes US feel good.

Why do we presume to know what is good for others? We like to tell the Asian people what to do instead of standing beside them and asking how

we can help. In some places workers from foreign countries are not welcome and not necessary.

Mrs. Perkins rather shocked her audience by reading some world history according to James Beckett, lawyer, writer and economist with extensive experience in developing nations, in his book, "The Development Apocalypse".

"Western Europe did not go out in the world and find 'under-developed' countries, she created them", he wrote. "Even today people have the idea that all countries began at some pristine state of under-development and that some developed while others remained stationary.

"Under-development however is a process, it is not a static state . . . It was the 19th century that shaped today's world, divided between the developed and the under-developed. The pattern then was visible as to who was to industrialise and who was not, who was to provide manufactured goods and who was to provide raw materials.

"This was also the century when the population of the world began to 'explode' . . . The ascendant ideology of the day which accompanied this vast transformation was Manchesterian liberalism. The world-view of this doctrine was that if the world economy were left alone it would produce prosperity for all . . . There would result the 'wealth of nations' . . . The proponents of the doctrine . . . paid attention to

Asian Christian Service was created in 1966 by Asian churches to rehabilitate refugees in South Vietnam, and its operations now extend throughout Laos and Cambodia. Australians also are serving with A.C.S. teams in South Vietnam and Laos, in medical education and relief work.

The programme is supported by churches in all Asian countries and by World Christian Action (formerly the Division of Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Service of the Australian Council of Churches).

it only when it suited them . . . It was a doctrine . . . to make those who are comfortable feel comfortable".

Today the Christian West is asking, "What can we do about it?" Do we bear any responsibility? Should we feel uncomfortable?

Help is not just a meal for today. We must recognise that man does not live only by bread — he must have respect, be able to work as a dignified person, and he must have justice. There must be love and, more importantly, hope. There must be a tomorrow for him, as for us.

What we are really seeking when we think about "development" is to provide conditions everywhere, for every man, so that he can grow with integrity in peace and happiness. This demands development on all fronts at once. World poverty must be attacked so that children may grow to adolescence without being smitten by the agonies of malnutrition and disease — so that all may say, "When I grow up I want to be . . ."

There must be a revolution in our thinking, in our living, in our attitudes. Unless we can hear the Christian command to love our neighbour as ourselves, unless we can stand in his shoes and feel his needs compared with our overfed affluence, there will be no tomorrow for these people.

We should examine our personal values, our motives and our role in society. If we lived each day as if it were our last, we would be much more ready to put into action our compassion, our sympathy for our brothers and sisters. Christians can't stand aloof or cut back their aid — they must stand alongside and learn to share, even if it hurts.

Ask in your libraries for books about the countries and peoples of Asia. Learn about their different cultures. See the potential of these people. Help them to become fuller, rounder members of the world community.

Jill Perkins's book, "Fragments of War", was reviewed in "A.P.L." in the January 30 issue.]

NATIONAL COMMITTEE MEETING - 1972.

"FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS"

Mrs. Barbara Thiering.

B.D(London). Theol. M. (M.L.D) B.A.

BIBLE STUDY LECTURER -

most interesting and stimulating
sessions of '72 N.C.M.

"The Biblical View of Women
and
The Church's View"



MISS JEAN SKUSE -

(Sec., ACC. Cmen. on Race Relat
also FEDERATION OF METHODIST
WOMEN SEC.) -

Delivered inspiring opening
address on NATIONAL
MEETING Theme "FOR SUCH A TIME
THIS" also conducted ACC. S.



REV. GORDON BEATTY -
ACC. C'tee on Co-operation
ADDRESS - Conflict, Con-
structive and Destructive
with National C'tee Members

30 DAILY TELEGRAPH, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1972

magazine for women

Revolution in the church?

CHURCH Women's groups have never been known as hotbeds of revolution.

You don't find your actual G. Greers hanging about church basements or spring fetes.

But people who deride such groups, complaining that they are not aware of a changing world, a world in which the church social is not as important as it was, may have to change their tune.

In Sydney this week the Australian Church Women are holding their annual National Committee meeting at Deaconess House, Newtown.

Discrimination

It is not going to be simply reviewing the year's accomplishments.

They plan to undergo a rigorous self-examination and to determine exactly what changes must be made in organisation and attitude to make church women's groups a means of battling injustice, especially racial discrimination.

The opening speaker on Tuesday was Miss Jean Skuse, Secretary to the Australian Council of Churches Commission on Race Relations, Secretary of the World Federation of Methodist Women and a woman who spends most of her time travelling in the developing or "third world" countries.

Instead of flowery welcoming speeches, Miss Skuse, in her address, reminded her audience that the infant death-rate among Australia's Aborigines is the second highest in the world.

With 131 deaths per 1000 children, it is even higher than India.

She chose as her theme a Biblical text, saying, "If you remain silent at such a time as this, relief and deliverance will appear from another quarter . . . and you will perish."

She saw, and wanted her audience to see, four main areas of conflict. The poor, the non-white, the young and now—to a certain extent — women, were demanding a different world.

And two forces divided all these people from the power holders — economics and race.

Miss Skuse said that in women's organisations, resolutions have been passed and collections taken up but it has not been enough.

She pointed out that poor people, especially in Asian countries, have nothing but the power they take. The white, western and Christian world already has the means to get and hold power.

Law and order

"We are being judged not by our intentions and resolutions and beliefs but by what we do," Miss Skuse said. "We can afford to want law and order, but the absence of war is not peace."

"There is also peace in cemeteries."

She insisted that the Church may have to be in constant conflict with the State until better conditions are achieved.

Church women, almost more than any others, must realise that they have been domesticated out of their responsibilities in government and in their own lives.

Bible Offers A Solid Basis For Freedom For Women

By Margaret Macneil

"If you remain silent at such a time as this, relief and deliverance for the Jews will appear from another quarter, but you and your father's family will perish. Who knows whether it is not for such a time as this that you have come to royal estate?"

These words from the book of Esther came as a recurring challenge to the 57 women gathered at the annual meeting of Australian Church Women in Sydney last month. From the opening address given by Miss Jean Skuse, through the Bible studies, the addresses and the actual transaction of business, came the call for women to find their true role as Christian people equally responsible with men for meeting the needs of the world.

In telling of her personal knowledge of hunger, poverty, oppression, and denial of freedom in many countries, including our own, Miss Skuse, who is Australian Council of Churches secretary for World Christian Action, reminded us of the need to create new kinds of political, social and economic conditions which will allow people to lead fully Christian lives. "The mission field is here . . . it is ourselves we have to change, ourselves as women not participating fully in our community and nation, content with under-achievement, ourselves as church members and citizens of a rich country, ourselves as members of a world community".

In her enthralling Bible studies Mrs. Barbara Thiering, Lecturer in Hebrew and Biblical Studies at Sydney University, spoke of the Biblical view of

women and the Church's view. She pointed out that the Bible offers a solid basis for the movement for freedom for women, but classic church theology seemed to have negative comments on women.

THREE WOMEN

She spoke of three women in the Old Testament— who, without usurping a man's role, used their special talents in peace and war. They were the ideal woman of Proverbs who was really the centre of a large social structure; Deborah, the charismatic leader; Huldah, the scholar.

In the New Testament there was a tension between ideal and practice. Redemption had been wrought but not accomplished. We had to work and put redemption into practice.

We had done something in the sphere of race and bondage but not in the relations of male and female. There was a danger that redemption was being worked out in the world ahead of the Church. People were people first and only secondarily male or female, but the Church said the opposite.

A report was received about the year

spent in Australia by Violet Sampa, the 1971 Winifred Keik scholar from Zambia. It has been a joy to have her with us and she has endeared herself to everyone who met her. Her visits to all States have increased interest in the scholarship.

Violet, who celebrated her 21st birthday in Australia, feels that the year she has spent here has been a very great privilege and that she has learned many things, spiritually and academically. At the request of the United Church of Zambia it has been arranged for Violet to spend a further three years studying with the Joint Faculty of Theology in Brisbane.

She will be supported by the United Church of Zambia, the Queensland Congregational Theological Hall, and the Congregational Women's Fellowship of Australia. Violet will visit her home at the end of this year, so that she will not lose touch with Zambia.

"SPECIAL" SCHOLARS

The 1972 Winifred Keik scholar, Miss Terani Aisake, a Methodist deaconess from Fiji, spent a day at the meeting. There is something very special about Winifred Keik scholars. So many applicants have had to be disappointed that in future applications will be received from specially defined geographical areas in rotation.

Reports from State units indicated growth in most areas. In Victoria and Tasmania Roman Catholic women are now in full membership. Queensland reported on the increase of interest and enthusiasm, due partly to the fact that the Working Committee is based in Brisbane for the first time and partly because Violet Sampa has been resident in Brisbane. In 1973 the Working Committee will move to South Australia.

Reports were given of two prayer fellowships — the Women's World Day of Prayer, now being observed in 65 countries, and the Fellowship of the Least Coin. The "Circle of Prayer", Volume 4, is available and the use of this, with the token gift of the least coin of the country (in Australia one cent) every month unites us with women around the world.

The annual meeting ended as it began, and as it had started and ended each day, with prayer together in the lovely chapel at Deaconess House.

RETURNING FROM HONG KONG - JANUARY 1972.

AUSTRALIAN MEMBERS
OF THE
PLANNING COMMITTEE -
ASIAN CHURCH WOMEN'S
CONFERENCE -

MRS. OLGA BADGER - SYDNEY
and NSW.

MRS. FRAN BAILEY - ADELAIDE
S.A.

at BRISBANE AIRPORT.



YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS!

by Dorothy McMahon

Some emerging thoughts from the conference on "Women's role in peace education" organised by the World Council of Churches and the Pontifical Commission on Justice and Peace, held in Cyprus, May 1972. Mrs. McMahon was one of 41 women attending from 29 countries.



Peace is dependent on justice.

An absence of fighting does not necessarily mean peace because violence can be hidden, or threatened, to keep a people oppressed.

Violence is "Anything which prevents a person from achieving his, or her, true human potential." Therefore the institutionalised violence of a Government like that in South Africa is just as real, and deserving of condemnation, as that of liberation groups seeking to overthrow oppressive regimes by guerilla warfare.

The world arms race goes on unabated. The fog of propaganda pours on us all, with its lies and distortions.

In every country men seek new ways of manipulating and exploiting other people. The poor of the earth multiply daily.

Women at a peace conference draw aside to discuss a creative reaction to torture.

The people in power are headed for war, not peace. So peace is equal to change and we desperately need to learn how to produce it.

Developing Awareness

There is no short cut. It begins with the lifting of the level of awareness of people—starting from one and moving out; with a consciousness of who we are, what is the reality of our situation and our potential.

People who know themselves are then free to be concerned about the condition of others, to ask why a problem exists and question the system which produces it. Women need special encouragement in developing this awareness and peace will never come without their involvement.

Over the years the Church has intermittently tried to produce this sort of consciousness as an expression of its belief in the value of all people and the brotherhood of man.

It could perhaps have added weight to its programmes if it had emphasised that we do not, once and for all, decide for, or against, Christ — we need to decide for or against Him in every single issue that confronts mankind. We can only do this if we are unceasingly seeking the truth.

So we have a group of aware people. When they are doubtful or indignant enough, they want to move into action. Sometimes, at this point, the Church leaves them in the air, in case it becomes involved in politics.

In a politically anathetic society, many people simply do not know what to do, or how to voice their opinion, so they decide they are powerless.

Often the Church suggests a good strong resolution, a petition to someone, maybe a small deputation or a generous donation. Having done all, or one of these things, we feel that we have done our bit, that our conscience is clear — regardless of whether or not, the change has actually occurred! And there we rest.

Peace and Social Change

So how serious are we about peace, how serious about social change?

If we are serious, we must constantly present the conviction that no conscience can be clear until change comes about; that we are not free until everyone is free; that resolutions have no meaning until they are tied to action; that letters and petitions and deputations must go on and on until we get results; that donations have to be costly enough to affect our life-style — not given of our surplus.

We must prepare people for the fact that, if they move for change, they will probably have to stand against the stream and will need to be surrounded by a warm and inspiring support group.

Ultimately they will face opposition from those opposing change and must

learn ways of handling conflict — keeping it to the minimum, acting non-violently without giving way to pressure, using techniques of reconciliation.

