



AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN

WORLD COMMUNITY DAY

"The World — My Responsibility?"



OCTOBER 1987

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The organisation of Australian Church Women came into being in 1965, uniting the existing State Women's Inter-Church Councils prepared to share common tasks and undertake united action. Through Australian Church Women we are linked to Asian Church Women and send representatives to their Assembly which is held every four years.

Australian Church Women forms a network of committed Christian Women dedicated to encourage fellowship and service across denominational and national boundaries.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE LEAST COIN

The Fellowship of the Least Coin is an ecumenical movement of prayer for peace and reconciliation which began in 1956 during a goodwill mission to East Asian countries by an international team of women, sponsored by women of the United Presbyterian Church in the USA.

A fellowship of prayer, without any discrimination of race, colour, culture or denomination, it enables all, whether rich or poor, educated or illiterate, in urban or rural areas, to participate in the offering of their 'least coin', thus enabling "gifts of love" to be provided for projects all over the world. Australia is one of some sixty countries linked together in this unique movement.

SPECIAL PROJECT OFFERING

Just before midnight on Saturday, 7th February this year, Cyclone Uma struck the small Pacific Island nation of Vanuatu with ferocious force. The cyclone destroyed homes, crops and public buildings; it killed some people, injured many others and left thousands homeless. The money from the Special Offering will go toward helping the victims of the Vanuatu Cyclone.

"THE WORLD - MY RESPONSIBILITY?"

Leader: The world - is it the earth or the people who occupy the earth? Psalm 8 helps us to think through our theme. We are brought before the majesty of God who is Creator of our earth, that is the world in which we live and of ourselves, we who people the earth. The Psalmist reminds us of the great and glorious majesty of God's creation and of the responsibility given to the people on this earth who are made "a little less than God". That is: people have a conscience and a responsibility for everything else that God has created.

The world - whether it is the earth or the people of the world, are indeed the responsibility of God's people.

COMING BEFORE GOD

Call to Worship Psalm 8 (paraphrased by Bruce Prewer)

Leader and congregation may read alternate verses

God, our God yours is the most wonderful name in all the world, the highest joy in the whole universe!

Little children know this and grow strong,
rebellious adults break themselves against your truth.

I see your fingers at work in the vast galaxies,
sun and moon obey you to the very second.

I can't help wondering why you remember mankind,
why you bother about creatures like us.

Yet you have made us only slightly less than gods,
trusting us with remarkable responsibility.

You have asked us to take charge of our land,
making all other creatures subject to our authority.

The cattle and sheep, the kangaroo and crocodile,
wedge-tailed eagle, magpie and cockatoo.

.... contd.

Barrumundi, tuna, dolphin and shark,
turtles, fairy penguins and seals.

O God, our dear God,
yours is the most astounding name in all
the world!

*(from Australian Psalms by Bruce Prewer
Adelaide - Lutheran Publishing House 1979
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Hymn No. 13 (Australian Hymn Book)

Let all the world in every corner sing:
My God and King!
The heavens are not too high,
his praise may thither fly,
the earth is not too low,
his praises there may grow.
Let all the world in every corner sing:
My God and King!

Let all the world in every corner sing:
My God and King!
The Church with psalms must shout,
no door can keep them out;
but, above all, the heart
must bear the longest part.
Let all the world in every corner sing:
My God and King!

Prayer of Thanksgiving:

Lord you are a great God and King;
thank you for all you have given us.
You have surrounded us with everything we need
and placed us in the world's family.
Thank you for your guidance and love.
Let us never forget that we belong to that family.

Amen.

Readings: Old Testament Genesis 4: 2b - 12.

LOOKING AT THE WORLD

Poem: "Blackshouldered Kite" by Judith Wright

Carved out of strength, the furious kite
shoulders off the world's hate.
The black mark that bars his white
is the pride and hunger of Cain
Perfect, precise, the angry calm of his closed body,
that snow-storm - of his still eye that threatens harm.
Hunger and force his beauty made
and turned a bird to a knife-blade.

(From "Australian Geographic" Jan/Mar '87)

"Camels in Central Australia are tracked by satellite.
The camel is fitted with an electronic device which emits
a small signal....Picked up by the R.C.A. Satellite near
Alaska, it is relayed to Maryland U.S.A., then by submarine
cable to France where it is decoded. The information is
then transmitted by Intelsat which is situated between
Africa and South America, across the Pacific to Ceduna, South
Australia, then by landline to Sydney where the whole
picture of the camels' journeys are depicted on a display
panel".

Leader: Are we not clever? The things we can see and
hear - as well as the things we can track by
satellite.

Reader: God endowed mankind to use the Universe and
discover these things.
Has not God asked us to have a responsibility
for His creation and the world's family?

Speaker 1: We must look after ourselves. No-one else
will care for us.

Speaker 2: Surely we have a wider responsibility than
ourselves?

Speaker 1: Why?

Speaker 2: We do belong to the Church. Doesn't that stand for something?

Speaker 1: Well what does it mean? Should we have a greater conscience than the community in general?

