



Australian Church

Women

★
WORLD COMMUNITY DAY

October, 1967
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Theme:

World Community
Through The
United Nations

CALL TO WORSHIP:

LEADER: Let all the earth fear the Lord, let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.

ALL: Let thy steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us, even as we hope in thee. (Psalm 33).

INVOCATION

LEADER:

O God the Father, who made of one human family all the peoples of the world, now open our eyes to see the signs of your reconciling work among the nations.

O God the Son, who broke down the middle wall of partition between men of different races and traditions, now give us confidence that under your rule and in your presence, our enmities will be turned to penitence and our anxieties to trust.

O God the Holy Spirit, who at Pentecost opened men's hearts to understand one another across boundaries of language and history, now guide us into the truth that will make us free for one another and for all men.

ALL:

O God the Father, Son and Spirit, blessed is the man who loves you, and his friend in you, and his enemy for you. To you we entrust all that we hold dear; so shall we lose nothing. Our hope and our trust is in you, O God, who made heaven and earth. Amen.

HYMN: "Before Jehovah's awful throne."

(Tune: Old 100th)

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| 1. Before Jehovah's awful throne,
Ye nations, bow with sacred joy;
Know that the Lord is God alone;
He can create, and He destroy. | 3. We'll crowd Thy gates with thankful
songs;
High as the heavens our voices raise;
And earth, with her ten thousand
tongues,
Shall fill Thy courts with sounding
praise. |
| 2. His sovereign power, without our
aid,
Made us of clay, and formed us
men;
And when like wandering sheep we
strayed,
He brought us to His fold again. | 4. Wide as the world is Thy command;
Vast as eternity Thy love;
Firm as a rock Thy truth shall stand,
When rolling years shall cease to
move. Amen. |

LET US MAKE OUR CONFESSION AND OFFER OUR PENITENCE TO GOD:

O God who fashioned a world for our benefit,
whose rain falls on good and bad alike,
who so made us that we are human only when we share,

Forgive the self-interest that darkens our thought and limits our action.

Forgive the blindness which does not see the goodness and worth of those
who have loyalties other than ours,

Forgive the national self-concern which hinders us from supporting the work
of the United Nations as fully as we should,

Forgive the resignation and insensitivity with which we too often think of the
war in Vietnam.

Forgive the way in which we so often separate the gospel and politics, worship
and work, church and world, and so become dividers rather than reconcilers
in Christ's name.

Most merciful God, we confess that we and all men have sought knowledge and power more than virtue and love, and so are not fit to use rightly the power we have won over nature. O God, in your compassion, grant us space to repent. Teach us how we may make new knowledge a blessing, how we may turn hunger into sharing and suspicion into trust.

Teach us humility, that we may withhold our judgments and learn to share the gift of life with one another and with all men.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

LEADER: Let us prepare ourselves to hear God's word:
The Lord be with you.

ALL: And with you.

LEADER: Let us pray:

O Lord, show us your mercy.

ALL: And grant us your salvation.

LEADER: O God, make our hearts clean within us,

ALL: And take not your Holy Spirit from us.

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: Psalm 67.

LEADER: God be merciful unto us and bless us:

ALL: And show us the light of His countenance, and be merciful unto us.

LEADER: That Thy way may be known upon earth:

ALL: Thy saving health among all nations.

LEADER: Let the people praise Thee, O God.

ALL: Yea, let all the people praise Thee.

LEADER: O let the nations rejoice and be glad:

ALL: For Thou shalt judge the folk righteously, and govern the nations upon earth.

LEADER: Then shall the earth bring forth her increase.

ALL: And God, even our own God, shall give us His blessing.

LEADER: God shall bless us.

ALL: And all the ends of the earth shall fear Him.

THE EPISTLE: Ephesians 2:11-22.

THE GOSPEL: Matthew 8:5-13.

OFFERING: (For Inter-Church Aid Team Work in Vietnam).

DEDICATION OF OFFERING:

We pray O God that this money may help to bring some relief where there is suffering in the villages of Vietnam, some hope where there is despair, some trust where there is cynicism, some food where there is hunger, and some awareness of your love for every man. Take this money O God, and turn it into a symbol of our hope and determination to be bearers of your peace. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

HYMN: "And art Thou come with us to dwell."

(Tune: Pentecost)

And art Thou come with us to dwell,
Our Prince, our Guide, our Love, our Lord?
And is Thy name Emmanuel,
God present with His world restored?
The world is glad for Thee! The rude
Wild moor, the city's crowded pen;
Each waste, each peopled solitude,
Becomes a home for happy men.

Thou bringest all again; with Thee
Is light, is space, is breadth and room
For each thing fair, beloved and free,
To have its hour of life and bloom.

Each heart's deep instinct unconfessed;
Each lowly wish, each daring claim;
All, all that life hath long repressed,
Unfolds, not fearing blight or blame.

Thy reign eternal will not cease;
Thy years are sure, and glad, and slow;
Within Thy mighty world of peace

The humblest flower hath leave to blow.

Then come to heal Thy people's smart,
And with Thee bring Thy captive train;
Come, Saviour of the world and heart,
Come, mighty Victor over pain. Amen.

ADDRESS: (In place of the address group discussion may be held at the close of the act of worship).

LET US THANK GOD:

We praise your name O God, for the United Nations, a sign of your hidden working in the world and a symbol of our hope for peace and understanding.

For its General Assembly,
bringing together like and unlike, powerful and weak,
affluent and poor, on the basis of equality.

ALL: We offer our thanks.