Apart from the Quakers, the Church has made little or no attempt to come to grips with issues in this area. It has supported official violence and denounced unofficial violence by those wanting change. It has done little creative work in either situation.

If we are serious we'll inform ourselves about all the issues confronting us and move into action right here in Australia. How does Australia look from outside? We are not big news, but people know that—

- * We have a white Australia policy.
- * We have a bad record in our treatment of our Aboriginal people.
- * Our Government is good friends with South Africa.
- * We are intolerant of migrants who don't speak English and come from a different culture.
- * We have American bases here, and supported her in Vietnam.

Not exactly a peace picture.

We could well start by applying to ourselves the principles of "Values Education" used by some South African Christians. State any belief which you hold. For example, "I believe in land rights for Aborigines." "You do? That's great! You must have written letters to your M.P. about it this month, have you?"

It's hard to be self-disciplined, and it's costly to stand out from the crowd. But Christians should be the agents of change through all the earth — this is our exciting task, this is where we use our power in Christ and live the abundant life, the Christian life. ♦

Mrs. McMahon delivered the opening address on the N.C.M. theme "Able for ALL THINGS" - Tuesday, 6th February, 1973.

NATIONAL COMMITTEE MEETING - 1973

DEACONESS HOUSE. 6th - 9th FEBRUARY.



← The "Working" Committee
at work! - 5th Feb.
at Deaconess House. packaging
Orders of Service for 1973
special days



At LONGUEVILLE -
ST Aidan's.
Wednesday, 7th Feb..
Pres.-elect. Mrs A.L. Smith
(in pulpit) leading devotions.



ST AIDAN'S
HALL
AFTERNOON
SESSION.



at
National Committee
Meeting '73 - Deaconess
House

Mrs. Win. Dooaherty & Mrs. Margaret Ralph
(N.S.W.)



Kalpana Airon - 1973
ACN. WINIFRED KICK SCHOLAR
with Mrs. Lorna Miller (Q.)
whom she had robed in her sari!

AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN

WORLD COMMUNITY DAY, 1972

HOW MUCH DO YOU CARE?



Enough to help DEWI

who is in Second year of her 4 year Biology course. She comes from a poor family in Central Java. Her father is jobless and her mother supports a family of seven by making and selling cakes. Dewi is studying hard but is under constant anxiety over tuition fees and board costs. Unless she is helped she cannot continue her studies.

and ENDANG LIES HARIJANTI

a Second Year student in Maths. and Physics (4 year course), who comes from East Java where her father is supporting a large family on a very poor salary. Endang would like to become a science teacher following graduation — but she needs financial help to finish her course.



In Australia's near north lie the 20 provinces of Indonesia with their population of over 106 million people. Over 80 million of these are on the island of Java, and at Salatiga, in Central Java, is the Christian University, "Satya Watjana" (Faithful to the Word) with its aim to train as many Christian students as possible for leadership in the Indonesia of tomorrow. It seeks to relate the Christian Faith to every field of learning and service. Members of the full-time staff are Christian. Over half the student body (1,250) are women. Satya Watjana has sent out as seed into Indonesian Christian Churches, Schools and society over 600 graduates. Some are serving as principals and teachers in schools, others as elected officials; some are working within legislative bodies, defending the principles of justice and truth for the common people; some, too, are working in Borneo, Sumatra and other islands.

A Board of Directors composed of church leaders, business and professional men, appointed by the 18 churches which make up the Council of Churches of Indonesia, is responsible for Satya Watjana. This Council, together with churches in Canada, U.S.A., New Zealand, Australia, the Netherlands and West Germany, sponsors the University. Costs of maintaining the University and providing the increasing requirements of up-to-date techniques are understandably quite considerable. Students' fees, though appreciably less than at Australian Universities, are nevertheless, more than quite a number of very promising students can meet. An "S.O.S." was sent to Australia during 1971, by Miss Angela Hope, Australian missionary and student counsellor at Satya Watjana, who trusted that Church women in her homeland would look in compassion on the desperate need of some Indonesian women students in the University. Unless financial assistance was forthcoming from some quarter, these young students must forego all

opportunity to complete their courses. Of the two who have been selected to receive assistance from your offerings at this World Community Day Service, she wrote, "It seems inevitable that if these two girls are not helped they must leave and we shall lose two promising teachers for Indonesia's High Schools."

In accordance with the decision of the National Committee of Australian Church Women at its meeting in Sydney, February, 1972, the offerings received on World Community Day, 1972, will be forwarded to the Scholarship Funds at Satya Watjana to assist the two women students pictured above. This is **NOT** a World Christian Action project: attention was drawn to this particular area of need by a member group of Australian Church Women.



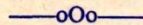
FELLOWSHIP OF THE LEAST COIN — PRESENTATION OF "LEAST COINS" FOR 1972

The collection of "least coins" for remittance to F.L.C. International is not to be confused with the offering incorporated in the World Community Day Service. All women attending the service are invited to contribute to the general offering which, this year, will be donated to assist two women students at Satya Watjana, whereas "least coins" are presented on behalf of the many individuals or groups who have been regularly setting aside the ONE CENT each month throughout the year as a TOKEN of their participation in the Fellowship of Prayer.

It is customary for the year's accumulation of "least coins" to be received on World Community Day as the occasion provides a convenient and suitable opportunity.

It is left to the discretion of those responsible for local arrangements to make provision to receive "least coin" collections at whatever point in the service is deemed suitable, but it is suggested that a special presentation could make a fitting conclusion, representatives being invited to bring forward their group's contribution to a central offering plate, during the singing of the last hymn.

The leader would then offer a prayer of dedication before pronouncing the benediction as printed in the Order of Service.





Original photographs
of
"SATYA WATIANA"
Students -

from which blocks for
World Community Day
leaflets were made

(Supplied by Miss Hope,
SCHLDC'tee. "SATYA WATIANA".)



29.10.1970.

Asks for the least coin

THE Chairman of the Fellowship of the Least Coin, Mrs. Rathie Selvaratnam, arrived in Brisbane yesterday on the last leg of her Australia-wide trip.

Mrs. Selvaratnam, who comes from Colombo, Ceylon, said interest in the fellowship was on the upsurge in Australia.

The Fellowship, of which Mrs. Selvaratnam has been a member since 1958, was a world-wide association of Christian women, who monthly put aside the least coin of their particular currency, Mrs. Selvaratnam said.

The coins were prayer tokens.



Mrs. Selvaratnam

The funds raised were then used for relief in all countries, irrespective of whether they were affluent or developing.

"Women are then united in helping their fellow women in other countries, and so we are developing a

feeling that the whole world is our family," Mrs. Selvaratnam said.

And why the least coin? "By giving the least coin, everyone is the same, from the worker in the field to the richest woman in the cities," she explained.

There was no feeling of competition between countries as it was not a fund-raising project, she said.

"As we say 'the left hand must not know what the right hand is doing', so too no country ever knows what the other has raised," Mrs. Selvaratnam said.

Of Asian origin, the Fellowship had its beginnings in the post World War II period.

When Mrs. Selvaratnam took over chairmanship in 1966, there were only 15 countries participating. Now there were 58, Mrs. Selvaratnam said.

Mrs. Selvaratnam, also holds the chairmanship of the Asian Church Women's Conference, and the National Y.W.C.A. Religious Education Committee.

Wife of the Vicar of Christ Church Cathedral, Colombo, Ceylon, Mrs. Selvaratnam has a daughter, Sulochana, who is a kindergarten trainee and two sons, Peter and John, "who are madly interested in cricket."

After addressing two Brisbane meetings yesterday, Mrs. Selvaratnam will leave for Sydney today and then home to Ceylon.

28.10.1970.

CHURCH'S ROLE IN MODERN AGE

PAT religious answers were no use in a world groping for peace, the Asian Church Women's conference chairman, Mrs. Rathie Selvaratnam, said today.

Mrs. Selvaratnam, wife of The Rev. John Selvaratnam, vicar of Christchurch Cathedral, Colombo, Ceylon, was speaking at a meeting at the Queensland Women's Inter-Church Council in Wesley House.

She said that a religious renewal where people and churches kept pace with developments and progress in the community was needed.

She added that women, with their new role in the rapidly-changing world, could do much to achieve this renewal.

She advised women everywhere to strive to promote individual initiative in every way they could.



Mrs. Rathie Selvaratnam at the Queensland Womens' Inter-church Council meeting.

"Concern should be with the individual and not the whole community before people find true

peace and this is why the State has not yet been able to make people happy," she said.

Mrs. Selvaratnam, who is chairman of the National YWCA religious education committee and the central committee of the Fellowship of the Least Coin, also urged Australian Christian women to take part in the Least Coin scheme.

Ridiculed when it started in 1958 this scheme had grown to support 55 different relief evangelical projects throughout the world.

The idea is that women put aside the Least Coin of the currency of their country (Australia one cent) each month. The funds raised are distributed through Geneva and the World Council of Churches.

The coins represent a prayer token by women all over the world.

VISIT
OF
SHANTI SOLOMON
SEPT 1972



Picture by "Courier-Mail" - BRISBANE

on arrival at AIRPORT - Wednesday. 27th Sept.

1972.

O W I N G T O U N F O R T U N A T E D E L A Y IN HER DEPARTURE from INDIA

MRS. SOLOMON DID NOT ARRIVE IN AUSTRALIA UNTIL TUESDAY, 19th September (scheduled arrival date, 9th September). She was therefore unable to visit PERTH, ADELAIDE and MELBOURNE as planned, but "caught up" with the itinerary as from the morning meeting on the 19th in Melbourne, departing on the same day for LAUNCESTON. The visit then proceeded as planned.

Although arrangements were altered or cancelled in Western Australia, South Australia and Victoria, the plans, revealing much careful careful thought in their preparation, are included in this record.

The accompanying informal and unofficial account of the visit was circulated for the purpose of sharing some of the delight and inspiration of Shanti's visit with those deprived of a personal meeting with her.

The mailing of Minutes, etc. following the September Working Committee meeting on the 25th, has been delayed for several days during which Shanti Solomon visited Queensland, so that this 'unofficial' commentary could be included with the correspondence. Perhaps those who were unable to meet Shanti will accept an invitation to 'look over my shoulder' as I think some impressions on paper. This is not an attempt to compensate for not having met "Asia's splendid New Woman", but maybe there will be a 'backwash' of the tide of inspiration and delight which I have experienced. -- Cora Connell.

2/10/72.

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"ANY NEWS OF SHANTI?"

"Any news of Shanti?" - not quite the words in which I might have expected to express the high point of anticipation of the much-talked-about visit of Shanti Solomon. Yet, ten days and many 'phone calls, telegrams and cables after Shanti's scheduled arrival date, those were the exact words of the last anxious query telegraphed to Mrs. Wilson (W.A. Unit secretary) in Perth, on the morning of Monday, 18th September, in a frantic attempt to locate our missing visitor.

In retrospect, those ten days have a quality of unreality, like a disturbing dream, coming as they did in the midst of a spate of highly-coloured tales of hi-jackings, bomb scares and international tensions, when Ugandan Indians were facing ruthless ejection from their familiar surroundings. The P.M.G.'s Department could scarcely be blamed had they set in motion some top-line investigations of their own as a result of the cryptic messages that swept back and forth among A.C.W. Units. Alas, I fear I should have figured as the villain of the plot they might have pieced together, particularly when the local P.O. tersely informed me, 3 days after sending it, that my cable to India could not be delivered as "Solomon left for Australia!!!" (Where, oh where, was Shanti?) - and what they might have made of Mrs. Wilson's, "Keeping Strack informed", I guess we'll never know! I was hesitant about believing that Shanti would indeed 'materialize' when the answer to that last-resource inquiry came back from Perth in the late afternoon, "Shanti hoping arrive tonight, midnight!", and even more hesitant about passing on the news - just in case What a lack of faith! But prayers were answered and it was indeed blessed relief to hear Doreen Strack's reassuring tones at the Melbourne end of the 'phone line early on Tuesday morning, "Shanti has arrived! She left Perth in the early hours of this morning, and we expect her in Melbourne at half past eight - in time for our Coffee Morning! Then we'll put her on the plane for Launceston at 1.40 p.m. so that she can take up her itinerary from that point." What an easing of tension her words brought! It was so good to be able to 'phone Olga Badger in Sydney to say with confidence, "Shanti IS HERE!" - a small cheer wouldn't have been out of place. Mrs. Badger's reference to herself as feeling by this time like the muddle-headed wombat, meant there were two of us!