Leader: Am I my brother's keeper?
This is the ancient question asked by Cain.
It was asked by the lawyer confronting Jesus.
It has been asked again and again through the age, but again and again comes Jesus word
Love one another as I love you.
If you would be one with me you must love one another.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Leader: Lord, my people have become mopokes,
enjoying the darkness,
but blind in the light.

Reader: Where is Australia going, Lord?
Is there any hope for this people
that I dearly love?

Leader: What will become of a people
whose gambling bills far outstrip
all pensions to the needy?

Reader: Who feed rump steak to greyhounds,
and do not notice unemployed citizens
sorting through rubbish bins?

Leader: Is there any future for a people
who spend a thousand times more
on assorted pet foods
than they give to the starving
people in our cruel world?

Reader: What will become of a Society
where married couples
prefer pets and yearly travel
to the joys and disciplines
of family love?

Leader: Speak your word of judgment and mercy
to me - and to all my fellow Australians.

Reader: For my people are your people, Lord.
and you understand them
and love them more profoundly
than I ever can.

Leader: Lord when we burrow like wombats to evade you,
deal with us with strong discipline;

Reader: Make us face the truth,
and live by the light that shines
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

*("Lament for My People" from Australian Prayers
by Bruce Prewer, Adelaide - Lutheran Publishing
House 1983. Used by Permission)*

JESUS COMMAND

Leader: Let us hear what Jesus has to say to us:

Readings: Matthew 5, 43-45 (Good News Bible)
John 17, 20-26

OUR RESPONSE

Let us express that love in our giving to the
Fellowship of the Least Coin.

The money which has been prayerfully and faith-
fully collected during the past twelve months,
will be brought forward for dedication.

Prayer of Dedication:

Heavenly Father, accept this offering of the Least Coin as a testimony of our love and concern for each other and for your world. We ask your blessing on the giver and the receiver. In Jesus' Name we pray.... Amen.

Musical Interlude

Let us express our gratitude to God and our response to Him as we give our money to help the victims of the cyclone in Vanuatu.

Prayer of Dedication:

Lord, most of us have no idea what it would be like to experience a cyclone, or to lose all our belongings. Heavenly Father, we remember all the people who live in Vanuatu and ask you to be near and bless each one of them. Use our offerings to relieve the devastation caused by the cyclone. Hear us as we pray in Jesus' Name. Amen.

Hymn No. 112 (Australian Hymn Book)

God, who stretched the spangled heavens,
infinite in time and place,
flung the suns in burning radiance
through the silent fields of space,
we thy children, in thy likeness,
share inventive powers with thee:
great Creator, still creating,
teach us what we yet may be.

Proudly rise our modern cities,
stately buildings, row on row;
yet their windows, blank, unfeeling
stare on canyoned streets below,
where the lonely drift unnoticed
in the city's ebb and flow,
lost to purpose and to meaning,
scarcely caring where they go.

We have conquered worlds undreamed of
since the childhood of our race,
known the ecstasy of winging
through uncharted realms of space,
probed the secrets of the atom,
yielding unimagined power,
facing us with life's destruction,
or our most triumphant hour.

As thy new horizons beckon,
Father, give us strength to be
children of creative purpose,
thinking thy thoughts after thee,
till our dreams are rich with meaning,
each endeavour, they design;
great Creator, lead us onward
till our work is one with thine.

Address on the Theme:

"THE WORLD - MY RESPONSIBILITY?"

Prayer of Commitment: Prayer of St. Francis

Lord, make us instruments of your peace
Where there is hatred, let us sow love,
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is hatred, love;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy;
for your mercy and for your truth's sake

Lord, grant that I may seek rather to comfort
than to be comforted; to understand than to
be understood; to love than to be loved; for
it is by forgetting self that one finds, it is
by forgiving that one is forgiven; it is by
dying that one awakens to eternal life.

Amen.

GOD'S FINAL CALL

Reading: Rev. 21: 1-5

Leader: Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The first heaven and the first earth disappeared and the sea vanished.

Response: And I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared and ready, like a bride dressed to meet her husband.

Leader: I heard a loud noise speaking from the throne.
"Now God's home is with mankind! He will live with them, and they shall be his people.

Response: God Himself will be with them, and he will be their God. He will wipe away all tears from their eyes. There will be no more death, no more grief or pain. The old things have disappeared".

Leader: Then the one who sits on the throne said
"And now I make all things new!"

Hymn No. 106 (Australian Hymn Book)

Lord bring the day to pass
when forest, rock and hill,
the beasts, the birds, the
grass will know Your finished
will:

When we attain our destiny
and nature its lost unity.

Forgive our careless use,
of water, ore and soil,
the plenty we abuse,
supplied by others' toil
save us from making self
our creed

turn us towards our
neighbour's need.

Give us when we release
creation's secret powers,
to harness them for peace
our children's peace and ours,
teach us the art of mastering
which makes life rich and
draws death's sting.

Creation groans, travails,
bound in its futile plight
until the hour it hails
the new found of the light
who enter on their true
estate
Come Lord, new heavens and
earth create.

Benediction: Go out into God's world in peace aware of
your responsibilities, and the blessing of
God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
be with you all. Amen.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Copyright permission for use of Hymns 112 and 106 has been sought.

Permission to print "Blackshouldered Kite" by Judith Wright has been sought from Angus & Robertson.

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