

ASCM ACROSS THE GENERATIONS



LANDMARKS

1888: Student Volunteer Movement founded by John Mott: After 1996 became a committee of ASCU. Over its period of existence, sent 43 **missionaries or volunteers**, mostly to India. High death rate from Cholera and Scepticsemia.

August 1895: Foundation of World Student Christian Federation in Vadstina, Sweden by John Mott, who was appointed first General Secretary.

June 1896: Foundation of the Australian Student Christian Union at Ormond College, MU. Branches were established at private schools and universities in Melbourne. Male and female branches were segregated.

1897: Christian Unions were established in Adelaide, at the University of Adelaide and protestant (mainly girls') schools.

April 1897: Fred Pratt appointed first Travelling Secretary.

1898: Sydney University Student Christian Unions were set up – **not segregated**.

June 1897: W H Sallman (an ex- Canadian) took over as Travelling Secretary – until June 1901.

1902: Ernst Withycombe was appointed Travelling Secretary – until 1903, and again 1904-1908.

1903: Harry Holmes was appointed Travelling Secretary – until 1904.

1905: Englishwoman Ruth Rouse appointed General Secretary of WSCF: highly influential especially with the mainly female membership of ASCU.

1906: Stanley Addison appointed General Secretary of ASCU – until 1920.

1910: World Student Missionary Conference in Edinburgh: start of the **modern ecumenical movement**.

1910: Daylesford Conference appointed a full-time Missionary Secretary

1910: Visit from William Temple: introduction of **social gospel movement**. Workers' Educational Association branches were formed in Sydney and Melbourne linked to ASCU.

1910: Head office of ASCU moved to Melbourne.

1913: QSCU founded by Freda Bage.

1913: Regional structure was set up: staff of 8 set up -General Secretary, Assistant General Secretary, 4 Travelling Secretaries (2 full time and 2 part time), P/T Secretary for Schools, Office Secretary, Literature Secretary. ASCM Press set up providing materials for school and university branches. Funding came from undergraduates, churches, business and graduates.

1914: WASCU founded by Stanley Addison and Percy Wisewould.

1914 – 18; WWI. Office staff and leadership decimated by enlistment (reduced to 4).

1915: Margaret Holmes joined part time staff at HO and held it together until 1922

1918: John Mckellar Stuart appointed chairman of ASCU.

1920: Aims and Basis changed to reflect life rather than creed.

1922: C F Andrews led ASCU to oppose the White Australian Policy.

1922: SVU contract changed from long term to short term commitment.

1923: Paramatta Conference saw division over softening of aims and objectives to allow more open memberships. National membership was 1,400. Many wanted almost total emphasis **on Bible study replaced by Bible study plus ethics, practical Christianity and the teachings of the human Jesus.**

1923: David K Picken made chair of ASCU to 1930. Office of General Secretary abolished. SCM Press published annual study guides.

1924: Margaret Holmes was appointed National Secretary of ASCU to 1945

1930: Visit of Dr Howard Guinness from Cambridge Inter Varsity Fellowship led to **split between Fundamentalists and Modernists**, led to the former leaving ASCU as the Evangelical Union

1930: ASCU renamed ASCM: increasing influence fellowship.

1930: Opening of Canberra University College (off-shoot of Melbourne Uni) start of ASCU activity.

1931 – 1939: WSCF increasingly open to **dialog between Christianity and Communism**. Movement in Australia less so.

1931: Rosalie McCutchen, from Adelaide, appointed travelling secretary: to 1934.

1934: ASCU was officially changed to the ASCM.

1935: Pacifism, led by Ernest Burgmann became a leading issue up to 1939. Move for a firm and practical Kingdom of God. **Influence of Quakers.**

1936: ASCM involved in the Peace Council

1937: Chinese SCM leader T Z Koo visited and reported Japanese atrocities in China (Sack of Nanking). Also some **influence from the Spanish Civil War**: stresses between Catholic Newman Society (B A Santamaria) and ASCM.