And would you believe? PERTH secretary, Vera Wilson, as well as Shanti's "would-be" hostess Mrs. Peg. Eaton were there at the airport at 2.00 a.m. to greet our sweet, petite Indian visitor, and no doubt further bewildered her as they kindly hustled her back aboard her Melbourne-bound airliner. There had been time for only the briefest of greetings and reassurances from these good Christian friends, before Shanti was on her way again with her 'memorable' visit to Perth already over! Alas, the best-laid plans When it is remembered that there had been planned in Perth, among other functions, a Sunday evening Service, an inter-church Rally and a Public Meeting, as well as sight-seeing, radio, TV and press interviews, then something of the intense disappointment there is realised.

But Perth was at least a "touch-down" spot. Alas, poor ADELAIDE didn't even have that consolation! No doubt Adelaide slept all unconscious of Shanti's chase somewhere overhead to overtake the hours and catch up with her schedule in Melbourne. And so Shanti missed out on the warm friendliness of Australia's delightful city of churches and all the wonderful things they had prepared for her there. What disappointment there must have been!

MELBOURNE was a little more fortunate; not that plans were in anything like their original shape by Tuesday, the 19th! There was only one appointment of the many "might have been's" that Shanti could keep, and according to the report, no one would have guessed from the smiling poise of the ladies welcoming and greeting guests as they entered the Independent Church for the 10.30 a.m. meeting, that there had ever been a moment of doubt that Shanti would arrive - and "she was SPLENDID", they all declared.

And so to LAUNCESTON. - "What", I wondered, "are Shanti's reactions to all this whirlwind transporting of her person from place to place? Has she already privately decided that we are indeed a race of muddle-headed wombats?" Of course, I hadn't yet met Shanti: I only had Doreen Strack's word, "You'll love Shanti!" - would she also love us?

"I am so sorry that so many unfortunate delays occurred resulting in some States in cancellation of plans for Mrs. Solomon's visit. Her presence could bring nothing but enrichment to all who met her. We are thankful and grateful to have been so privileged." These were Mrs. Dawn Rhodes' words, written following the first 'visit-as-planned' in Launceston. Press clippings, picture and report enclosed with her letter told the story of a wonderful visit. Following her arrival at 2.30 p.m. on Tuesday, 19th, Shanti had been interviewed for TV CHANNEL 9 regional news that evening, and after a rest, she shared an Indian meal with Christian friends who had been medical missionaries in India for 9 years. A large crowd assembled at St. Ailbes Hall for the evening meeting, where the Catholic Women's League had prepared a very lovely Bible service as the first section of their programme. Mrs. Rhodes was then invited to introduce Mrs. Solomon and she did this with very great joy, at the same time thanking the Catholic ladies for the opportunity which their meeting provided for Australian Church women in Launceston to come together. The entire audience was captivated and enthralled as Shanti began to speak, her clarity of speech, her deep sincerity and her obvious love for her fellow man making a profound impression. It was estimated that there would have been about 250 people at the meeting and Shanti's moving address left no-one

it was obvious from reports that Shanti has a special warmth which draws in all who meet her. A Sydney correspondent wrote, "My friend, Shanti (she'll no doubt be yours too, but already I feel as though I have always known her) has made a tremendous impression". The account told of Shanti's participation in the big P.W.A. Rally in Sydney on Thursday night. This must have been a most colourful function, with lots of work going into the preparation and presentation.

The first two days in Sydney provided Shanti with much variety in her planned programme - interviews, recordings, meetings at distant places, sight-seeing with a visit to Gilbulla for a luncheon date at the Y.W.C.A. Seminar there. And HERE'S GOOD NEWS! - one of Shanti's addresses in N.S.W. has been tape-recorded by Mrs. Olga Badger, who felt that PERTH, ADELAIDE and MELBOURNE may like to hear it at some future time.

Shanti herself wrote from CANBERRA telling of the exciting times in Melbourne, Launceston, Hobart and Sydney and also in Canberra where she was enjoying a little leisure time to catch up with some correspondence. She expressed warm appreciation of all that had been done for her in the cities already visited - not forgetting Perth! She was greatly moved by the real Christian fellowship she had enjoyed.

And then, at last, it was our turn -- Shanti was on her way to QUEENSLAND! Now I CAN tell you about that! On Wednesday evening, four Working Committee members were at the airport to await Shanti's arrival - Mrs. Jessie Dennis (A.C.W. President), Mrs. Eileen Dingle (Vice-President) - both of whom had previously met Shanti - Mrs. Haigh (Convenor of F.L.C. for A.C.W. and Qld. Unit), and myself. You can imagine how eagerly our eyes scanned the alighting passengers for the first sight of Shanti. Yes, there she was, serenely smiling in response to our excited greetings and chatter. How diminutive and sweet she is, the glow of her Christian personality being felt at once. I was immediately reminded of the old romantic lines - "I saw her and loved her so closely together, that I scarce know

Whether I saw her before I loved her or loved her before I saw her." - and that's how it was! I am sure my response was not unique. I watched her among the crowd at NAMBOUR the next morning and observed the very same response obviously being felt then by those with whom she was talking. We were delighted too, to discover that there lurked just beneath the surface of Shanti's calm serenity, a very lively sense of humour - so we felt all the rigours of the early delays would have been born with Christian good spirit. Nambour is a very pleasant rural centre and really produced a V.I.P. reception for Shanti. The Chairman of the Shire, after welcoming her to the area, paid a very sincere tribute to her Christian personality, and then presented a most attractive basket of tropical fruit to Shanti. Her charming response was heartily applauded. Morning Tea was served at several tables, all carrying beautiful floral arrangements. (Nambour is noted for the excellence of its floral art work at its annual Chelsea Flower Shows.) On moving into the Presbyterian Church for the special meeting, the beautiful flowers again pleased Shanti, who later spoke appreciatively to the ladies responsible for the arrangements. Representatives of the denominational women's groups of Nambour and near-by districts (approx. 250) were at the meeting and listened with rapt attention as Shanti expressed her Greetings from Asian Church Women and told the story of the Fellowship of the Least Coin. Many of these same women stayed on to share lunch and informal conversation with Shanti. Opportunity was taken by A.C.W. President, Mrs. Dennis, during the luncheon to give to Shanti a small memento of her visit to Australia. Nambour women appreciated this as a gesture made in their centre on behalf of all Australian Church women. Shanti, in reply, made humorous reference to the fact that she would not forget her visit to Australia - the gift was a pendant in the shape of a small Australia with an opal set into the eastern half. She pleased every one by wearing it. The journey back to Brisbane occupied the afternoon, as a scenic route was followed along the near north coast over Buderim mountain. It was a long but memorable day - we had set out from Brisbane at 7.30 a.m. and arrived back at 6 p.m.

Friday morning's paper carried a picture of Shanti with the interview made at the airport on her arrival on Wednesday night, so Brisbane church women were reminded that THIS was THEIR day. Introductions to Shanti were made over Morning Tea before the meeting which was held in the Presbyterian Church. It was estimated that attendance was about the same as at Nambour. Shanti's address on this occasion, while covering similar ground, was presented in quite different style, and her audience was captivated by her warmth and sincerity. Before taking Shanti off to lunch at Parliament House, Qld President, Mrs. Gwyn Clarke presented a gift from the Queensland Unit of A.C.W. Afternoon engagements included a tour of Parliament House and observation of the Aboriginal Maternal and Child Welfare work in which Dr. Jean MacFarlane is engaged. Shanti is now in NEW GUINEA where Mrs. Sharp of the United Church in Port Moresby is ensuring that she is shown a comprehensive coverage of church work in that region of N.G. She returns to us on Friday to spend a brief hour or two before boarding the evening flight to Auckland. After the New Zealand visit, she will have just one day in Sydney to enable her to connect with a direct flight to Singapore and her commitments in Malaysia - more women's meetings! We have the greatest admiration for Shanti's patient love and understanding - if we wearied her with the demands of an exacting itinerary, she allowed no hint of it to be seen - and we are left with a feeling of great privilege in being permitted to meet her and experience the warmth of her Christian personality.

ON BACK OF PAGE - Some significant points from Shanti on membership in F.L.C.

The following points concerning membership in the Fellowship of the Least Coin were clearly enunciated by Shanti during her addresses -

- (i) You must pray and set aside your token (least coin) AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH, but after that there is no limit to the number of times you may do this. The guide must be the number of times you NEED to pray a prayer of reconciliation, whether it be in situations where domestic relationships within the family need to be repaired or restored to a state of peaceable acceptance of each other, or where neighbourhood relations are strained, even where the relations between one's own nation and another are at variance, and so on.

Shanti told the story of an Indian woman who brought an exceptionally large number of least coins as her year's contribution. It was received with some surprise, but the woman explained that it really should have been much larger, as she had not always prayed and set aside her coin when relations between her mother-in-law and herself became strained - which happened with alarming frequency!

- (ii) The time to act towards reconciliation is immediately a "break-down" in peaceable relations occurs. Immediate prayer for a forgiving spirit in the case of injury received and a repentant one on the occasion of injury inflicted on another in whatever manner, was the only truly Christian course to follow in order to love a neighbour as one's own self.
- (iii) No member of the fellowship may rightly classify herself as a donor and the others as recipients - we are all donors and we are all recipients. No one gives in this fellowship without receiving!
- (iv) This is primarily a fellowship of Prayer - fund-raising has no part in it. "Least coins" are set aside simply because they are "least coins" and in most cases when assessed singly are quite valueless. It is the bringing together of these apparently valueless "small things" and amassing a worthwhile sum which assists world-wide projects, that constitutes the modern miracle of F.L.C., and a whole multitude of donors contributes towards it.
- (v) The one who, in prayer, sincerely and humbly seeks from the Father the means to reconcile, to heal and to love, is herself the recipient of His Spirit to help bring peace to the world in our time.

MRS. SHANTI SOLOMON -- "Personal Glimpses"

Following are quotations from the opening chapter of Grace Nies Fletcher's book, "In Quest of the Least Coin", in which the author says she "unweaves the strands of the life story of Shanti Solomon" as it was told to her by Shanti herself.

- * "Shanti Solomon, whose first name means 'peace' and whose surname connotes 'wisdom', is the splendid new woman of Asia, educated by Christian missions, who does not trot meekly behind her husband, carrying the bundles, but who stands proudly beside her man."
- * "Shanti, born in Sambhal, Uttar Pradesh, India, is the daughter of Nanhe Mall, the twelfth child of the family." (Shanti's father grew up as a Hindu; her mother was born into a Christian family: only three of the twelve children survived.)
Shanti's father was murdered by his own Hindu family for becoming a Christian. When Nanhe Mall decided to be baptized he went all the way and became an evangelist." (Shanti was only six weeks old when her father died.)
- * "Being a widow in a Hindu family is almost to die yourself or to become a vegetable with no voice of your own. At thirty-three, my mother further defied public opinion by becoming a Bible woman in our village. Not overly strong in body, working long hours for little pay, she nevertheless ran a gay and happy home; she taught us three children how satisfying it is to stand on your own two feet. Often there wasn't quite enough to eat and seldom meat to fold into our chapattis, but we learned early to share what we had."
- * "Shanti today is a small, gentle woman with infinite compassion in her dark eyes. She has known hunger, deathly fatigue, injustice in the murder of her father and despair at watching, helpless, for two years while her husband, Reuben Solomon, slowly died. But she has also two college degrees, has been around the world several times and has been welcomed by many nations as the representative of her great country, free India. She has little money but never worries about tomorrow."
- * "After her graduation from Isabella Thoburn College, Shanti taught English and Geography for ten years in various Indian schools before she and Reuben were married at Budaun, U P, in India. The son of a Methodist minister, he was professor of history and psychology in a college. Higher education is a status symbol in India, so their wedding was an important social affair to which even her father's estranged family came, bearing gifts."
- * "Their home was a 'model' house which with very little more investment than the usual, could be duplicated in any village. It had mud walls three feet thick; even then the white ants came through and were a pest. She cooked on a model 'smokeless chulha' (stove) and her house and kitchen were open at all hours for whoever came to see and, it was hoped, learn."
- * "She had a pile of poster teaching aids for child care, personal hygiene, charts for learning how to read, instructions for sewing and knitting clothes for a family. If a child got sick she would take him with his mother to the local hospital, stand by to interpret what the doctor prescribed in everyday words the mother could understand. Thus she helped overcome the villagers' fear of foreign medicine. She utilized every opportunity to teach by example."
- * "Shanti did not preach with words but if the villagers asked her why she and her husband were helping them in their community projects, she would say simply, 'Because we are

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followers of Jesus Christ.' If they wanted to know more, she told them."

