



WOMEN AT WORK

JULY, 1977

Prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts,
if I will not open you the windows of heaven,
and pour you out a blessing, that there shall
not be room enough to receive it.

Malachi 3.10

In this spirit, believing that this kind of "blessing" is still available to us, we approach the National Committee timed for the end of this month. We have come to the end of another chapter. We would remind you of the message of our president Dorothy Wacker, at the beginning of the chapter - in the first edition of Women At Work from Perth. Here it is :-

"Now we begin to write our next chapter - a chapter that will end in Perth in 1977. I invite you to make it an A.C.W. chapter that stands for AUSTRALIANS who give evidence of responsible citizenship in a global context; for CHURCH action, demonstrating the freedom and the unity that is in Christ; for WOMEN who are a sign of life as they say "Yes" to being the PEOPLE of God, and claim the promise for others."

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In this the last Women At Work from Perth, we are making space available for comments and greetings from some members of the Working Committee. You will have been conscious of our growing together over the past two years, even as we have been. Sometimes it might seem to you that we have become a mutual admiration society. Rather, it is a matter of mutual appreciation. As we have sat around the table and each has made her contribution, we have appreciated more and more our interdependence and the necessity and glory of the "diversities of gifts" of which Paul speaks in the first letter to the Corinthians. Because we have come from different backgrounds and church traditions the danger of becoming a closed group secure in its comfortable intimacy has not been so much with us. Rather we have seen ourselves as an open fellowship-fellow travellers taking "one more step along the way" together, meeting and travelling with so many others from so many different places. For individually and collectively we have reached fellow christians in many parts of Australia and the world. We are thankful most of all for the realisation that we are indeed one in Christ. Greetings and welcome to the new Working Committee, and may the Lord be with you and with all whom you serve as he has indeed been with us.

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"A message from a very "ordinary" woman to all the ordinary women who read this paper. If you are asked to do a job which you are sure is beyond your ability, don't just say "No!" God does provide in so many ways. He didn't turn me into a "Super Secretary" overnight. He surrounded me with "people", some from whom I learnt a lot and others whose help has enabled the job to be done - hopefully, as He would wish. It has been an experience I would not have missed. And so I say "Shalom" to you all.

Vera Dean

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JESUS CHRIST IN ASIAN SUFFERING AND HOPE

From the news and information sheet of the A.C.C. we print some extracts from the report of the Sixth Assembly of the Christian Conference of Asia. The Assembly held in the Town Hall of Georgetown, Penang, from May 31 to June 8, focussed on the theme Jesus Christ in Asian Suffering and Hope.

HUMAN RIGHTS Highlight of the Assembly was a series of Testimonies from individuals involved in action on Evangelism, Human Rights, Struggles for Justice and Women's Rights. Indonesian lawyer, Mr. Yap Thiam Hien described his "six short days but six long and sleepless nights in a 3 x 2 metre cell" with three others as a political prisoner in Java. Mr. Yap described how this experience was the beginning of an open crusade for the release of all political prisoners whose long detention without trial was punishment enough.

Concluding his testimony, Mr. Yap declared it was a "fallacy that international concern for political prisoners of a country or state is an infringement of the sovereign rights of that country or state."

A similar testimony came from South Korean, the Rev. Kim Kwan Suk who was imprisoned for six months by the Korean Government for his bold championing of the cause of human rights.

Stating that it was neither by deliberate design nor the use of valiant courage that he got himself involved in human rights struggles in Korea, Mr. Kim testified :

"I feel that I was pushed into them, unprepared and troubled though I was. I believe that the church as the people of God should identify itself with the suffering of the people."

The third testimony on human rights came from Australian Aborigine, Val Bryant who had been imprisoned by a different kind of captor - alcohol. Val recounted her personal battle for release from drinking and her subsequent struggle to establish the first hostel for Aboriginal alcoholics, Bennelong's Haven, in Sydney. "My people are regaining their spirituality and their

sobriety," she declared. "They do not seek the things of this world. They seek God, pride, dignity and self respect."

Special guest lecturer, Dr. Philip Potter, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, reminded the Assembly that "to be human is to suffer and to be human is also to hope. For hope is that inner drive to live and grow, that conviction that the affirmative not-yet is possible."

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THE WORKING COMMITTEE could be a title that would daunt the most industrious or courageous. However, the experience of the past two years with the A.C.W. has given me a sincere appreciation and admiration for the West Australian women comprising the team. They have certainly measured up to every implication of the title, and have maintained a spirit of true Christian fellowship and happy industry. I would express my appreciation for the opportunity to share with each member in the privilege of service to the 1977 biennial Committee Meeting, and pray that God will richly bless our gathering together in Perth in the last week of July.