1938 – 1940: ASCM debated 'Just War' issues. Passionate debates involving other student organisations.

1938: From now on there were more members in Senior Branches than in student branches.

1941: Corio National Conference underlined Christianity could not escape involvement in social, economic and political issues. Last National Conference before 1946.

1945: David Garnsey elected General Secretary – until 1948: first ordained officer.

1946: Mittagong conference, first after WWII. Movement to build a new fair society after the war: issues **poverty, injustice and refugees.**

1947: In Perth, SCMer Bob Hawke helped found UWA Labour Club.

1948: With Cold War brewing, CIB took interest in ASCM due to its **anti-racism, refugee advocacy and 1930s links to Communism**. Files kept on Camilla Wedgwood, Margaret Holmes and Frank Coaldrake.

1949: Rosalie McCutcheon Resident Secretary, NSW: until 1965.

1949: Frank Engel elected General Secretary – until 1958

1950: ASCM members joined left-wing Australian Peace Club, but withdrew in 1953.

1950: Corio Conference 'Truth and Life' attendance 500, a record never exceeded.

1950: From 1950, most ACC secretaries came from ASCM

1954: ASCM increasingly turned away from involvement in politics, and turned to theological enquiry – Bart, Chardin, Birch, Bonhoeffer, etc.: articles in the 'Australian Intercollegian' and publications of SCM Press. Bible studies in their light were popular.

1954: Local Melbourne theologians and active SCMer's Davis McCaughy, George Yule, Harry Wardlaw fostered **liberal theological discussion**.

1954: Armidale Conference 'Encounter', input from new World Council of Churches'

1956: Mittagong Conference had 400 attendees.

1957: "Christ our Life" Conference: influence of biblical study.

1957: **Increasing interactions with Catholic university societies.**

1958: Proliferation of denominational societies at universities: weakened ASCM finances.

1958 onwards: Proliferation of new universities, teachers colleges, institutes of technologies who had no involvement with ASCM. ASCM lack of involvement in missions of Stephen Neill, Billy Graham

1958: ASCM sponsored Australia wide mission of Franciscan Fr Michael Fisher from Cambridge.

1958: ASCM set up Australian Students International Network based in Adelaide to offer support for increasing number of overseas students. Melbourne and Sydney set up International Houses.

1960: WSCF organised a World Teaching Conference at Strasbourg, attended by 700 delegates from all continents. Delegations from S America and Some students from N America and Europe rebelled and called for a demystifying and action – **Liberation Theology**.

1961: Australian Intercollegian replaced by Crux with broader appeal. Covered modern issues and modern theology.

1961: Mittagong Conference attended by 300 students. An undercurrent of dissatisfaction that traditional Christian action should be channelled into **anti-racism, and nuclear disarmament**. Student Action set up by Ross Terrill split the executive.

May 1961: In the light of ASCM and other student ministries being swamped by new schools/universities and inadequate budgets, ASCM/ACC consultation involving ASCM, IVF, and denominational societies for students organised by Frank Engel rejected but an coordinated ecumenical approach under ACC firmly rejected.

Jan 1962: ASCM officers advocated an ecumenical approach, but no workable strategies.

1964: Adelaide Conference last run on the traditional model, with 400 attendees. **Traditional intellectual approach of ASCM was a turn-off to vast numbers of new younger students.**

1964: Inconclusive debate between 'Open approach' and 'closed community model'.

1964: Publication to 'Honest to God' by UK SCM Press, with **non-religious and secular interpretations of the Gospel** – seen as ultra liberal. 'Death of God' debate. Furious debates.

1965: ASCM took up **anti-racism and Aboriginal land rights**.

1966: Students no longer participating at branch or national level and confused seniors were withdrawing support. Universities were increasingly polarised and politicized. Students were focussed on anti-(Vietnam) **war activism, women's liberation, the counterculture and rejection of bourgeois morality.**

1966-1969: **Vietnam war** dominated ASCM. ASCM branches were active in subverting the draft.