- * "When there was bitter warfare between Moslems and Hindus in India, Shanti went to terrified victims on both sides to ask, 'What can I do to help YOU?' This early she had the belief that religious differences do not necessarily result in hate but may be resolved by love."

- * "In 1956, the Presbyterian Church organized an International Fellowship Team of Reconciliation - six church women were to go to Alaska, Japan, Korea, Hong Kong and the Philippines to try to knit together the raveled sleeve of Christian forgiveness. Shanti Solomon was asked to go from India; other team members included a Japanese and four Americans."

The Pacific Team gathered first in Tokyo, where together they planned their continuing trip. But the postwar bitterness dismayed them, for both Shanti and the Japanese team member had been refused admittance into Korea." (The team invited two new Asian members to replace them). 'I want to ponder this matter in my heart', Shanti said. 'I shall wait for you in Manila with our Christian friends there, studying to see if perhaps I myself have wrong thoughts.'

- * "She was still pondering while she and the group of women in the Manila church read together the gospel of Mark. When they reached the twelfth chapter where Jesus comments that the widow who gave her two infinitesimal coins had given more than any other because she had given all she had, Shanti's heart gave a great leap. 'The widow's mite! That's the answer!' Shanti cried aloud. .. Her dark eyes shone, her lips trembled with eagerness to make them understand. 'You have to give YOURSELF along with your least coin. Real giving is a throwing off of pride. Only when our hearts are empty of self can God fill them with love and forgiveness. Why could we not start a fellowship where all women - any woman - shall pray for another in a different land? There must be some concrete symbol of her concern - possibly the smallest coin of her country? Like the widow's mite, help people sick, in bad trouble everywhere? What do you think? Could we do this?'" ..
- * "You can't see a prayer or an atom, but both can have great power for good. If women all over the world taught understanding of each other in their homes to their children, who knows what might happen? To release this power may take time, but what other practical way is there to prevent war? The one small coin we save every month wouldn't amount to much but it would be a beginning."
- * "When the rest of the Team met Shanti again in Manila, one American said sceptically, 'I do not think our church women would want to be bothered with saving only twelve pennies every year!' 'That's what's wrong with you who have everything', Shanti pointed out patiently. 'You don't understand how humiliating it is to always be on the receiving end as we are in Asia! The paisa, the least coin of my country, is worth only a fraction of an American penny, but even the poorest village woman can afford to give it to someone worse off than she is. She needs to do it for HER OWN SAKE! To stand up proudly. It is important that rich and poor, college graduate and illiterate, CAN GIVE ON THE SAME LEVEL. If you of the West draw aside your skirts, you'll be the loneliest women in the world. YOUR GREAT MONEY HAD DIVIDED US; LET'S SEE IF YOUR LEAST COINS CAN DRAW US TOGETHER!'

When the invitation was later extended to other Christian women in the United States, South America, Europe and Africa, they gladly joined the FELLOWSHIP OF THE LEAST COIN first sparked in Manila.

- * "The idea of praying and giving person to person, on an equal basis in both East and West, has swept like wildfire around the world. Women in seven countries that first year began saving their tiny coins in as many kinds of receptacles as there were nations."
- * "'This must not be just another organization with monthly meetings and a deadly dull secretary's report', Shanti insisted. 'The Fellowship is a spontaneous sharing by women everywhere in the power of the spirit which may be turned to a given end as surely as sunlight focussed by glass upon a bit of wood may burn. The small coins should not interfere with either local or other church giving, for they are only SYMBOLS.'"

By the end of the first year, the Asian women were startled to find that these coins, some so valueless that when a person dropped one she did not stoop to pick it up, amounted to \$11,000. Next year it totalled \$20,000. The tiny coins continued to accumulate till they amounted to \$100,000. Little did they dream that within ten years this money would amount to over half a million dollars!"

(The first Asian Church Women's Conference was held in Hong Kong in 1958. It was agreed that this organization should administer the funds. This conference, with headquarters in Bangkok, includes in its membership churches extending from Korea on the north, south to Australia and New Zealand, west to Pakistan and as far east as Japan. The women formed a Central Committee to interpret and promote the Fellowship of the Least Coin, to receive applications for grants and to make recommendations to the All-Asia Conference as to where the funds from the Least Coins should be spent.

IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF THE FELLOWSHIP -

Not more than the least coin in our currency may be given to this fund, in order to keep the idea that every woman can give the same amount to this project.

The covenant of prayer and world fellowship must be emphasized, rather than the form of raising money or the amount.)

"Today the Fellowship of the Least Coin has contributing members, or has given aid, in Australia, Brazil, Burma, Cameroon, Ceylon, Chile, Colombia, Guatemala, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Korea, Lebanon, Liberia, Mexico, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Portugal, Britain, Syria, Taiwan, Thailand, the United States, Vietnam, Venezuela, and Yugoslavia. .. The Fellowship goes on and on quietly, with its comparatively small gifts, forging little links of understanding and reconciliation between one nation and another, weaving the hopeful fabric of peace."

.. .. .

Other chapters of the book, "In Quest of the Least Coin", are concerned with the story of peoples and projects which have received gifts from the Fellowship: each is an eloquent testimony to the existence of the fellowship. Chapter Three, "The Cross and the Lotus",

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commences with this verse by Sara Lindsay -

"With careless hand I gave the coin,
It seemed as nought to me.
The least of all my goodly share
As gift? A mockery!
My sister in her distant land
Gave one least coin, like me;
But went without her evening bread
To share her poverty.
Within the cup which feeds Thy lambs,
Our coins became, through Thee,
The golden coin of Fellowship -
Thy love - the alchemy."

** **

MRS. OLGA BADGER (Member of the Planning Committee of the Asian Church Women's Conference) has kindly supplied additional information, outlining Mrs. Solomon's current activities and interests. -

MRS. SHANTI SOLOMON is a VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE NEW WORLD ALLIANCE OF REFORMED CHURCHES. She is Chairman of the committee on women's work in the Department of Co-operation and Witness, and is also Co-ordinator of all Women's Work in the World Alliance of Reformed Churches.

Mrs. Solomon a MEMBER of the EAST ASIA CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE WORKING COMMITTEE, a MEMBER of the RESOURCEMENT CONFERENCE of the EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE of the E.A.C.C. and a CONSULTANT to the LIFE AND ACTION UNIT of the E.A.C.C.

Mrs. Solomon is also serving as EXECUTIVE SECRETARY of the ASIAN CHURCH WOMEN'S CONFERENCE which carries responsibility on behalf of Christian women of six continents for interpretation of the FELLOWSHIP OF THE LEAST COIN of which is the FOUNDER.

Until recently, SHANTI SOLOMON was Secretary for WOMEN'S WORK of the UNITED CHURCH of NORTH INDIA.

She has just returned from DJAKARTA, where she was attending the WORLD ALLIANCE MEETINGS. In June, she was in HONG KONG for a meeting for the Resourcement Conference Executive Committee, also in Seoul for the E.A.C.C. WORKING COMMITTEE MEETINGS, and on completion of her visit to AUSTRALIA, NEW GUINEA and NEW ZEALAND, will be attending special women's meetings in MALAYSIA.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

PLANS FOR THE VISIT OF MRS. SHANTI SOLOMON

TO PERTH - 10th to 12th SEPTEMBER, 1972

MRS. PEG. EATON, her HOSTESS and a member of the Council, will meet Mrs. Solomon at the
the Airport.

ITINERARY:

10th September,
SUNDAY - afternoon

7.30 p.m.

Sightseeing.

Speak at Evening Service at St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, Nedlands. The minister of this Church is Rt. Rev. Gary Jacobs, State Moderator of the Presbyterian Church and Chairman of the W.A. COUNCIL OF CHURCHES.

11th September,
MONDAY

12.00 noon

2.00 p.m.

7.30 p.m.

Lunch at Y.W.C.A. with W.A. Council members of A.C.W. W.A. Unit.

Inter-Church Women's Rally at Trinity Congregational Church, Perth.

Public Meeting at St. Paul's, Nedlands, arranged by COUNCIL OF CHURCHES, W.A.

12th September,
TUESDAY

12.50 p.m.

Depart for Adelaide.

RADIO, T.V. and PRESS have been contacted.

VICTORIA

PLANS FOR THE VISIT OF MRS. SHANTI SOLOMON

TO MELBOURNE ---- 15th to 19th SEPTEMBER, 1972

HOSTESS - MRS. DOREEN STRACK

Direct from Airport - LUNCHEON with W.W.D.P. Committee in Essenden.

Informal gatherin at home of Pastor Sylvia Simpson.

17th September,
SUNDAY

Morning Service at Presbyterian Church, Essenden.

Appearance and Greeting on P.S.A. Wesley.

Probably segment in Evening Service at Scots Church,
Melbourne.

18th September
MONDAY

Morning Coffee for Council members, local groups,
representatives of denominational women's organisations.
Luncheon with Executive

Visit to Prahran Methodist Mission and European Australian
Christian Fellowship.

Mrs. Solomon Addresses Launceston Women

International traveler should love one another) ciliation which began women, separated
Mrs. Shanti Solomon, an ecumenical movement in 1956 when a great through the bitterness
founder of the Fellow— for peace and recon— need was felt to draw and hostility of war,
together.



Mrs. Shanti Solomon at left, is helped by Mrs. Dawn Rhodes. (Tasmedia Photo)

ship of the Least Coin, was in Launceston briefly last week to address a gathering of some 260 church women at St. Ailbes Hall.

Mrs. Solomon, from India, had accepted a special change in her busy itinerary to include Launceston in her current Australian tour. She was especially interested in addressing a group where a variety of denominations was present. Mrs. Solomon has been a guest of the National Committee of Australian Church Women.

At last week's meeting, Mrs. Solomon whose name Shanti, means Peace, spoke about the Fellowship of the Least Coin (that we

From the Churches

THIS column is compiled for LAUNCESTON WEEK by the Rev. John Ward, secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society. Churches and church organisations with items for insertion in the column may contact Mr Ward at 44 5179, or P.O. Box 971, or 2 Jillian St, Kings Meadows.

Indian visitor

An overseas visitor to Launceston soon is Mrs Shanti Solomon of India, founder of the Fellowship of the Least Coin. The fellowship aims to unite Christian women in prayer of concern for other women in need around the world. In token of this concern women are invited at their meetings to give the least coin of their currency towards a fund to be distributed wherever there is need among women. \$1000 has been allocated to Australia for Aboriginal maternal welfare projects. Mrs Solomon will address a meeting in Launceston on September 19.

*The visit
"write up" of
plans. Sept. '72
MELBOURNE.*

In the Churches

Lady of the least coin

LIKE Florence Nightingale, the Lady of the Lamp, Mrs Shanti Solomon, of North India, is a dedicated woman with a mission.

This is to unite Christian women of all nations in the work of international reconciliation.

This week Mrs Solomon visits Essendon and will speak at communion services next Sunday at 9.30 and 11 a.m. at St. John's Presbyterian branch, Essendon.

As her special work concerns people of all churches, especially women, the minister of St. John's (Rev. R. B. Catford) has given a special welcome to visitors from other churches to meet and hear Mrs Solomon next Sunday.

Mrs Solomon's special mission is the Fellowship of the Least Coin which grew out of attempts at international reconciliation by herself and others in the post war bitterness in Asian and Pacific countries.

Women of the fellowship collect the least coin of the country and join in prayer for one another.

The least coin enables even the poorest to participate, and the money has multiplied rapidly as the idea has caught on — \$11,000 the first year, but now half a million dollars annually!

