

AUSTRALIAN CHURCH
WOMEN

WORLD COMMUNITY DAY

October 1979

"The family = its faith

& its future"

THE FAMILY - ITS FAITH AND ITS FUTURE

INTROIT - Choir (Optional)

CALL TO WORSHIP: "Praise the Lord, my soul!
All my being, praise his holy name!
Praise the Lord, my soul,
and do not forget how kind he is.
He does not punish us as we deserve
or repay us for our sins and wrongs.
As kind as a father is to his children,
so kind is the Lord to those who honour him."

1. THE FAMILY

HYMN: "Happy the Home" (11.10.11.10 - Australian Hymn Book, No.495.
Suitable tunes: Welwyn, O Perfect Love, Intercession.)

1. HAPPY THE HOME that welcomes you, Lord Jesus,
truest of friends, most honoured guest of all,
where hearts and eyes are bright with joy to greet you,
your lightest wishes eager to fulfil.
2. HAPPY THE HOME where man and wife together
are of one mind believing in your love:
through love and pain, prosperity and hardship,
through good and evil days your care they prove.
3. HAPPY THE HOME, O loving Friend of children,
where they are given to you with hands of prayer,
where at your feet they early learn to listen
to your own words, and thank you for your care.
4. HAPPY THE HOME where work is done to please you,
in tasks both great and small, that you may see
your servants doing all as you would wish them
as members of your household, glad and free.

PRAYER - ADORATION and PRAISE

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

ALL: All thanks and praise, glory and honour
be yours at all times and in all places,
Creator Lord, True and Living God, Holy Father.

Leader: You brought the earth into being
and made man in your own image.
ALL: *You set us in families - parents and children together.*
Leader: You have given us the earth
that we might care for it and delight in it:
through its bounty you preserve our life.
ALL: *We thank you and praise your holy name.*
Leader: In your great love you gave your Son to be made man:
to share our common life: to die upon the cross for our
redemption; to reconcile us to yourself,
our God and Father.
ALL: *Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of Power and Might;
Heaven and Earth are full of your glory. Hosanna
in the highest.*

THE DIVINE CONCEPT -

Narrator: In the beginning God created! The whole universe was
the work of his creation, and it pleased him.
To the human beings whom he had created to reflect himself,
he gave the responsibility of reproducing their own kind
in the world.
The divine concept was a 'Family of Mankind' - a caring
community of family units, with the Creator himself the
caring parent!

SCRIPTURE - Psalm 127; Acts 17.

Reader: "If the Lord does not build the house, the work of the
builders is useless"..
"Children are a gift from the Lord; they are a real
blessing."
"The God who created the world and everything in it, and
who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines
made by men. .. He created every race of men of one stock,
to inhabit the whole earth's surface."

Narrator: Within the divine concept, the family unit requires
parents who themselves obey God's laws, so that children
may develop mentally, physically, socially and spiritually.

SCRIPTURE - Luke 2.

Reader: "As prescribed in the law of the Lord, given to Moses,
Mary and Joseph took the young child Jesus to Jerusalem
to present him to the Lord, and when they had complied

with all the requirements of the law, they returned to Nazareth where the child grew big and strong, full of wisdom, pleasing to God and his fellow men. ..

"Every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Passover Festival and when Jesus was twelve years old they made the pilgrimage as usual. When the Festival was over, they started back home, but the boy, Jesus, stayed behind in Jerusalem."

II. ITS FAITH

HYMN: "Author of Faith" (8.8.8.8. - Aust.H.Bk. No. 473. Suitable tunes - Duke St., Festus, Fulda, Maryton, Tallis' Canon)

1. Author of faith, eternal word, whose Spirit breathes the
active flame;
faith, like its Finisher and Lord, today as yesterday the same:
2. to thee our humble hearts aspire, and ask the gift unspeakable;
increase in us the kindled fire, in us the work of faith fulfil.
3. By faith we know thee strong to save; (save us, a present
Saviour thou!)
whate'er we hope, by faith we have, future and past are
present now.
4. Faith lends its realizing light, the clouds disperse, the
shadows fly;
the invisible appears in sight, and God is seen by mortal eye.

Narrator: A shared family faith in God as Creator and Lord, is a source of strength to the whole unit. As parents in their turn hand on to their children knowledge of the love of God, so too, faith passes from generation to generation to give stability and substance to hopes.

SCRIPTURE - Hebrews 11.

Reader: "It is for their faith that the men of old stand on record. By faith we perceive that the universe was fashioned by the word of God, so that the visible came forth from the invisible. ...