1967: Canberra Conference, focus on religionless Christians. Monash University defined the ASCM role as radically testing one's Christian beliefs. Financial support from older friends dried up.

1968: WSCF conference in Turku, Finland, Richard Schaul elected chair promoted **extreme politicisation of the movement.** Over next 5 years financial support for WSCF dropped by 33%.

1969: National office closed.

1970: WSCF office moved to Geneva. Focus shifted from **mission to power struggle** – criticism of Church replaced by scorn: discipleship defined by the law of revolutionary action: rejection of God's transcendence.

1970: Sandy Yule appointed ASCM General Secretary with a balanced budget but no staff. Resigned 1975.

1972: Barrie Baker led a TAFE group "God Squad" at Mount Lawley Technical College, Perth

1975: Chris Ledger joined General Council and found distrust by denominational leaders, especially about financial support. Movement now used part-time staff workers.

1979 – 80: Raymond Island "Good Lord, What Next" Conference: students wanted less control from Senior Friends.

1970s and 80s: SCM houses were set up in Perth, Sydney, Adelaide, Melbourne and Canberra. These helped lead to a revival in branch numbers. Sexual equality an issue

1981: Andrew McGowan revised ASCM branch in Perth.

1981: Mandy Tibby coordinated production of document 'Feminism and Theology: Women and the Church'.

1981: First issue of national magazine "Across the Currents" **(Homo)sexuality** was a dominant issue.

1984 – 1986: Chris Ledger Chair of ASCM: first female student in this office

1985: National Conference held in Perth with about 30 attending.

1985: Thirteen student led branches in Australia

1988: Chum Creek conference 'Strangers in Our Land: **Racism, Christianity and Justice**' attracted over 100 attendees.

1992: Sean Whiting appointed full-time Victorian Development Officer

1992-2006: Jim Martin edited National SCM Friends Newsletter

1995: Barrie Baker led ASCM group at Perth Campus, Central metropolitan College of TAFE.

1995: Barrie Baker revived WA Area Council at UWA, also covering Curtin University.

1996: John XXIII College, Centenary Gathering of over 400 Senior Friends and 20 students from all over Australia. Foundation of Centenary Trust.

1997: Barrie Baker led Aboriginal ASCM branch at Leederville Technical College with Geoff Narkle and Sealin Garlett.

1999: Julia Pitman, National Chair: Rachel Osmond, National Treasurer – to 2005, June Searle, National Secretary – to 2002

2000: National Conference, Eagle's Nest, Perth

2000: Otira National Consultation organised by Friends of the SCM (Margaret Bearlin & Christine Fensham). 31 attended Took major decisions about reorganising ASCM into a leaner model. Considerable deficit to be stopped with move to part time officer contracts.

2004 -6: Clare Schulz edited Jubilee Grapevine

2004: National Conference, Eagles Nest, Perth

2004-2007: Bronwyn Crowe, National Chair

2007: National Conference, Melbourne 'The Virtual Church'

Jan 2008: Annabel Dulhunty National Chair

2008: National Conference "What is Church", Katoomba

July 2008-2009: Tim Ngui, National Chair

2009: ASCM History " A Century of Influence" published, written by Renate Howe

2009-2011: Xochi Mace, National Chair

Feb 2011: Major organisational and financial restructuring, facilitated by Barrie Baker "A **Community**, not an Organisation, Faithful to Jesus and his Gospel'

2011: National Conference 'The Revolution of the Small', Gallilee, Perth

2011- 2014: Ann Ng, National Chair

2015: John Biswas, National Chair

2018: National Conference, Mount Lawley, Perth, 17 attended

Based on extracts from "A Century of Influence" by Renate Howe

and

"Australian Christians in Conflict and Unity:" by Frank Engel