

# Home is where peace must begin

Last Sunday I watched the first candle of Advent being lit in our Church. Even though it was a bright day, the glow from that small candle could be seen by everyone in the sanctuary.

I write this during the Advent season. The hustle and bustle of preparing for Christmas does not mask the true meaning of the time. As the season progresses, three more candles will be lit, and on Christmas Eve, the final candle, heralding the climax of our celebration. A Celebration to commemorate the coming of the Prince of Peace. The glow from five small candles will pierce the darkness and illumine the faces of all who watch.

1986 has been designated the Year of Peace. Is each of us being like one of those small candles, helping to illumine and brighten the homes and communities where we live?

Our motto is "For Home and Country". Home is where Peace must begin. There are too many homes that do not know peace, that do not know the comforting hand of a benevolent parent or the serenity of having a good mate. There are too many homes that do not know courtesy begins with family members; too many homes that do not make sharing a daily habit; too many homes with a constant fear of physical violence; too many homes where verbal abuse is a daily companion. There are too many homes where respect for one another's bodies is absent. Where, then is the Peace we seek? How can there be peace in the world when there is no peace within many of the homes within this world?

Through the years, the rights of women and children have been emerging slowly. In 1911, women were assured of marital property under the Dower Act in Alberta. It assured them of one third of the family property in the case of a separation. After eight years of deliberation, in 1929, women were finally classed as persons in the famous Persons Case. No court in Canada could make the decision, and it went to the Privy Council — to the King — in England. The Charter of Rights enlarges on the rights women have as citizens in Canada, and Family Laws give us the option of gaining freedom from op-

## Between the Lines Charlotte Johnson



pressive situations.

What must we do to ensure that our families will determine that peace will be their legacy?

I think we must dare to take a stand and say that we will not tolerate any movement or action that will create turmoil within the lives of our families. Women make up one half of the population. If that one half dare to object to violence or abuse in any form, and will take steps to quell it, imagine the strides we would make.

It will take courage. It takes courage to leave a shattered dream behind to seek safety for oneself. It takes courage to admit that a habit is slowly destroying a partnership and you must seek support. It takes courage to realize that a way of life has failed and new horizons must be sought. But at the end of each of these courageous moves there is light. A candle has been lit to illumine the future

and make it worth while.

It takes time. Time to sit down with our children and listen to their dreams, listen to their problems, listen to their fears. Time to share our joys and our triumphs. Time to talk about our hopes for the future. It takes time to put everything into a focus that will give us a clear picture of where we're at. Sometimes the effort will not be worth the time we must spend, and we must move in another direction.

To develop peace, we must look inwardly. Are we willing to accept the fact that peace in our homes is our responsibility? Do we believe that to have peace in the world we must first have peace in our homes? As citizens of the world, that is our responsibility.

For Home and Country then, can we think of that one small candle whose light pierced an already bright day. Light a candle in your heart. Help to illumine the lives of those whose days know no peace. Ensure that within their homes some of those small rays will help to pierce the darkness and light a ray of hope.

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## 'We have the courage to deal

*(continued from Page 6)*

pattern of a new environment. Our generation is the first part of society in the information revolution. We have to look to a new model. We live in the most interesting times in history and if you don't think that there will be change — you are living in the past. Changes from models we were used to is happening. Change is real — one we can plan for, but it isn't necessarily the one we are going to get. The future we are moving into in our society has surprises and we have no control over them.

We must monitor the changing environment, read the signs of the times — look at the future: Is it rosy or not? Are my eyes open to these new changes and can I adjust? These are questions we, as branch members, and as branches, have to ask ourselves. We have the courage to deal

with changes together. If we are not prepared to take up the challenge, no amount of luck will cause the rewards to land in our laps. Take on that position within the organization — take on the opportunity — it is being offered to you.

William Shakespeare in his play, Julius Caesar, wrote: "There's a tide in the affairs of men, which, taken at the flood, leads on to the future; omitted, all the voyage of their life is bound in shallows and in misery". We must congratulate the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario, Provincial Board in taking the voyage to look at the Women's Institute in a broad perspective and look at the many changes they can make or would like to make in the organization — BUT, as the last part of the quotation states: "On such a full sea we are now afloat; and we must take

See page 22 for CWIF Time Line Chart