ALL: "And what of ourselves? We have this large crowd of witnesses around us, so we must run with resolution the race for which we are entered, with our eyes fixed on Jesus on whom faith depends from start to finish."

Narrator: The words of the apostle Paul to the young Timothy concerning the fact that God's plan works through a genuine faith, stand today as an encouragement to the Christian family to transmit its faith from one generation to the next.

SCRIPTURE - II Timothy 1.

ALL: *"I thank God, whom I serve as my ancestors did. I thank him as I remember you always in my prayers night and day. .. I remember the sincere faith you have, the kind of faith that your Grandmother Lois and your Mother Eunice also had. I am sure that you have it also.*

Narrator: Alas, how often we fail as Christian parents to 'transmit' our faith! It is only as we draw near to the Source and Giver of Life in humility and contrition, confessing our shortcomings, that strength is given to carry out this God-given responsibility.

PRAYER - CONFESSION

Leader: Let us pray -

Almighty and most merciful Father, we have strayed from your ways -

ALL: *Lord have mercy on us.*

Leader: We have neglected to carry out our Christian parental responsibility towards the children you have put in our care.

ALL: *Lord have mercy on us.*

Leader: We have followed our own ways and desires, and have overlooked the spiritual needs of the children of our generation.

ALL: *Lord have mercy on us.*

Leader: According to your promises declared to mankind in Jesus Christ our Lord, pardon and renew us, O God.

ALL: *We put our trust in you, Lord. Help us, we pray, to live Godly lives - a worthy example to the next generation - to the glory of your Holy Name. AMEN.*

III. ITS FUTURE

HYMN: "Put Thou Thy Trust in God" (6,6,8,6,D - Aust.H.Bk.No. 464. Suitable tunes - "Crown Him with Many Crowns", "Make Me a Captive Lord", "Soldiers of Christ Arise".)

1. Put thou thy trust in God, in duty's path go on;
walk in his strength with faith and hope, so shall thy work be
done.
Commit thy ways to him, thy works into his hands,
and rest on his unchanging word, who heaven and earth commands.
2. Though years on years roll on, his covenant shall endure;
though clouds and darkness hide his path, the promised grace
is sure.
Give to the winds thy fears; hope, and be undismayed:
God hears thy sighs and counts thy tears; God shall lift up
thy head.
3. Through waves and clouds and storms his power will clear thy way:
wait thou his time; so shall this night soon end in joyous day.
Leave to his sovereign sway to choose and to command;
so shalt thou, wondering, own his way, how wise, how strong
his hand.

Narrator: God alone knows the future; we can but put our trust in him and 'walk in his strength with faith and hope,' leaving to his 'sovereign sway to choose and to command'. The faith and the mutual love and concern that have characterized the Christian family in bygone years are its surety of a future for itself while time lasts. Modern social attitudes and standards have made subtle attempts to devalue the worth of parental example, but the stabilising influence of the Christian family has not been diminished by attacks upon it as an out-dated 'institution'. However, Christians must exercise great resolution if it is to be preserved in the manner and style set out in God's word through his apostle.

SCRIPTURE - Ephesians 6.

Reader: "Children, it is your Christian duty to obey your parents, for this is the right thing to do. 'Respect your father and mother' is the first commandment that has a promise added: 'so that all may go well with you, and you may live a long time in the land'. Parents, do not treat your children in such a way as to make them angry. Instead bring them up with Christian discipline and instruction."

Narrator: Christian parents will need to exert great will power to ensure that the precepts of that scripture are maintained in a society that more and more tends to disregard them. In our own strength we would assuredly fail.

PRAYER - INTERCESSION

Leader: Let us pray -

Almighty God, Creator and Father, in humility we ask for your help and guidance in our endeavours to preserve the divine concept of the Christian family amid the confusion of today's society.

ALL: *Strengthen our resolve to love and serve you, Lord God, as we ought.*

Leader: For the unhappy members of broken families, we ask your blessing.

ALL: *Look in compassion on them, Lord.*

Leader: For families experiencing the insecurity of unemployment and all its associated ills, we ask your blessing.

ALL: *Give ME a generous spirit, Lord, to share MY material resources.*

Leader: For families saddened by bereavement, worried by ill health, or disturbed by domestic problems, we pray

ALL: *Let your love flow through each one of us so that they find in you the great comforter, the bearer of all burdens, and the one who meets all needs, whom to know and love is life eternal. AMEN.*

Leader: The WORLD COMMUNITY DAY OFFERING PROJECT provides opportunity to express in a practical way a loving family concern for sisters and brothers, parents and children of other places whose needs can be met from our resources as we now make them available through our offering.