The proceeds, are administered by the Asian Church Womens' Conference for inter church overseas aid schemes.

In India, a least coin would be placed in a clay pot.

In Yugoslavia the container is a matchbox.

New England's Cape Cod women use clam shells, and in the Philippines the coin is set aside in a hollow bamboo stick.

Australian women use a jar of some kind with a printed label around it, and each month each woman puts in one cent to join the collection of tiny coins.

Mrs Solomon is a small gentle woman with infinite compassion in her dark eyes.

Born a Hindu, her father was murdered for becoming a Christian.

Following the Christian example of her mother, Mrs Solomon became a Christian worker in Indian villages teaching, nursing, helping the people in any way possible.

A VERY unusual and interesting speaker will be heard at a rally in St. Thomas' Anglican Church on Tuesday, September 19, at 7.45 p.m.

It will be a rally of the Bush Aid Society, and the speaker will be Bishop Witt, from the north-west of Australia.

Bishop Witt was recently featured in an ABC documentary, and everyone interested will be welcome.

the Essendon Baptist Church Hall.

There will be musical items and a creche will be provided.

Guest speaker will be Mrs E. M. Kippax, who will speak on "Children Under Probation."

Mrs Kippax, a past member of the committee at Essendon, and has carried out probationary work for a long period.

Also present at the luncheon will be Mrs Shanto Solomon (see above).

— ★ —
Special luncheon for

— ★ —
ANNUAL luncheon of the Essendon branch of the Women's World Day of Prayer will be held next Friday at noon in

TASMANIA

PLANS FOR THE VISIT OF MRS. SHANTI SOLOMON
TO TASMANIA - 19th to 21st SEPTEMBER, 1972

ITINERARY:

19th September,
TUESDAY -
LAUNCESTON

Guest Speaker, ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S
League of Tasmania.

Evening
20th September,
WEDNESDAY
HOBART

Open ecumenical meeting.

W.I.C.C. Meeting

21st September,

3.50 p.m.

Departure for Sydney

Report for the National Committee of Australian Church Women on the visit
to Launceston Tas. of Mrs. Shanti Solomon.

How priveleged and blessed we were to be one of the fortunate cities to receive as our guest, this wonderful lady. Few of the 250 women who gathered to hear her speak knew just how fortunate - or just how much we owed to various 'back stage' church women.

Mrs. Solomon arrived at 2.30 p.m. Tuesday 19th. Sept. and we drove straight to Channel 9 T.V. where she was interviewed for the regional news that night. The ABC had broadcast her imminent arrival on the mid-day news. She was able to sleep for 1½ hrs. during the afternoon and at 6 p.m. she shared an Indian meal with christian friends who had served as medical missionaries in India for 9 years. We collected her at 7.30p.m. and joined the large crowd assembled at St. Ailbes Hall. As was mentioned in previous correspondence, the Catholic Women's League State Conference was in progress at Launceston at this time and they had provided our Inter-Church committee with this splendid opportunity to come together as Australian Church Women. The Catholic Women's League had prepared a very lovely Bible service as the first section of their programme and then I was invited as President of the Northern committee of W.I.C.C. to introduce Mrs. Solomon which I did with great joy and at the same time thanked the C.W.L. for the opportunity we had been given to come together.

The entire audience was immediately captivated and involved as Mrs. Solomon began to speak about the Fellowship of the Least Coin. All were enthralled with her clarity and purity of speech and profoundly impressed by her deep sincerity, her obvious love for her fellow man and her dedication to christian service. It was a very moving address and left no-one untouched.

The Archbishop of Tasmania, Dr. Young, whom Mrs. Solomon had met earlier, came up to me during supper, clasped my hands in his and said 'Thank you Mrs. Rhodes, for bringing this lovely woman to us this night! It had been, he said, one of the most moving experiences of his life. His Grace was so kind and charming to Shanti as indeed he was to all the women visitors present.

We ascertained that at least 80 women present were from church groups other than Catholic - many I believe, for the first time experiencing close christian fellowship with each other. I felt that this was a very special meeting of considerable significance and importance to us as Australian Church Women. There was without a doubt, one of the warmest feelings of fellowship with each other that I had experienced. Shanti met and spoke with dozens of women and seemed to embrace us all with her love. I felt deeply grateful that this meeting had been made possible.

Dawn Rhodes

FOR THE WOMEN'S GROUPS IN YOUR CHURCH

Please make this event widely known among your church women.

NORTHERN COMMITTEE OF TASMANIAN WOMEN'S INTER CHURCH COUNCIL

(State Unit of Australian Church Women)

INVITES TASMANIAN CHURCH WOMEN

to hear

MRS. SHANTI SOLOMON

Founder of the Fellowship of the Least Coin
(A Fellowship of prayer and concern for all women throughout the world)

Mrs. Solomon will speak to church women at

ST. AILBES HALL

TUESDAY NIGHT, 19th SEPTEMBER

The Women's Inter-Church Council is indebted to the Catholic Women's League State Conference, taking place at this time, for their offer to incorporate Mrs. Solomon's address in their Conference programme.

Tuesday night's programme begins at 7.45 p.m. with a Bible Service.

R.S.V.P. Would groups please indicate attendance by 15th September, in order to facilitate supper arrangements.

Phone 44 1022
or
44 4520

Dawn L. Rhodes
President
Northern Committee
Tas. Women's Inter-Church
Council.

Visit of Mrs. Shanti Solomon to Hobart. Wednesday Sept. 20th and Thursday, Sept. 21st. 1972.

Tasmania greatly enjoyed and appreciated the visit of Mrs. Shanti Solomon. The Executive of the W.I.C.C.T is most grateful that, despite the delay in the early part of her tour, Mrs. Solomon was able to visit Tasmania. On her arrival on Wednesday am. Mrs. Solomon was taken direct to Channel 6, the Television Station with the widest viewing public. There she was interviewed for the evening news. Another interview for a Women's Session to be shown later in the week, was video-taped. Quite a considerable time was given to each interview, and as the Chief News Editor had been supplied with full details before Mrs. Solomon's arrival, the questions were good and Mrs. Solomon given free rein in reply. A press interview for 'The Mercury' later in the day completed the media publicity.

A small group met informally at the home of her hostess Mrs. G.A. Wood on Wednesday evening enabling both conversation and information at greater depth and a reasonably early night for Mrs. S!

The main function in Hobart was a luncheon arranged for Thursday. Over 60 people attending this, mainly women, some Hobart ministers also being present. To hear of the beginnings of the F.L.C from its founder and to be made so much aware of one's membership of the A.C.W.C was a most enriching experience and fully appreciated by all those present.

The weather was perfect, the Equinoxial gales which had battered the State for weeks lapsed for a day making the short time available for sight-seeing particularly enjoyable.

As a result of this visit the F.L.C will mean a great deal more to those already interested and many, many more have had it presented to them in an indelible way.

In Launceston Mrs. Solomon was guest speaker at the Catholic Women's League Annual Conference about which a report has been furnished by Mrs. Rhodes. The pleasing fact of this occasion was that at least 200 of those present represented towns from all over the State.

Reverend H. G. G.

CHURCH NEWS

Visit soon by Asian laywoman

MRS Shanti Solomon, of Ceylon, founder of the Fellowship of the Least Coin, will visit Tasmania next week as part of a world tour.

The fellowship is one of prayer and reconciliation involving women throughout the world.

Mrs Solomon is also executive secretary of the Asian Church Women's Conference and one of the three vice-presidents of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches.

She will arrive in Launceston on Tuesday and will speak to the Catholic Women's League annual State conference at St Ailbe's Hall on Tuesday night.

Mrs Shanti will visit Hobart on Wednesday and attend a luncheon at the G. A. Wood hall at 12.30 pm on Thursday.

Help to women



Mrs Shanti Solomon (above) founder of the Fellowship of the Least Coin, to which \$1,000,000 was contributed in 12 months to help women, arrived in Hobart yesterday for little more than a 24-hour visit.

Mrs Solomon, whose headquarters are in Delhi, India, is vice-president of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, executive secretary, Asian Church Women's Conference, and a member of the East Asia Christian Conference Working Committee.

Her duties as full-time executive secretary take her to 16 countries and she makes three trips a year.

This is Mrs Solomon's

first visit to Australia. She also will visit Papua New Guinea and New Zealand for the first time.

A small, gentle woman, she has known hunger, deathly fatigue, injustice in the murder of her father, and despair at watching helpless while her husband, Reuben Solomon, died slowly 12 years ago.

For 10 years before her marriage, Mrs Solomon, who has two university degrees, taught English and geography in various Indian schools. Her late husband, the son of a Methodist minister, was professor of history and psychology at a Hindu college.

Mrs Solomon had the idea of the "Least Coin" during a Bible study in Manila.

She said that by giving the smallest coin of their country, as well as giving their services and throwing off pride, women who contribute to the Least Coin promote fellowship and evangelistic programmes.

They also become involved in the secular world by providing financial help when needed in times of flood, famine, or other calamities.

Knowing what a tremendous help the Least Coin has been during the past 10 years, Mrs Solomon said yesterday: "I thank God for it".

But she admitted she did not realise a decade ago how the organisation would develop, or that through it, women in 62 countries would be helped.

NEW SOUTH WALES

PLANS FOR THE VISIT OF MRS. SHANTI SOLOMON

TO SYDNEY - 21st to 24th, 26th (night), 27th September, and
11th - 12th October.

HOSTESS: MRS. OLGA BADGER

ITINERARY:

21st September, THURSDAY (arrive 6.30 p.m.	Evening meal thence to C.E. Chapter House Rally
22nd September, FRIDAY, 10 a.m. 11 a.m.	C.B.A. Fivedock Studios for Recording. Haberfield Presbyterian Church for W.I.C.C. Rally and Lunch. (Mrs. Solomon guest speaker).
Afternoon 7.45 p.m.	Drive to Wollongong via National Park and Coast Road, arriving in time for dinner at home of hostess (local). Combined Man's and Women's Rally (Interchurch) followed by supper. (Mrs. Solomon guest speaker)
23rd September, SATURDAY - After breakfast	Leave Wollongong, driving via Bulli Lookout to "Gilbulla", Camden, for Lunch at YWCA Houseparty Conference. Thence via Penrith and Windsor back to Mrs. Badger's home.
24th September, SUNDAY, 9.50 a.m.	Depart for Canberra from Airport.
26th September, TUESDAY, 6.10 p.m.	Overnight at Deaconess House - informal consultation with students.
27th September, WEDNESDAY	Guest speaker at Lunchhour Meeting, St. Stephens Church, Macquarie St., followed by light luncheon in lower hall. Afternoon sightseeing if desired. Evening at Deaconess House till departure for Airport.
11th October, WEDNESDAY, 7.50 p.m.	arrival from Christchurch.
12th October, THURSDAY 3.00 p.m.	Invitation extended to speak briefly at school assembly at P.L.C. Croydon (8.30 a.m.) by Headmistress, Miss Whitlam. Departure for Singapore.

N.S.W. WOMEN'S INTERCHURCH COUNCIL

YOU ARE INVITED TO MEET AND HEAR

MRS. SHANTI SOLOMON

Founder of the FELLOWSHIP OF THE LEAST COIN

and

Vice President, World Alliance of Reformed Churches

In 1956 Mrs. Shanti Solomon (whose first name means "Peace") was a member of an International Fellowship Team of Reconciliation of women who were to go to Alaska, Japan, Korea, Hong Kong and the Philippines to try to knit together the ravelled sleeve of Christian forgiveness. Unable to travel to Korea because of a Visa restriction Shanti waited in the Philippines. She was shocked by the bitterness still existing between women of the Asian countries who had been on opposing sides in World War II. She shared her concern with Christian women in Manilla as they studied together the Gospel of Mark. When they reached the 12th Chapter Shanti's heart gave a great leap. "The Widow's Mite!" That's the answer! "You have to give yourself along with your least coin. ..." So the covenant of prayer and world fellowship became one of the principles rather than the raising of money. The coin is but a symbolic token, as outlined in our devotional booklet "Circle of Prayer".

Today the Fellowship of the Least Coin has contributing members or has given aid in twenty-nine countries. It goes on quietly, with its comparatively small gifts, forging links of understanding and reconciliation between one nation and another, weaving the hopeful fabric of peace.