For its Security Council,
charged with the responsibility of maintaining peace and security.

ALL: We offer our thanks.

For its International Court of Justice,
providing a criterion of judgment above the strength and weakness of nations.

ALL: We offer our thanks.

For its Secretary-General,
working tirelessly to open doors of negotiation and understanding,

ALL: We offer our thanks.

For the International Children's Fund,
gathering and spending millions of dollars each year for the health and education of children.

ALL: We offer our thanks.

For the World Health Organization,
working for the improvement of nutrition, housing, sanitation, and the promotion of preventive medicine.

ALL: We offer our thanks.

In hope and thanksgiving we praise you, O God, for the United Nations. We pray that it may be able to bring the present conflict in our world to a peaceful resolution. May its far-reaching effort more and more bind the nations together in increasing co-operation.

Although we stand in a broken and riven world we thank you O God for the signs that we stand also in a day of great possibilities.

For the emerging shape of a new society, with a more united mankind, with new values, with wider outlook, with deeper understanding of what it means to be human.

ALL: We offer our thanks.

For the increasing uneasiness everywhere in our world about the suffering, waste and destruction of war.
ALL: We offer our thanks.

For the growing concern about hunger.
ALL: We offer our thanks.

For the signs of the pressure for human rights in the struggle for racial equality,
ALL: We offer our thanks.

For the increasing awareness of Australia's relation to Southeast Asia and the responsibility this lays on us.
ALL: We offer our thanks.

For the gains made in giving the Aboriginal his rightful place in our society.
ALL: We offer our thanks. Amen.

LET US INTERCEDE BEFORE GOD:

We pray, O God, for the General-Secretary of the United Nations, that he may be sustained by your providence and enabled by your Spirit to press on for understanding and peace, despite every set-back. May his work be fruitful and may the great longing of men of goodwill everywhere be fulfilled in peace.

We pray, O God, for the leaders of the powerful nations, that they may know that yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory.

We pray, O God, for the leaders of the emerging nations; that they may use discipline and patience in their quest for national self-fulfillment.

We pray, O God, for all leaders of a generation which has grasped and holds the terrible power of final destruction.

O God, who showed yourself to us in the form of a Servant, number us among those who alleviate pain by sharing it.

O God, whose word is spoken to the world, place us in the world so that we may hear it clearly.

O God, whose concern is with the world, place us in the world so that we also will be concerned.

We offer these prayers in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

ALL: Our Father in heaven
may your name be kept holy.
Your kingdom come,
your will be done
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread,
and forgive us our sins
as we have forgiven those who have wronged us,
and do not bring us to the test,
but rescue us from evil,
for the kingdom, authority and glory
belong to you forever. Amen.

HYMN: "Where cross the crowded ways of life." (Tune: Fulda)

Where cross the crowded ways of life,
Where sound the cries of race and clan,
Above the noise of selfish strife,
We hear Thy voice, O Son of Man.
In haunts of wretchedness and need,
On shadowed thresholds dark with fears,
From paths where hide the lures of greed,
We catch the vision of Thy tears.
From tender childhood's helplessness,
From woman's grief, man's burdened toil,
From famished souls, from sorrow's stress,
Thy heart has never known recoil.

The cup of water given for Thee
Still holds the freshness of Thy grace;
Yet long these multitudes to see
The sweet compassion of Thy face.
O Master, from the mountain side,
Make haste to heal these hearts of pain;
Among these restless throngs abide,
O tread the city's streets again.
Till sons of men shall learn Thy love,
And follow where Thy feet have trod;
Till glorious from Thy heaven above,
Shall come the City of our God.

OFFERING of the FELLOWSHIP of the LEAST COIN to be brought forward during the singing of this Hymn.

PRAYER of DEDICATION of FELLOWSHIP of the LEAST COIN OFFERING:

Hungering and thirsting for Thy presence and desiring Thy help in listening for Thy voice,
Recognising that Thy gifts without measure are greater than our hopes and far more than we deserve,
Trusting in Thy power to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think,
We offer these gifts to Thee, Christ Jesus — To Thee, to whom unending praise and blessing belong. Amen.

BENEDICTION.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION GROUPS:

1. Jesus said of the Roman Centurion, "Nowhere, even in Israel, have I found such faith." (Matt. 8:10). In the light of this how should we think of people whose beliefs are different from ours?
2. The writer of Ephesians is dominated by the theme of Christ's reconciliation: (see 2:14 and 1:10).
When the Church seeks to live this reconciliation into the world's life, must it do so only in 'religious' ways or should it concern itself with the economic and political realities that divide men?
3. Why should we consider the overwhelming problems of hunger and poverty in other parts of the world as OUR problems?
4. What avenues are open for personal responsibility for peace?
5. Do you think Red China should be seated in the United Nations? Would the inclusion of Red China increase the possibilities of peace-making? Is it wise to refuse to talk with one-fifth of the world's population? Should the churches speak on this question?

Would you be able to list the Principal Organs and the Specialised Agencies of the United Nations? What can be done in your community to make people more familiar with the extent of its work?

This service was prepared by the Australasian Federation of Methodist Women, and produced by Australian Church Women, c/o Victoria Council of Churches, 100 Flinders Street, Melbourne, 3000.

The Australian Church Women was established by the Australian Council of Churches, to co-ordinate the work of women in the member churches throughout Australia. It operates through State Units and prepares two services annually, Fellowship Day in July, and World Community Day in the last week of October.

Both offerings from this service should be sent to the treasurer of your State Unit.