Isabel Macintyre.

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Two of the Working Committee members were in Sydney for the Uniting Church celebrations. They share some of the wonder of the experience. Dorothy Craig writes :

On June 22 I was privileged to attend the Inaugural Assembly and Service of Celebrations of the Uniting Church held in Sydney. For me this was a memorable experience, as it was the culmination of years of prayer and planning to this end. The moment of inauguration was marked with great thankfulness to God for bringing His people to this point, as was indicated by the spontaneity of the response in the singing of the Doxology. The Thanksgiving prayer led by Dr.A.H.Wood was inspirational and opened the Assembly on a note of triumph and deep gratitude. It was a tremendous experience in every way.

And from Vera Wilson we have :

Last week I had the privilege of being a delegate to the Presbyterian Women's Assembly Federal Meeting in Sydney. During my time away I was able to contact the F.L.C. conveners from Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland. It was an experience to be forever remembered, to be present at the Inaugural Assembly of the Uniting Church and the Service of Celebration in the Sydney Town Hall.

Vera concludes

I give thanks to God for the many enriching experiences through which he has led me during my association with the Working Committee.

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To you who read Women at Work, the rewards which come from being a member of the A.C.W. Working Committee will be obvious - the fellowship and friendship which are part of it, and the happiness that comes from believing that one is serving God. As a Treasurer there are perhaps "bonuses", in that special opportunities arise to communicate that Christians care, and that they do something about it. Then, as my consciousness became focussed on both local and world scene, there was, for me, a deeper, humbler sense of being part of a whole Christian brotherhood.

Jean Banyard

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WINIFRED KIEK SCHOLARSHIP: We look forward to selecting our new scholarship holder at the N.C.M. We feel that we know them so well, those with whose interests we have been concerned in these two years. Jean Vincent tells a little about how the convener works.

Being Convener of the Winifred Kiek Scholarship Committee has had its ups and downs. Overseas correspondents do not always meet necessary deadlines. But the ups have exceeded the downs, and it has been a challenge to achieve and maintain the relationships by mail with Christian young women who share our ideals and aspirations, even though their ways of life differ considerably from ours. I feel the experience has enriched my life and expanded my horizons. Thank you, A.C.W., for giving me this opportunity to serve our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ.

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Janet Watts became one of the Working Committee in answer to an urgent call for help

Early in 1976, after a change in circumstances, I had been seeking God's guidance about how I should use some of my free time. When Norma asked me to take her place as Editor for Women at Work while she was overseas for four months, I gladly said yes. This proved very rewarding for me and it was a great joy when the Committee asked me to stay on as co-opt member. It has been a privilege to sit together at the Committee table and see the strong faith and witness of each member. Perth is an isolated city but having the A.C.W. Working Committee operating here

for two years has brought us closer to the other state units.

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FELLOWSHIP DAY While we celebrate Fellowship Day in Perth, through the representation of A.C.W. from other states we shall draw all Australian Church Women together in this act or worship. Marjorie Scurlock, our Special Days Convener writes

Serving for two years on the Working Committee has been a rewarding experience and has given understanding of all that is accomplished by A.C.W., both in Australia and in the Third World countries. It has been a joy to share with others who are seeking to follow Christ's teachings, and more than ever it gives an awareness that "You can force your way through any trouble if you use the lever of prayer. Only work away with the mighty implement of prayer and nothing can stand against it."

Our newest member, Grace Reid, offered her services as a minute secretary to help Vera through this approach to N.C.M. She shares with us this song

We thank you for those others Whom we have never known,
With those whose courage and devotion the Christian church
has grown;
Who lived in different ages And thought in different ways
But their Lord is the same as our Lord To whom be all the
praise.

We thank you for the present In which we know your care
For the life we now are given In which your work we share;
For the witness and the service Of your people here these
days,
For the saints with whom we worship, We offer, Lord, our
praise.

We thank you for the future To which your Spirit leads,
That in every moment of it He will satisfy our needs;
Your hand can never fail us, Through all Eternity,
So may we and all your people Fulfil our destiny.

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AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN - - - NATIONAL COMMITTEE MEETING

JULY 26 - 29 1977

We know that you cannot all be with us from 26th to 29th July, but we want you to be aware of where we are and what we are doing. For this reason we print this supplement to Women at Work.

Our days will begin at 7.30 with morning prayers, and end with evening prayers. Perhaps, in spite of the differences in time and place, you could be with us particularly then, even as you go about your daily tasks, or in your times of silence and thinking.