MRS. SHANTI SOLOMON

will be GUEST SPEAKER at a Special Rally in the

HABERFIELD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

on

Friday, 22nd September, 1972 at 11 a. m.

followed by a Basket Lunch (Tea etc., provided)

Copies of these leaflets were included in all Orders of Service at all Fellowship Day Services in both City & Suburban Centres. They have been distributed to all Branches, Church Fellowships etc.

NEW SOUTH WALES WOMEN'S INTER-CHURCH COUNCIL
(State Unit of Australian Church Women)

September, 1972

VISIT OF MRS. SHANTI SOLOMON
TO AUSTRALIA

We are honoured to welcome to Australia, Mrs. Shanti Solomon, the founder of the Fellowship of the Least Coin.

"Shanti Solomon, whose first name means 'peace' and whose surname connotes 'wisdom' is the splendid new woman of Asia. Born in Sambhal, Uttar Pradesh, India, she is the daughter of Nanhe Mall, the twelfth child of the family. (Shanti's father grew up as a Hindu; her mother was born into a Christian family: only three of the twelve children survived.)

"Shanti's father was murdered by his own Hindu family for becoming a Christian. When Nanhe Mall decided to be baptized he went all the way and became an evangelist. Shanti was only six weeks old when her father died.

"Being a widow in a Hindu family is almost to die yourself or to become a vegetable with no voice of your own. At thirty-three, my mother further defied public opinion by becoming a Bible woman in our village. Not overly strong in body, working long hours for little pay, she nevertheless ran a gay and happy home; she taught us three children how satisfying it is to stand on your own two feet. Often there wasn't quite enough to eat and seldom meat to fold into our chapattis, but we learned early to share what we had."

"Shanti today is a small, gentle woman with infinite compassion in her dark eyes. She has known hunger, deathly fatigue, injustice in the murder of her father and despair at watching helpless for two years while her husband, Reuben Solomon, slowly died. But she has also two college degrees, has been around the world several times and has been welcomed by many nations as the representative of her great country, free India. She has little money but never worries about tomorrow." (The foregoing are extracts from Grace Nies Fletcher's book "A Quest of the Least Coin", published by Worlds Work Ltd. Ask for it in your local library.)

Mrs. Solomon is a Vice-President of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. She is Chairman of the committee on women's work in the Department of Co-operation and Witness, and is also Co-ordinator of all Women's Work in the W.A.R.C.

A member of the East Asia Christian Conference, she is a member of the Rescurement Conference of the Executive Committee of the E.A.C.C. and a consultant to the Life and Action Unit of the E.A.C.C.

Mrs. Solomon is also serving as Executive Secretary of the Asian Church Women's Conference, which carries responsibility on behalf of Christian women of six continents for interpretation of the Fellowship of the Least Coin.

Until recently, Shanti Solomon was Secretary for Women's Work of the United Church of North India.

She has just returned from Djakarta, where she was attending the World Alliance meetings. In June, she was in Hong Kong for a meeting for the Rescurement Conference Executive Committee, also in Seoul for the E.A.C.C. Working Committee meetings, and on completion of her visit to Australia, New Guinea and New Zealand, she will be attending special women's meetings in Malaysia.

INTRODUCING THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE LEAST COIN

by Rathie Selvaratnam, Chairman
Asian Church Women's Conference 1970

In 1956, Shanti Solomon was a member of a fellowship team which visited and participated in Bible study with Christian women in East Asia. Unable to travel with the team to Korea because of a visa restriction, Shanti Solomon waited in the Philippines. While there she shared her concern that Christian women everywhere become aware of their relationship within the world-wide family. So few could travel; but an act of remembrance would encourage women in isolated villages as well as cosmopolitan communities to pray for other people in all parts of the world and become ministers of reconciliation in a world of barriers and broken fellowship.

A tangible token of sharing in a world-wide fellowship of prayer was needed - one that would be the same for women everywhere, be they rich or poor, educated or illiterate, isolated or world citizens. The thought came to her that the "least coin" of each country could be such a token.

The least coin - despised often and thrown aside - has knit continents together and drawn peoples into a deeper and abiding fellowship in prayer. It has helped to satisfy those in need and drawn a smile from faces that were wrinkled with sorrow and fear.

The Fellowship of the Least Coin can be likened to the parable of the Mustard Seed - the least seed - the mustard seed - a man took and sowed in his field. It sprouted, it grew, it spread its branches and became a mighty tree, so that the birds of the air might lodge in it.

The Fellowship of the Least Coin born in the heart of a woman, Shanti Solomon, has in the providence of God grown to involve tens of thousands of women around the world in prayer for one another as they set aside a 'least coin' each month.

The participation of the women in the Fellowship of the Least Coin both in giving and receiving has been a very inspiring experience. We can now say that it is a gift from the women of the world to the world. The coins are contributed annually to a common fund from which grants are made each year for ministries of mercy on every continent and for opportunities for women to attend ecumenical meetings and experience international fellowship.

The Least Coin in Australia

With the formation of Australian Church Women in 1964, the Fellowship of the Least Coin was made known in all states and it continues to grow steadily. Last year \$3000 were sent to the international fund.

Grants from the F.L.C. have been made to Australia - for work with aboriginal girls, for work with migrant youth and this year to the Institute for Aboriginal Development, Alice Springs. At Australia's suggestion a Grant was also made to help with the training of wives of pastors-in-training at the Theological College of the United Church in Rabaul and the Lutheran College at Lae.

NEW SOUTH WALES WOMEN'S INTER-CHURCH COUNCIL

President Mrs. N. Pfeiffer, 2 Provincial Rd. Lindfield 46 2746
Treasurer Mrs. C. Perriam, 6/37 Ormond St. Ashfield 798 6481

The N.S.W. Women's Inter-Church Council comprises appointed representatives of its member churches and local branches. Visitors are always welcome to its meetings in the Assembly Hall, Salvation Army H.Q., 140 Elizabeth St. Sydney (4th floor) at 10.30 a.m. on the third Monday of February, March, April, June, September and November.

As the state unit of Australian Church Women, it sponsors the Fellowship of the Least Coin and the WINIFRED KIEK SCHOLARSHIP. Offerings collected on Fellowship Day in July make it possible to bring a young woman from a developing country for further training. This year's Winifred Kiek Scholar is Miss Terani Aisake of Fiji who is studying at the Methodist Training College and Bible School in Queensland to enable her to return to Suva equipped to take over the supervision of deaconess training in Fiji.

Miss Aisake will be visiting Sydney from 6th to 11th December 1972. You are invited to meet her over morning tea on Monday, 11th December at 10.30am in the Salvation Army Assembly Hall, 4th flr. 140 Elizabeth St., Sydney.

In Australia our Least Coins are gathered together on World Community Day. Services in the metropolitan area of Sydney will be held as follows:

Friday, 20th October, 1972

ROSEVILLE Methodist Church, Lord St. 10.30 a.m.

Wednesday, 25th October, 1972

LANE COVE Congregational Church 10 a.m.

CITY Central Baptist Church, Geo.St. (J. Skuse) 11 a.m.

Friday, 27th October, 1972

EPPING Presbyterian Hall, Rawson Street 10.30 a.m.

HURSTVILLE Church of Christ, MacMahon St. 10.45 a.m.

FAIRFIELD Baptist Church, Ware Street 11 a.m.

PARRAMATTA Presbyterian Church, Phillip St. 11.30 a.m.

NORTH RYDE, Baptist Church, Lane Cove Rd. Ryde 7.45 p.m.

If Fellowship Day or World Community Day are not observed in your district and you would like to do something about it, please contact Mrs. F.I. Down 177 Copeland Road, Beecroft 2119, phone 84 2587

Fellowship of the Least Coin

copy of a tape made by an Indian Woman,
Mrs. Shanti Solomon at the request of Mrs. D. Badger who
represented Australian Church Women at the
East Asian Christian Womens' Conference held in Tokyo
in July, 1966.

Fellowship of the Least Coin

Dear Sisters in Christ,

I am thrilled with the opportunity of talking to you on the tape. It is due to Mrs. Badger's kindness that I have this opportunity, and I must tell you that this East Asia Christian Womens' Conference how thrilled we are to have a delegate from Australia for even one delegate can remind us that we belong to a world wide fellowship in coming to Jesus Christ and accepting him as our Saviour because when delegates from Asian countries get together we are so Asian that we forget that there are sisters and brothers on the other side of the world, and one delegate from Australia and one or two from New Zealand remind us that we have fellowship with the West as well.

Now this Asian conference was especially emphasising the 10th anniversary of the Least Coin Fellowship. I am sure through your delegates you have heard much about it, but I hope you will not mind if I tell you about it again. Often people say that the idea disturbs them because offering "least" to God is not very high ideal. Well, this project when it was started, was not started to raise a fund, and therefore it doesn't disturb us when we say LEAST COIN FELLOWSHIP. I am sure you would like to know how it was started. After the World War II some of the Asian countries could not forget the evil of the second World War, and therefore some American Presbyterian wo-

men decided to take an international team to the Asian countries. It was my opportunity to be a member of that team. We went to Asian countries, and I was surprised to know that how each country had something against another and hadn't yet got reconciled, and I saw the American women how eager they were to get reconciled with the women of the East because they knew that the whole world was condemning them for what they did at Hiroshima. On the other hand here I was from India since September 1956 and I knew nothing about it, how the women of the East had suffered or how keen the people of America were to get reconciled for what they did, and therefore I think that all three parties were involved in being concerned for each other as we profess that we belong to the same Christian family. And I thought that there could be something that we could do to promote the Christian love among ourselves.

I have been to the States and I knew how they were advanced economically, and knowing the conditions in my country very well after working in rural area I knew how far behind we were economically. And therefore keeping these things in mind I thought if once a month we sit down ourselves and try to be straight with God in our relationship to man, and come close before God and ask for a forgiving heart for those who had hurt us whether purposely or any other way.

And when we are doing that, praying God we must have a symbol—you know we people of the East always have to have something concrete as a symbol for the abstract thing that we see or do. And therefore for this abstract spiritual experience we wanted to have a concrete symbol and I thought that if each woman put the least coin for the prayer as a symbol, and then at the end of the year we had 12 least coins to put in the treasury of the World Council of Churches, then how much amount we can get together to serve to promote the Christian fellowship in the whole world. So this idea was expressed in the Philippines first of all and then of course it was brought to different other countries in 1957 only six countries participated but it was amazing to see that \$11,000 were collected from this least coin offering. And then just how many people got reconciled with their neighbours and you can say with their co-workers and also learned the lesson of forgiveness at Jesus' feet in prayer. Then we decided what to do with this money and we thought "Let's promote fellowship among the Christian women", and then realised that the women in Asia knew very little about each other than what we knew about the women in the West. Therefore we decided to hold an international womens' conference every four years somewhere in Asia and invite the women to that. Now this major portion of this offering is used for this Christian womens' conference which we hold every 4 years. I

was present at the first conference which was held in Hong Kong and I have come to the third womens' conference and I tell you that it is growing every year. Every time we meet we find something new and enriching in this fellowship and it is a blessing that God has given to us through this Least Coin Fellowship. Least Coin Fellowship is a fellowship of prayer, when we try to get reconciled with our own people and I think it is needed most now in our time, when the whole world is like a volcano which is ready to erupt any moment and have war with each other. I think we have to understand each country, and, before God, just confess our ignorance and ask for a forgiving heart. Perhaps this fellowship of prayer will promote Christian fellowship, and will bring peace in our time in this world which is most needed. And I'm sure that you will agree with me that we all want it and pray for it.

Thank you very much for listening to me so patiently. It has been a pleasure to be with you, who has never been to Australia, but it seems as though I have met you now through this tape.

[This message from an Asian woman is worth reading more than once that you might appreciate the high standard of Christianity achieved by our sisters in the East (Editor.)]

CANBERRA

PLANS FOR THE VISIT OF MRS. SHANTI SOLOMON TO CANBERRA - 24th to 26th September, 1972

24th September,
SUNDAY, 2.30 p.m.

Combined Service, Inter-church

25th & 26th

Sightseeing and meeting with church groups -
possibly W. A. R. C.

MONDAY & TUESDAY

5.35. p.m.

Departure for Sydney.

