

Minutes of an informal meeting

of the

WOMEN'S ECUMENICAL LIAISON GROUP.

Geneva, 11th June, 1969

1. Members present:

Miss Pilar BELLOSILLO

Dr. Marga BUEHRIG

Miss M. de Lourdes PINTASILGO

Ex officio:

Miss Brigalia BAM

Dr. Madeleine BAROT

Apologies from:

Mrs. Marianne DIRKS

Mrs. L. NOLD

Miss Rosemary GOLDIE

Deaconess E. SOUTTAR

Miss Maria MEERSMAN

Miss M. VENDRIK

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2. The meeting started with a short prayer (Prayer to the Holy Spirit by Pope John XXIII, used in the order of worship at the Ecumenical Centre, Geneva, on the occasion of the visit of Pope Paul VI on 10th June).

3. Brief report by Miss Bam

Miss Bam shared with the group some of the reactions she had received from various members of the group after the Rome meeting in December 1968. Generally speaking, most members who attended the Rome meeting had felt disconcerted because the purpose of the liaison group did not seem to be clearly defined.

Miss Bam mentioned that since Rome she had met most of the members of the committee and discussed a number of points with them. She also stated that she had attended the meeting of the World YWCA Executive Committee in May, 1969, at which Mrs. A. Athanassiou had presented a most favourable report on the Women's Ecumenical Liaison Group, and the YWCA Executive Committee had given the assurance of their full support and cooperation. Miss Bam had an opportunity, when visiting the Netherlands in February, of meeting the Women's Ecumenical Council, in which Miss Maria Vendrik was invited to participate. There was a very positive attitude in the council towards the possibility of working with the Roman Catholics, since the latter had become members of the Netherlands Church Council.

In Germany, Frau Nold and Fraulein Gudrun Diestel (Chairman of the World Day of Prayer International Committee) are both very active in the field of RC/WCC relations and give this group their warm support.

support  
of women  
in the  
"system"

### Future Meetings

- (a) *J Alberta* The Lutheran World Federation International Women's Consultation had also invited two Roman Catholic observers to participate in their meeting to be held in Sweden at the end of June.
- (b) In August 1969, at Abidjan, Ivory Coast, a Women's Consultation will be held just before the All-Africa Conference of Churches' Assembly. Two Roman Catholic delegates, who are to be chosen, have been invited to attend this meeting.
- (c) The Asian Church Women's Conference Assembly will be held in Djakarta, Indonesia, in September 1970, and it is anticipated that they will invite Roman Catholic participants. Miss Bam has already communicated with the ACWC Chairman on this.
- (d) Dr. Margaret Shannon had sent Miss Bam a long calendar list of all important women's meetings and other events of interest in the USA during 1969/70.

#### 4. Plans for December meeting of the Committee

The meeting will be held at Cartigny, near Geneva, from Monday, 8th December, starting at 4 p.m., to Thursday, 11th December in the evening, participants leaving on Friday morning.

#### 5. People to be co-opted for the December meeting

Miss Rosemary Goldie, in a letter addressed to Miss Bam, had made the suggestion of co-opting Mrs. Eugene McCarthy, of USA, for the next meeting of the group. There were a few reactions from the Roman Catholic members, who decided that they would discuss the matter with Miss Goldie at the first opportunity.

The majority of the members present were negative to the co-opting of anyone to the group on a permanent basis. Nevertheless, the principle of co-opting people to take part in the studies and meetings of the group was still upheld by all the members present. Miss Bam stressed the importance of co-opting other members, because the present committee is so overwhelmingly European in composition and it is necessary to have representation from the other continents.

#### 6. Review of the functions of the RC/WCC Women's Ecumenical Liaison Group

Miss Bam reported to the meeting what she had heard from various members since the Rome meeting. Some had felt frustrated by the lack of clarity in the actual aim and purpose of the committee as a whole; secondly, the relationship between the old 'nucleus' group and the enlarged group was still unclear; thirdly, there was uncertainty in the minds of the Roman Catholic members about the relationship between the Liaison Group and the Secretariat for Unity on the one hand, and the Council on the Laity on the other.

After a lengthy discussion, it was agreed that the Roman Catholic members would discuss the question with Miss Rosemary Goldie in order to try and clear these relationships before the December meeting.

Finally, the principle was duly accepted that in the future the activities of the 'nucleus' group would be fully incorporated with those of the enlarged group.

7. Draft letter for circulation to the women's organisations

Most of the members of the group had sent in their reactions, comments and suggestions to the first draft letter, and note of these was taken in order to incorporate them into the new draft. There was a general discussion on the various points raised. Dr. M. Buehrig was asked if she would be willing to write the final draft and she accepted to do this. The letter will be sent to all the Taizé participants and to the heads of the women's organisations on the national and international levels.

8. Tentative agenda for the meeting next December

- I. A summary and analysis of the replies to the circular letter which was addressed to the Taizé participants in November 1968. This will be presented to the group with recommendations for follow-up. Miss Pilar Bellosillo on the Roman Catholic side and Miss Brigalia Bam on the WCC side accepted this assignment.
- II. The group unanimously agreed that Ecumenical education and ecumenical contacts were one of the priorities for the committee's programme. A decision should be made on the strategy and methods to be adopted for this purpose.
- III. Dr. Lukas Vischer (WCC Commission on Faith and Order) to be asked to inform the group on "The Present Situation of the Ecumenical Movement".
- IV. The group agreed that they would ask Mrs. L. Nold to make a presentation on "The Issues of Today with regard to Women's Concerns around the World", with special reference to the changing roles of women in Church and society.
- V. Practical issues
  - a. The World Day of Prayer
  - b. Case-studies and interesting projects that are going on in different parts of the world
  - c. Dialogue with Other Religions
  - d. Dissemination and sharing of news from the different parts of the world

VI. Study

A suggestion had been made by Miss R. Goldie that the group adopt as its theme for study "Conscientious Living in a World of Change"; the WCC Division of Ecumenical Action has decided to have this theme as a major study. Some members of the Laity Council have already indicated their interest in co-operating with the WCC in this. The members of the group were quite positive to this suggestion. There will be more discussion on this in the December meeting.

9. Witness and Mission in the World

Miss Pilar Bellosillo raised the question of the witness of Christians in the world and made special reference to dialogue with non-Christians. There was a long discussion on the idea of witness and mission in to-day's world. The group made a suggestion that there be a panel of three speakers at the December meeting (Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant) to speak to this theme. This would be an open meeting, so that more people could be involved.

10. Dates of next (informal) meeting

A proposal was made that another informal, preparatory meeting should be held before the general meeting in December. The group felt very strongly that more preparatory work should be done by most members. It was therefore decided to have a meeting in Rome after the meeting of the Division of Ecumenical Action with the Laity Council, and the dates suggested were: Sunday, 12th October, all afternoon, and Monday 13th October.

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