

# Message from the World President

By Aroti Dutt

Excerpts from the ACWW President's Address  
on Taking Office, Dublin 1965

**T**O BECOME the President of the Associated Country Women of the World is like reaching the top of a mountain. When a mountaineer reaches the summit, he has no pride in his mind; he feels humble because then he realizes how insignificant he is compared to the greatness of the mountain. So is A.C.W.W. with its great work spread all over the world. I feel humble and thank each one of you for giving me this great opportunity of serving this wonderful international organization as your President.

Through the years, A.C.W.W. has truly become the voice of rural women at an international level. It is overwhelming to think that each one of you represents here today hundreds or thousands of rural women of your country. As leaders of such a vital force your responsibility is great. We should realize that it is not enough to give only material help, scholarship, finance or knowhow knowledge to our women. Our work must be inspired by something more fundamental, and we should be able to give a part of ourselves in our work. The late President Woodrow Wilson of the U.S.A. has said, "If we can harness the moral conscience of the world, we shall have a force greater than armies." I ask you, who else can harness that moral conscience of the world better than women? We as homemakers are to set the standard which future generations will be able to follow. We hope to create a world of peace and understanding and carry on our ceaseless war until we reach our goal against the common enemies of humanity—Ignorance, Illiteracy, Poverty and Disease, as mentioned by U Thant, Secretary General of the United Nations.

The world consciousness, which makes us realize the essential oneness of mankind, strives for a union of hearts on a person-to-person basis. It does not mean interference with others' ways of life, thoughts and beliefs. It only means an attempt to understand the other person's point of view with regard to the basic facts of life, and to tolerate and respect as far



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as possible. True internationalism means knowledge of other people, their ways of life, traditions, culture and civilization.

Modern life has shown that no one can live in isolation, and countries at different levels of progress, economic or otherwise, have much to learn from each other. The future plans of A.C.W.W. are broadly based on this knowledge. "Working Together" has been the theme of our conference, and these two weeks we have learned much from each other. Let this be the beginning of a long chapter of co-operation in our work and in our thoughts. Speaking of working together, I remember those lines, "The human heart is all I need, for I have found God ever there, Love is the one sufficient Creed. Comradeship the purest prayer."

The A.C.W.W. has always put the emphasis on welfare of home and family, so with your consent I would like to make some personal remarks. I owe very much to my husband and to his family tradition of social work, and to my seventeen-year-old son. It has been possible to work for A.C.W.W. with their constant support and encouragement.

In the days to come let us hope that we shall come to see more clearly not that which divides but that which unites us, and let us pray for a world in which we can live in sympathy with others and plan for the future with confidence. May God bless you all and your work.