A.C.T. Sept. '72

Spreading gospel of the joy in giving

An Indian church-woman who founded the Fellowship of the Least Coin a little more than 15 years ago will speak in St Paul's Church, Manuka, at 2pm on Sunday.

She is Mrs Shanti Solomon, whose father was killed by members of his family after he abandoned the Hindu religion and turned to Christianity when Mrs Solomon was six weeks old.

The Fellowship of the Least Coin, which raises money for mission work through donations of the least coin of every country, was begun in 1956. It now has assets worth more than \$500,000 and is administered by the Asian Churchwomen's Committee. It has contributing members in 29 countries and grateful recipients in 25.

Mrs Solomon had a mission upbringing.

"My mother, being a widow in a Hindu society, was relegated to the position of a vegetable with no voice

of her own. It is like being dead yourself. But she defied public opinion and became a Bible woman in the village", Mrs Solomon said. "We grew up in privation and want, but she made us happy".

After graduating from college as a teacher she married in 1950 Reuben Solomon, son of a Methodist minister, a professor of history and psychology in a Hindu college.

They lived in a "model" home with a smokeless stove and her kitchen was open night and day to show women how they could run a home with much less labour than they were accustomed to.

"A 'model' home meant that its mud walls were 3ft

thick instead of about 6in, but even so the white ants ate their way through". Mrs Solomon said, "But I had a pile of teaching aids, some posters, charts for teaching simple words and instructions for knitting and sewing".

In 1956 Mrs Solomon was asked to go on a tour of reconciliation organised by the Presbyterian Church to try to bring peace and forgiveness to war-embittered people in Hong Kong, Korea, Japan and the Philippines.

In a Manila church Mrs Solomon listened to a Bible reading of the Gospel of St Mark. The story of the widow's mite, her smallest coin,

given in love and forgiveness, gave her the idea of the Fellowship of the Least Coin.

"Most women in poor countries cannot afford to give anything but the smallest coin. But, given in love, it can be joined with millions of other small coins to do good.

"And more than that, a woman needs to give, even if it is the paisa, the smallest coin of India, so that she can stand proudly and know that she is helping someone worse off than herself", Mrs Solomon said.

"It is not mere money itself, but the giving of love and oneself that accompanies it. This is the cornerstone of the fellowship's philosophy.

"It is not just another fund-raising organisation with monthly meetings and dull reports. It is a joyous, spontaneous sharing by women everywhere. There are only two important rules of the fellowship — no money the least coin of any currency may be given, no covenant of prayer world fellowship must be emphasised rather than the raising of money or the amount raised", Mrs Solomon said.

Big Christian help from small coins

THE founder of a religious movement that has spread to 62 countries is visiting Queensland this week to tell women about new projects and developments.

She is Mrs. Shanti Solomon, of Delhi, India, who established the Fellowship of the Least Coin in 1958, to bring together Christian women throughout the world.

Each fellowship member is expected to offer a prayer for peace and reconciliation at least once a month. At the same time the member puts aside the smallest coin of her currency as a token of her prayer.

Women in India put their coins into clay pots for collection while women in the Cape Cod area of the United States use clam shells and in Venezuela they use plastic cowboy boots.

First year

In the first year, the "least coins" of women in seven countries totalled \$11,000. Within 10 years, the total reached \$500,000.

The money is used to deepen Christian fellowship, by enabling people to get together, and to provide funds for Church projects.

As well as being the founder of the Fellowship of the Least Coin, Mrs. Solomon is also a vice-president of the New World Alliance of Re-

formed Churches, and executive secretary of the Asian Church Women's Conference.

She arrived in Australia on September 10, and has been meeting fellowship members.

Mrs. Solomon said she did not feel the fellowship had become too large.

Personal

"It's a very personal thing, and in fact it's the simplicity of the idea that is attracting women to the fellowship throughout the world," she said.

Yesterday, Mrs. Solomon met church women of all denominations at Nambour and in Brisbane.

This morning she will have morning tea with Australian Church Women (Queensland Unit) members, at the Ann Street Presbyterian Church.



MRS. SHANTI SOLOMON

QUEENSLAND

PLANS FOR THE VISIT OF MRS. SHANTI SOLOMON

TO BRISBANE - 27th to 30th September, 1972.

HOSTESSES: MRS. RUBY HAIGH and MRS. JESSIE DENNIS

27th September,
WEDNESDAY,
10.5 p.m.

Airport arrival from Sydney.

28th September,
THURSDAY

Drive to rural centre, NAMBOUR, for meeting with church women in NAMBOUR PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH. Special service arranged. Luncheon followed by return drive via Sunshine Coast Road.

Evening

Dinner and informal meeting with W.A.R.C. members.

29th September,
FRIDAY

MORNING TEA and MEETING to follow in ANN ST. Presbyterian Church - Church women of all denominations invited.

LUNCHEON and meeting with TERANI AISAKE, VIOLET SAMPA and DR. McFARLANE, also President of A.C.W. Q. Unit (Mrs. Clarke) and President A.C.W. (Mrs. Jessie Dennis)

Arrangement made with Dr. McFarlane for screening of films of Aboriginal Maternal & Child Welfare Work.

30th September,
SATURDAY, 9.05 a.m.

Departure from airport for Port Moresby

6th OCTOBER,
FRIDAY - 3.00 p.m.
6.50 p.m.

Arrive from Port Moresby

Depart direct flight to Auckland.



Interesting Indian visitor

Sept. '72
NAMBOUR CHRONICLE

Church women of Nambour and the surrounding districts will have a unique opportunity to meet and hear Mrs. Shanti Solomon, at a special meeting which will be held in Nambour Presbyterian Church on Thursday, September 28.

In describing her as "Asia's splendid new woman," authoress Grace

Nies Fletcher pays tribute to the fact that Shanti Solomon has "arrived." The humble background from which she emerged to walk with serene confidence on the national and international scene was probably the refining influence which brought to light the gold of her character.

Shanti Solomon today is a gentle woman with infinite compassion. She has known hunger and deathly fatigue, injustice in the murder of her father, and despair at watching, helpless, for two long years while her husband, a professor of history and psychology, slowly died. But she has two college degrees, has been round the world several times and has been welcomed by many nations as the representative of her great country, free India.

The idea of praying and giving, person to person on an equal basis in both East and West, has swept like wild-fire

around the world. It started that first year with women in seven countries, and gifts of "least coins" at its end totalled \$11,000.

Today the Fellowship of the Least Coin has contributing members and has aided many and varied projects in 29 countries.

As well as being founder of the Fellowship of the Least Coin, Mrs. Solomon is a vice-president of the New World Alliance of Reformed Churches; a member of the East Asia Christian Conference Working Committee; a member of the resourcement conference of the executive committee of the East Asia Christian Conference; a consultant to the life and action unit of the E.A.C.C., and executive secretary of the Asian Church Women's Conference.

Before the Nambour meeting at 10.30 a.m., morning tea will be served at 9.30 o'clock.



COPY OF NOTICE FORWARDED TO MEDIA

THE VISIT TO AUSTRALIA
OF
MRS. SHANTI SOLOMON,

PROMINENT ASIAN CHURCH WOMAN,
COMMENCES IN PERTH ON SUNDAY, 10th SEPTEMBER.

MRS. SOLOMON WILL ARRIVE IN BRISBANE ON WEDNESDAY EVENING, 27th SEPTEMBER,
ON FLIGHT TN 408 FROM SYDNEY. HER TIME IN QUEENSLAND WILL BE OCCUPIED
AS FOLLOWS: -

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| THURSDAY, 28th | Visit to NAMBOUR for specially arranged meeting with Church women - all denominational groups from Nambour and surrounding districts have been invited to attend. |
| " (Evening) | Brisbane meeting with members of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (Presbyterian and Congregational) of which Mrs. Solomon is a Vice-President. |
| FRIDAY, 29th | Morning Tea and Meeting with Australian Church Women - Queensland Unit at ANN ST. PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH HALL, 10.00 a.m. Church women of all denominations have been invited to this meeting. |

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Brief biographical notes on MRS. SOLOMON accompany this notice. Further information will be gladly supplied by -

MRS. E. DINGLE, Publicity Officer, Working Committee, Australian Church Women, 'phone 79 2625.
or MRS. C. CONNELL, Secretary, Australian Church Women. 'phone 78 34⁷/₄.

ASIA'S "SPLENDID NEW WOMAN"

In describing her as "Asia's splendid new woman", authoress Grace Nies Fletcher pays tribute to the fact that SHANTI SOLOMON has "arrived". The humble background from which she emerged to walk with serene confidence on the national and international scene was probably the refining influence which brought to light the gold of her character.

The twelfth child, and one of three to survive, of a Hindu father and a Christian mother, Shanti learned early the cruelty of intolerance and prejudice. Her father on becoming a Christian (very early in Shanti's life) was murdered by his own family for the step he had taken. With indomitable courage, her mother defied public opinion, ran a gay and happy Christian home for her three children, and taught them "how satisfying it is to stand on your own two feet". Often there was not enough to eat, and they learnt early to share what they had.

Shanti Solomon today is a gentle woman with infinite compassion. She has known hunger and deathly fatigue, injustice in the murder of her father, and despair at watching, helpless, for two long years while her husband, a professor of history and psychology, slowly died. But she also has two college degrees, has been round the world several times and has been welcomed by many nations as the representative of her great country, free India. She has little money but never worries about tomorrow.

Before her marriage Shanti had taught English and Geography for 10 years in various Indian schools, and she later drew on her knowledge and experience to teach local villagers in child care and personal hygiene, as well as how to read and how to knit and sew to meet family needs. Her house and kitchen were open at all hours for whoever came to see and it was hoped, to learn. She helped in every way she could, teaching by example rather than words, at the same time using every opportunity to affirm her Christian faith, but never discriminating in her kindnesses to Moslems, Christians or Hindus. In times of bitter warfare, her offer to terrified victims was, "What can I do to help YOU?"

Small wonder then that this woman's dream of a worldwide fellowship of women has seen fulfilment in her own lifetime. Refused admittance to a country in the immediate post-war years because of her nationality, Shanti applied herself devoutly to solving the problem of bringing the world's Christian women together on a common basis. Her solution came in the inspiration to found the Fellowship of the Least Coin, a fellowship in which participating women pray for each other - for peace in the world, in the home and in the heart. As token of her participation, each woman gives each month the least coin of the currency of her country. "The one small coin we save every month won't amount to much," she said, "but it will be a beginning." When some women of the western world tended to deride the smallness of the gift, she declared, "Your great money had divided us; let's see if your least coins can draw us together!"

The idea of praying and giving, person to person on an equal basis in both East and West, has swept like wild-fire around the world. It started that first year with women in seven countries, and gifts of "least coins" at its end totalled \$11,000. Little did they dream that within 10 years this money would amount to over half a million dollars. Not more than the least coin may be given and emphasis is on the covenant of prayer and world fellowship. Today the Fellowship of the Least Coin has contributing members and has aided many and varied projects in twenty nine countries around the world. "The Fellowship goes on and on, with its comparatively small gifts forging little links of understanding and reconciliation between one nation and another, weaving the hopeful fabric of peace."

As well as being founder of the Fellowship of the Least Coin, MRS. SOLOMON is

- a VICE-PRESIDENT of the NEW WORLD ALLIANCE OF REFORMED CHURCHES,
Chairman of the committee on women's work in the Department of Co-operation and Witness,
Co-ordinator of all Women's Work in the World Alliance of Reformed Churches;
- a MEMBER OF THE EAST ASIA CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE WORKING COMMITTEE,
- a MEMBER OF THE RESOURCEMENT CONFERENCE OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE of the EAST ASIA
CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE, and
- a CONSULTANT to the LIFE AND ACTION UNIT OF THE E.A.C.C.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE ASIAN CHURCH WOMEN'S CONFERENCE which carries responsibility on behalf of Christian women of six continents for interpretation of the Fellowship of the Least Coin.

Until recently, SHANTI SOLOMON was Secretary for WOMEN'S WORK of the UNITED CHURCH OF NORTH INDIA. She has just returned from DJAKARTA, where she was attending the WORLD ALLIANCE MEETINGS. In June, she was in HONG KONG for a meeting of the Resourcement Conference Executive Committee, also in Seoul for the E.A.C.C. Working Committee Meetings, and on completion of her visit to AUSTRALIA, NEW GUINEA and NEW ZEALAND, will be attending special women's meetings in MALAYSIA.

