

TRINITY AVENUE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA

WOMEN OF THE CHURCH

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

1973 - 1974

"He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in everything he might be pre-eminent."

Colossians 1:17-18 (RSV)

These words have been my "year verses" as president of Trinity Avenue Presbyterian Women of the Church in 1973-74. At the joint council meeting in August 1973, as I began my year with WOC, we spoke of what it means for Christ to have the pre-eminence in terms of the church's life. WOC is not just another club. It is not some kind of social service work with no higher aim than "soup, soap, and sunshine." We may feed the hungry and clothe the needy, we may have a good time together, but WOC's purpose does not end there. It exists only because of Jesus Christ and what he did for all of us.

At the joint council meeting a year later, in August 1974 (and my last one as president), we returned to this theme of Christ's preeminence. But this time the focus was not upon the organization's goals, but upon those of each of us as individuals. If Christ's interests are to be first, what sort of persons does he want us to be? If we have an ounce of gratitude the least we can do, in Paul's words, is to give Jesus Christ the preeminence--the first place--in all that we do. In the round of telephone calls and meetings that make up the work of WOC this persistent theme has been my underlying purpose. I hope that it has shown through.

GENERAL MEETINGS

Eight general meetings were planned. The first one, in October, was one of the high points of the year. The Rev. David Burr, pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Winston-Salem, was invited to give an over view of the year's Bible study on the book of Galatians. It was an occasion for inter-church cooperation. TAP WOC invited members of WOC's from all Presbyterian churches in Durham to join with them for this program. The attendance was large. The reception given Dr. Burr's message was enthusiastic. The following month, the chairman of our Leadership and Resources committee, at the invitation of First Presbyterian WOC, attended their general meeting and brought back to us a report.

Other general meeting programs included: November, Mrs. Jean Jansen, head of Durham Volunteer Services Bureau, planned by the Chairman of the Christian Community Action committee; January, Dr. William C. Bennett, planned by the chairman of Personal Faith and Family Life committee; February, family night supper with the Rev. Clarence Durham, Presbyterian missionary working with the Wilson Leprosarium in Korea, planned by the chairman of Ecumenical Mission and Relations committee; March, Mr. David Fleming, director of the Durham Contact Teleministry, planned by the chairman of Leadership and Resources committee; April, family night supper with Mrs. William H. Boone (Becky) presenting her own monologue interpretations of three women of the Bible; May, annual birthday luncheon with the Rev. David Hamilton, pastor of Northside Presbyterian Church, Burlington, who spoke concerning his mission work in Mexico; June, Mr. James McIntyre, director of Durham Allied Arts, planned by the chairman of the Christian Community Action committee. The programs in October, April, and May were planned by the First Vice President.

CIRCLE ACTIVITY

The circles have two major purposes: Bible study and the fostering of friendship among women of the church. Our circles have fulfilled these aims in many ways. Using the denominationally prepared workbook, each of the eight active groups has studied the book of Galatians month by month throughout the year under the leadership of a Bible moderator. In addition, they have served each other, the church, and the community in many ways. Each of the six members of the Home Circle, composed of women confined to their homes, was assigned to a circle. The members of that circle remembered the shut-in with cards, flowers, visits, and other attentions throughout the year.

Each circle furnished refreshments for one general meeting during the year. In the case of evening circles, they each were responsible for preparing the tables and rooms for one of the supper meetings. Circle 7 planned and prepared food and decorations for the May luncheon. Cookies were baked and contributed by each circle for the church's Christmas reception for new members. A member of WOC served as general chairman of this function, a large assignment. Food was contributed regularly to the church food closet. Volunteers from each circle served the fellowship dinners prepared for Every Member, Canvass workers. Dressing Christmas dolls for the Salvation Army, baking monthly birthday cakes for the Goodwill Industries workers, furnishing items requested by the Durham Nursery School and other agencies, completely refurbishing one cabin at Camp New Hope, and many other deeds of helpfulness were among the projects undertaken by the circles during the year.

TAP WOC was asked to be hostess for the January meeting of Orange Presbyterial Council. Luncheon for the group, about 65 persons, was planned and served by Mrs. Charles Knott (Ruth) and her committee.