OFFERING: WORLD COMMUNITY DAY PROJECT...Our offering this year is to the Etina Havea Memorial Appeal. Etina Havea, the greatly loved wife of Dr. Slone 'Amanaki Havea, Principal of the Pacific Theological College, died suddenly in Suva. The Pacific Theological College decided to make an extension of its Programme for Women as a memorial to her life and work. The funds from the Memorial Appeal will support a woman member of the faculty of the Pacific Theological College. From 1979 onward the intake of women students for ordination will rise. Wives of

students will share in a curriculum intended to enhance the status and role of women in the Pacific at all levels through the churches. In-service courses for the laity and decentralized extension training are part of the plan.

It will be necessary to establish a day-care centre on the college campus to provide for the care of the children while students and spouses are studying. This will also serve as a laboratory for learning about child-care and development, and a place for community learning experiences. The early establishment of this centre is imperative if the programme is to get under way. It is also envisaged that the child-care centre could eventually serve other families in the area.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION:

Leader: Multiply these gifts, O God, we pray, as they go out in blessing to others - through Jesus Christ our Lord. .. AMEN.

CHOIR ANTHEM, SOLO or other musical item.

ADDRESS OR 15 minute DISCUSSION of some aspect of the theme -
"The Christian Family"

IV. THE CHILD IN THE CHRISTIAN ORDER

Narrator: The 'Year of the Child', 1979, is of particular significance to Christians everywhere. It is a reminder that at the heart of the family unit is a child; it is a reminder, too, that Jesus himself enunciated the condition which placed the child at the heart of the divine concept. Jesus began his ministry with a declaration about the Kingdom of God, and later, when his disciples questioned him concerning its social composition, he made a simple yet most profound answer.

SCRIPTURE - Matthew 18.

Reader: 'At that time the disciples came to Jesus, asking, "Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven?" So Jesus called a child, made him stand in front of them, and said, "I assure you that unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the Kingdom of heaven. The greatest in the Kingdom of heaven is the one who humbles himself and becomes like this child,"

Narrator: When Jesus focussed the attention of his status-conscious disciples upon a child, he was surely but subtly reminding them

that his work on earth was one of reconciliation. He had come to remove barriers, not to raise them!
The apostle Paul later declared that barriers were non-existent within the fellowship of Christ.

SCRIPTURE - Galatians 3.

Reader: "It is through faith that all of you are God's children in union with Christ Jesus. You were baptized into union with Christ, and now you are clothed, so to speak, with the life of Christ himself. So there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles, between slaves and free men, between men and women; you are all one in union with Christ Jesus."

Narrator: During his ministry, Jesus expressed a loving tenderness for children, and when he set a child before his disciples as an example of one who met the conditions for entry into the Kingdom, no doubt he saw in the child

- one for whom race is of no consequence (young children of different races play together without awareness of racial differences).*
- one for whom social status has no meaning (young children don't acknowledge class among themselves).*
- one for whom sex is incidental (young children are innocently unaware of sex: it sets no barrier to participation).*

Oh, that we, too, could each at our Lord's request, humble ourselves and become as little children that we might gain entry into his Kingdom!

Leader: We pause at this moment in thankfulness for the inspiration that brought into being the Fellowship of the Least Coin. Through our participation in that Fellowship and through the outreach of its offering projects, some of the man-made barriers of race, social status and sex are being overcome. This year's contributions to the FELLOWSHIP OF THE LEAST COIN will be presented, those who have been appointed coming forward now with their offerings.

PRESENTATION OF CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE LEAST COIN -

We bring for dedication the least coins which we have prayerfully put aside each month during the year, sharing in this with women around the world.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION:

Leader: Dear Lord and Father of mankind, accept and bless these gifts from members of the Fellowship of the Least Coin. Bless those who have given and those who shall receive. For your Kingdom's sake. ... AMEN.

HYMN: "The Grace of Christ our Saviour" (8.7.8.7. - Aust. H.Bk.
No. 373 to tune "Stuttgart")

1. May the grace of Christ our Saviour, and the Father's
boundless love,
with the Holy Spirit's favour, rest upon us from above.
2. Thus may we abide in union with each other and the Lord,
and possess in sweet communion joys which earth cannot
afford.

Leader: Let us in confidence now pray as Christ taught his followers ...

ALL: (The Lord's Prayer) "OUR FATHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN ...

Leader: Go forth to love and serve the Lord, whose peace be
always with you.

ALL: And also with you.

The Service was prepared by Queensland Unit of Australian Church Women.

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