During 1971, Mrs. Solomon travelled in both North and South America, firstly to the Assembly of Church Women United at Wichita, and later to Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil, Guyana and Trinidad in the joint interests of World Day of Prayer and Fellowship of the Least Coin.

AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN

QUEENSLAND UNIT

THURSDAY

28th September

1972

CHURCH WOMEN AND THEIR FRIENDS FROM NAMBOUR AND
SURROUNDING DISTRICTS ARE INVITED TO MEET AND HEAR

Mrs. Shanti Solomon

on THURSDAY, 28th SEPTEMBER, 10.00 a.m.

at NAMBOUR PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

This is a "ONCE IN A LIFETIME" opportunity to meet this
REMARKABLE CHRISTIAN WOMAN whose inspiration was
responsible for the commencement of the FELLOWSHIP OF THE
"LEAST COIN" which is now a WORLD-ENCIRCLING PRAYER
FELLOWSHIP of Christian women. MRS. SOLOMON will spend
ONLY TWO DAYS IN QUEENSLAND during her Australian visit.
She moves constantly on the INTERNATIONAL SCENE and has
a FASCINATING STORY TO TELL.

DON'T MISS THIS OPPORTUNITY!! ENCOURAGE YOUR FRIENDS
TO COME.

Morning Tea - 10.00 a.m. -- Meeting 10.30 a.m.

A U S T R A L I A N C H U R C H W O M E N
Q U E E N S L A N D U N I T

M E E T I N G O F C H U R C H W O M E N

o f

N A M B O U R A N D S U R R O U N D I N G D I S T R I C T S

O n t h e o c c a s i o n o f t h e v i s i t t o A u s t r a l i a

o f

M R S . S H A N T I S O L O M O N - I N D I A

F O U N D E R

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F E L L O W S H I P O F T H E L E A S T C O I N

T H U R S D A Y , 2 8 t h S E P T E M B E R , 1 9 7 2 - 1 0 . 3 0 a . m .

a t t h e

P R E S B Y T E R I A N C H U R C H

N A M B O U R -- Q U E E N S L A N D

OPENING DEVOTIONS -

ANTHEM: Choir.

PSALM (67).

Reader: God, be merciful to us and bless us; Look on us with kindness,
RESPONSE: That the whole world may know your will,
that all nations may know your salvation.
Reader: May all peoples praise you, God: May all peoples praise you.
RESPONSE: Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, because you judge the
people with justice and guide all nations.
Reader: The land has produced its harvest: God, our God, has blessed us.
RESPONSE: God has blessed us; May all people everywhere honour Him.
Reader: Glory be to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.
RESPONSE: As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be;
world without end. Amen.

PRAISE - PRAISE TO THE LORD, THE ALMIGHTY, THE KING OF CREATION:
O my soul, praise Him, for He is thy health and salvation:
Come, ye who hear, Brothers and sisters, draw near.
Praise Him in glad adoration.

Praise to the Lord, who o'er all things so wondrously reigneth,
Shelters thee under His wings, yea, so gently sustaineth:
Hast thou not seen All that is needful hath been
Granted in what He ordaineth?

Praise to the Lord, who doth prosper thy work and defend thee;
Surely His goodness and mercy here daily attend thee;
Ponder anew All the Almighty can do,
He who with love doth befriend thee.

Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me adore Him!
All that hath life and breath come now with praises before Him!
Let the Amen Sound from His people again:
Gladly for aye we adore Him!

PRAYER - Accept our praise and thanks, O God
- for this day with all its blessings:
for this occasion which brings us together:
for the faith, hope and love which we have through Your Son,
our Redeemer, Jesus Christ our Lord:
for the Fellowship of Prayer through which we can share our
loving concern for women of other countries:
for Shanti Solomon through whom You chose to work to bring this
"Fellowship of the Least Coin" into being:

Prayer (contd.)

In quietness we remember before You the women of the world, many of whom are members of the Fellowship and are at this very time in great need:

We remember with special concern those who live outside the knowledge of Your saving grace and are without the hope such knowledge brings.

ALL: Now, in humility, we present ourselves for blessing and forgiveness.

Fill us, we pray, with your Spirit, that we shall go out into the world about us renewed and strengthened to be your faithful witnesses in all the situations of our daily lives. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: (N.E.B.) - Acts 1:8; 1 Peter 2:9-10; 1 Peter 3:15.

"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you; and you will bear witness for me in Jerusalem, and all over Judaea and Samaria, and away to the ends of the earth."

"You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a dedicated nation, and a people claimed by God for His own, to proclaim the triumph of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvellous light. You are now the people of God, who once were not His people; outside His mercy once, you have now received His mercy."

"Be always ready with your defence whenever you are called to account for the hope that is in you, but make that defence with modesty and respect."

MEDITATION: "The Other Side of the Coin - Our Witness"

Take any picture of the world you wish. It is our world, but it is first God's world. He has not abandoned it or abdicated. He sustains it, loves it, judges and redeems it. It is His plan that His LIGHT shall penetrate to 'the ends of the earth and to every depth in human life.

God has called into being a people to witness to His light in the world. The Church as the New Israel, has inherited this task from the people of God under the Old Covenant. It is to witness not only to God's mighty acts of redemption in the past, but also to His present work in the world, and to the Kingdom yet to come. This it does in its own congregational life and in the daily life and work of its members.

Church bears witness through its very existence in worship, fellowship and service, in the personal and family life of its members, in the proclamation of the word and even in its silence.

It is through WITNESS, SERVICE, and UNITY that the LIGHT of God in the face of Jesus Christ illuminates the world. It is Christ as the risen Lord who gives power to our WITNESS. His light illumines our SERVICE and enables us to reflect His light to the world. It is He who gives us the UNITY which we must manifest. WITNESS both leads to and requires UNITY and SERVICE. (Light of the World - New Delhi Assembly, W.C.C.'61).

It is still the light of God in the face of our risen Lord that illuminates the world, and participants in the "Fellowship of the Least Coin" from many countries around the world are giving expression to all three of these God-directed means of reflecting

His light:

WITNESS by our very participation as members of the Fellowship,

SERVICE by our practical expression of concern for the needs of others in .
setting aside a coin,

UNITY by our fellowship across the barriers of race and culture, and the
divisions of denominational difference.

Thus do we become part of His plan to penetrate the darkness with His
marvellous LIGHT.

HYMN -

NOW WE COME, OUR HEAVENLY FATHER,
One in glad fraternity,
Needing still Thy guiding mercies,
Stronger faith, more fervent plea.
All Thy blessing Now confessing,
We would praise and worship Thee.

Proudly high they held His standards,
Far surpassing human creeds;
Striving for His Church united
In the things for which He pleads;
Torn no longer, But made stronger,
One Church meeting all men's needs.

Through the years Thy Spirit guided
Those who blazed the path we tread,
In the glow of faith they laboured,
By the Bread of Life were fed;
While their yearning
Hearts were learning
More of Christ, their living Head.

Lift we, then, their torch with gladness,
Pledging all to this high aim -
Thy lost world reclaimed from darkness,
Yielded to Thy sovereign claim;
Visions firing,
Hearts inspiring,
March we onward in Thy name!

PRAYER: (From "All Things New", Uppsala Assembly W.C.C. '68)

Leader: O God, we thank you for calling us, because our lives have received
meaning from your call, and because you have given us a place to serve in
your plan for the world.

ALL: We confess that we have not seen or understood what you are doing in the
world, that we have not been eager to work with You.

Leader: As once you made yourself known to Moses and his people in the desert,
let your voice be heard with new power, O God, in the deserts of
human hearts.

ALL: Make us one in your truth. Increase our love, not only for other
Christians but for all our neighbours. Help us as we seek for new
social and international structures, using the insight and the courage
that You have given us through the Good News about Jesus Christ, in
whose name we pray this prayer .. "Our Father which art in Heaven"

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INTRODUCTION and ADDRESS -

MRS. SHANTI SOLOMON

Conclusion:

A MIRACLE OF PHENOMENAL GROWTH

VISIT OF MRS. SHANTI SOLOMON

Mrs. Shanti Solomon, internationally known as the founder of the Fellowship of the Least Coin, has long been active in ecumenical movements. She is a member and has been on the staff of the United Church of India and has been a member of the International Committee of the Women's World Day of Prayer. She is a Vice-chairman of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches.

In her capacity as Executive secretary of the Asian Church Women's Conference, Mrs. Solomon commenced, at the beginning of September, a tour of Pacific countries to report on and promote interest in the Fellowship of the Least Coin — Australia, New Guinea, New Zealand, Singapore and Malaysia have been or are to be visited. At Kuala Lumpur, at the time of the commencement of our State Conference, she will be one of the leaders at a large gathering of Christian women for several days' Bible study, prayer and evangelical training.

From September 27 to 30 she was in Queensland. It had been hoped that she would be able to visit Toowoomba, Rockhampton, Townsville and other provincial towns but her tight schedule only permitted a meeting in Nambour and one in Brisbane.

Prior to the meeting at Nambour, at morning tea, the Maroochy Shire Chairman officially welcomed her to the town and shire and presented her with a large basket of tropical fruits — products of the district. The Presbyterian Church was filled with women of all denominations from Nambour and surrounding areas. The Methodist Ladies Choir led the singing.

The coins given with prayer.

Mrs. Solomon spoke, as she did the next day at the Brisbane meeting, of the beginnings of the Fellowship in 1958 and of the miracle of its phenomenal growth during the succeeding years. The emphasis is always on prayer and the coins given when prayer is offered are just tokens; these token gifts, coming now from women in over 60 countries, when all gathered together amount to hundreds of thousands of dollars every year.

The monies are held by the World Council in Geneva and are disbursed at the discretion of the executive members of the Asian Church Women's Conference. This Conference came into being as a result of the establishment of the fellowship and is comprised of women from all the churches affiliated with the East Asian Christian Conference.

Vivid stories were told by Mrs. Solomon of the reconciling effects of

prayer offered by members of the fellowship and of the humanitarian projects assisted financially in many countries, year by year. Not all these projects are directly connected with the Churches, but all projects helped are chosen from requests made by responsible bodies within the countries where the fellowship is established. Monies have come to Australia from time to time to assist work amongst the aborigines and amongst migrants.

The Brisbane meeting was well attended and, as in Nambour, was presided over by the president of the Queensland Unit of Australian Church women, Mrs. B. Clarke. Two Indonesian students from the Kenmore Bible College brought a gospel message in song and Mrs. Solomon again endeared herself to her hearers by her evident Christian commitment and her earnest plea for Christian to unite in prayer for peace and progress throughout the world.

Many of our Methodist guild members belong to the Fellowship of the Least Coin and they will be sending their years' contributions to the annual Federation rally at the Albert Street Church on Monday, October 16. The Methodist contribution will then be presented at the World Community Day service which is to be held by Australian Church Women at the



Albert Street Church on October 31, when the theme of the service will be The Human Environment and the speaker will be the Rev. Rex Smith.

To MRS. SHANTI SOLOMON -

In a letter dated 12th September, Mrs. Sharp of Port Moresby, set out the following plans for your visit to Papua New Guinea --

HOSTESS (Port Moresby): Mrs. Sharp

Saturday,
30th September

Port Moresby and environs.

Sunday,
1st October

Morning Service at the United Church, Porebada -
MRS. SOLOMON will be asked to address the
congregation.

Monday,
2nd October

Meeting with women of Port Moresby where Mrs. Solomon
will be invited to speak (different group of women).
(THEY WOULD LIKE TO HEAR ABOUT THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE
LEAST COIN AND MRS. SOLOMON'S WORK IN CONNECTION WITH
IT.) Other churches will be invited to this meeting.

Tuesday,
3rd October

LAE - Speak to women.
RABAUL

Wednesday,
4th October

Meet and speak to women at Rabaul.

Thursday,
5th October

Pt. Moresby and visit to SAROA
HOSTESS overnight, Mrs. Ida Tuatagaloa, a Samoan
Minister's wife.
Saroa is 35 miles east of Pt. Moresby, where Mrs. Solomon
will meet and speak to a different group of women.

Friday
6th October

Return to Brisbane to connect with plane to Auckland