The various officers of WOC have served on the church committees to which they were assigned ex officio. Representatives of WOC attended the District Four meeting held last fall in Durham and the Orange Presbyterial meeting in Burlington last spring. The president elect and several others attended the Women's Conference at Montreat in June.

FINANCES

It seemed advisable at this time to overhaul the form of the budget which appeared to have grown unresponsive to the need for information which this document should provide. The finance committee met with Mrs. Florence Bivins, church secretary, and Mr. Mayton Betts, church treasurer, for information and suggestions. The form of the WOC budget was subsequently reorganized for two purposes: to make it more clear, and to bring its form into agreement with the form used in the church budget. The various benevolent causes remain substantially unchanged. This budget was approved by the joint council meeting in August, and will be voted on at the annual meeting in September. Last year the budget goal was raised to \$2,500.00 in the hope of challenging our women to greater giving. This goal was not realized and the 1974-75 budget is set at \$2,200. The new council will start their year with a balance of some \$200.00 on hand.

DIRECTORY

Although circle membership is changed each year in accordance with WOC custom for the purpose of enabling all members to widen their circle of friends, TAP WOC seems not to have ever had a generally available directory of members. A start was made toward such a publication this year with the mimeographing and distribution of a directory giving the names of all officers, circle chairmen, Bible moderators, and the membership rolls of each circle. Colorful construction paper covers were

designed and made. This major undertaking and the budget revision we count as the chief contributions of the 1973-74 council to our WOC organization.

PUBLICATION

Under the editorship of Miss Marion Warren, nine issues of TAP, our WOC newspaper, were produced. In response to opinions expressed in a poll of our church members, TAP was limited to four pages (two sheets) devoted almost entirely to news items.

LIFE MEMBERSHIP

One life membership was awarded this year. It was presented to Maelee Page Barringer (Mrs. Russell N., Sr.)

COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The chairman of Leadership and Resources committee arranged to have a paperback copy of the Psalms in Today's English Version mailed to each TAP member who is a student out of town. The books were obtained from the American Bible Society. This practice of sending some Scripture portion to out of town students each year is recommended for continuation.

A member of TAP WOC who attended a meeting of Durham Church Women United brought back a favorable report. This year it was decided that our WOC would not join this body. It is recommended that this decision should be reconsidered from time to time as it becomes more apparent what direction the program of Church Women United is taking.

The need for a church hostess to oversee housekeeping details was brought up at least twice in council meetings. So far no action has been taken upon this position.

It is recommended that the position of assistant Sanctuary Guild Chairman with these designated duties be created. A member of WOC could be invited by council to assume this office.

Circle preference sheets were distributed to circle chairmen in the spring. Each circle member was given the opportunity to indicate the day and time she preferred for her circle assignment. These were most helpful to the committee in making assignments. In response to inquiries, opportunity was provided for women to indicate their interest in a Monday morning circle at the church with a sitter service, or in a foreign missions emphasis circle. There was no interest in either. It appears that it is the preference of the majority of WOC circle members at TAP to keep the traditional Bible study and fellowship format with the meetings in members' homes and service performed on a "when need arises" basis.

No immediate solution to the problem of the perfect way to make circle assignments has yet appeared. It may prove helpful to ask that the chairman of the Leadership and Resources committee and the third vice-president both sit with the circle assignment committee inasmuch as the former has the responsibility of obtaining circle chairmen and the latter keeps the complete current membership file with notations upon members' availability for and interest in circle work.

In conclusion, I should like to note that the loving helpfulness and wholehearted participation of members of WOC has been splendid. Whether in rendering personal service to each other in times of trouble or bereavement or in working together on a church-wide project, their spirit of cooperation has been thorough. The church office staff has made possible the parts of our work which have involved clerical chores. Far beyond this, they have stood ready and were so well able to give background information and good advice.

It has been my privilege to serve in this position for this year. My sincere thanks to all of those who have served with me.

Respectfully submitted,

Martha E. Sparks, President
(Mrs. Bertel M. Sparks)

Spetember 8, 1974