THE RAILTON will be the home of delegates for the duration of the National Committee Meeting. It is conveniently situated close to the centre of the city, yet sufficiently apart and sufficiently self contained to be a home for three or four days. Incidentally, The Railton belongs to the Salvation Army, and you know what a reputation it has for caring.

THE CONFERENCE ROOM. Here the 'family' will meet each morning for Bible Study. This should produce the kind of thinking needed for discussions of policy and the making of important decisions. Here, too, we will 'discover' people, who for some, have been only names - and this in itself could be an adventure.

We hope that as we meet here on Tuesday afternoon, on Wednesday, and on Thursday and Friday mornings, we will be able to face problems squarely and together, to think clearly and honestly, to listen patiently and sympathetically, to keep our own words few and to the point - in short, we hope to see walls disappear.

SLEEPING is important if we are to be alert and ready to face the challenges of the day. To this end, The Railton offers to conference delegates comfortable and well equipped rooms - the rest is up to you.

THE DINING ROOM is pleasant and we may look forward to breaking bread in fellowship and sharing at the table food for body, mind and soul.

Quite close to The Railton, almost adjoining, is the SALVATION ARMY FORTRESS; and not far away the BURT MEMORIAL HALL, belonging to the Anglican Cathedral complex of buildings. Into these two halls, we welcome other interested people to share three public meetings with us:-

1. Tuesday, 11 a.m. in the FORTRESS, the FELLOWSHIP DAY SERVICE becomes our opening celebration.
2. Tuesday 7.30 p.m., also in the FORTRESS, we learn to LOOK THROUGH THE WALLS AND FIND OUR NEIGHBOUR.
3. Thursday, 7.30 a.m., in the BURT MEMORIAL HALL we JUMP OVER THE WALLS AND RENEW THE EARTH.

Now that you have found your way around the conference, there are four things which YOU MUST NOT MISS.

The ART EXHIBITION
The BOOK STALL
DREAM-TIME

in the Burt Memorial Hall;
which will be very much in evidence;
the film from Australian Council of Churches,
teaching about Aboriginal Culture in the
Kimberleys;
on Thursday afternoon - to show as much as
possible of our beautiful city and its suburbs.

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THE PEOPLE. You will meet MAISIE MCKENZIE, our guest speaker for the Fellowship Day service. We quote from the cover of Maisie's book, MISSION TO ARNHAM LAND:

Mrs McKenzie is now president of the Northern Territory Unit of Australian Church Women. In the past four years she has had several visits to Asia to forge closer contacts between Northern Territory and Asian Church women, and in 1974 she took part in the Australian delegation to the Asian Church Women's Conference in Bangkok.

Her great love and concern for the Australian Aborigines has sprung from her close contact with them in the West Australian Kimberley region, in Central Australia, and in Arnhem Land. She deals with some of the problems now faced by these people in her first book, THE ROAD TO MOWANJUM (1969). "I am more and more convinced", she says, "of the riches they could pass on to white Australians if only we were more willing to receive."

With such a background we feel sure that this will be a very good introduction to the theme of our whole conference - BREAK DOWN THE WALLS.

You will also meet Elizabeth Appleby, Robin Schaeffer and Sam McCollum, the leaders of the Bible Studies. Elizabeth is very refreshing as a speaker. She shared with our president, Dorothy Wacker - and others - in the Nairobi Experience. Robin Caudwell became Robin Schaeffer when she married in December 1976. A young Churches of Christ minister, she is an attractive speaker with a thoughtful presentation. Sam McCollum is a minister in the Uniting Church - dynamic, challenging and with a delightful sense of humour.

At each of the evening meetings we have arranged for four short addresses, and the speakers involved are:

TUESDAY

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| Adele Thomas | - who comes from "Women in Crisis" |
| Heather Jenkins | - represents the young people |
| Robert Dunn | - who claims he is disenchanted with the Church |
| An Aboriginal Woman | - representing her own people |

THURSDAY

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| Archbishop Sambell | - Religions that divide |
| Sandra Penrose | - Alternative Life-Styles - different political systems |
| Dr Peter Newman | - Renew the Earth |
| Revd Keith Dowding | - Alternative Australia |

We would like to introduce you to many more people, but we haven't the space. You will, of course, meet Dorothy Wacker, and Vera Dean, President and Secretary of the present Working Committee, and several members of the new Working Committee from New South Wales.

Please be with us when you can. We need your support: and be sure that we will be thinking of all church women throughout Australia as we attempt to Break Down Many Walls.