



Australian Church

Women



FELLOWSHIP DAY

July, 1968



Theme:

All Things New

ORDER OF SERVICE
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"ALL THINGS NEW"

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This is the year of the World Council of Churches Fourth Assembly at Uppsala, Sweden.

In this Worship Service the material of the preparatory booklet, "All Things New" is freely used. It is hoped that many who take part in this service will be stimulated to use the excellent material of this booklet for personal and group Bible Study.

LEADER:

Sing unto the Lord a new song
For He comes, He comes to rule the earth
He will rule the world in righteousness
And the nations with His truth.

(Ps. 96).

PRAYER:

O Lord God, You are our Father,
We are the clay, and you the potter,
And we are all the work of your hand.

Be not angry with us, O Lord, nor remember our sin,
Behold, see, we beseech you, we are your people.

HYMN: Tune: Leominster.

Make me a captive, Lord,
And then I shall be free;
Force me to render up my sword,
And I shall conqueror be.
I sink in life's alarms
When by myself I stand;
Imprison me within Thine arms,
And strong shall be my hand.

My heart is weak and poor
Until it master find;
It has no spring of action sure —
It varies with the wind.
It cannot freely move,
Till Thou hast wrought its chain;
Enslave it with Thy matchless love,
And deathless it shall reign.

My power is faint and low
Till I have learned to serve;
It wants the needed fire to glow,
It wants the breeze to nerve;
It cannot drive the world,
Until itself be driven;
Its flag can only be unfurled
When Thou shalt breathe from heaven

My will is not my own
Till Thou hast made it Thine;
If it would reach a monarch's throne
It must its crown resign;
It only stands unbent,
Amid the clashing strife,
When on Thy bosom it has leant
And found in Thee its life.

READING: Jeremiah 31: 31-34.

I. THE NEW COVENANT

"This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts and write them on their minds". I will remember their sins and their misdeeds no more".

(Hebrews 10: 16-17).

The Theme of Renewal is one that should stimulate the Church to action. God's promise that He made to the House of Israel and Judah as told in Jeremiah was renewed with the coming of Christ. This promise is ours today.

True renewal takes us through the hiddenness of the kingdom and the sufferings of the Cross. Paul tells us that we possess this new life as Hope, as a 'down payment' of the Holy Spirit. God can only fulfil His promise with our co-operation. We have to make the leap of faith. "I will be their God, and they shall be my people — I will forgive their iniquity. I will remember their sin no more".

In Christ's day what were the signs of the new? The 'good news' came to the sick, the poor, the social outcast.

Who are the poor in our societies? Who are the social outcasts? What action do we as Christians take that the 'good news' may spread?

PRAYER:

We thank Thee, O merciful Father, for the "love that will not let us go", and for the grace that was in Christ Jesus, who, while we were yet sinners dies for us. Thou, God, art Love and we praise Thee that in our Lord we may know that Thou hast love for us. For long ages men have known Thy power and they brought to Thee the tribute of their fear. But for us Thou hast reserved a better thing. In the new and holier way that has been opened to us in Christ Jesus we may come before Thee, not in dread as to a harsh tyrant, but in trust, as children to a Father. Grant unto us the gladness of that trust. Fill our hearts with joy and peace and lead us to respond to Thy love with the fulness of our love. Give us to know that behind all the experiences of this changeful life the purpose of Thine almighty love stands sure.

—(The Brotherhood Book of Devotions).

READING: Romans 5: 1-2; 12-21.

II. THE NEW HUMANITY

"Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Him we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in our hope of sharing in the glory of God."

(Romans 5: 1-2).

According to Paul man has the choice of two possibilities — to be "in Adam", or to be "in Christ". These are the two humanities in which we can live. Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, teaches that if a man is "in Christ" he is "a new creature".

For as many of you as were baptised into Christ, have put on Christ, there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free . . . for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

—(Galatians 3: 27-28).

This is our challenge to Mission:

A Christian must be "in the world".

The Church must be "the Church in Mission".

PRAYER:

Almighty God, who hast manifested Thy son Jesus Christ to be a light to mankind, Grant that we Thy people, being nourished by Thy word and sacraments, may be strengthened to show forth to all men the unsearchable riches of Christ, so that He may be known, and adored and obeyed to the ends of the earth: who liveth and reigneth with Thee, and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. AMEN.

—(Church of South India Book of Common Worship).

III. THE DISCIPLINE OF THE NEW LIFE

"So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus". (Romans: 6:11).

If the Christian accepts the fact that Christ dies for his sins he must accept the discipline that the new life in Christ imposes.

What are some of the marks of a Christian?

"You are not under Law but under Grace". (Romans 6: 14).

"You must also consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus". (Romans 6: 11).

To fight against sin for the Christian is not a series of "Thou shalt nots" but a positive commitment to Christ's way of life.

We accept certain positive attitudes as given by Christ in the Beatitudes:

"Poverty, mourning, humility, social passion, compassion, simpleminded, commitment, and a ministry of reconciliation":

A Christian can never rest on his laurels — he must be "up and doing" — he must be "about his Father's business" — he must strive after righteousness.

PRAYER:

O God, our Father, you intended the Church to be the Body of Jesus Christ, your son. You meant the Church to be a voice to speak for him, hands to work for him, feet to go upon his errands. Without your help the Church can't ever be what you meant it to be.

We ask you to cleanse the Church:

All bitterness that would disturb its fellowship;
all divisions that would destroy its unity;
all coldness that would lessen its devotion;
all slackness that would paralyse its action;
take from your Church, O God.

Give to it—

Courage in its speaking,
And tirelessness in its acting.

Give to it—

Ministers who are men,
on whose minds there is true learning,
on whose lips there is eloquence,
on whose hearts there is devotion,
who are men apt to study, skilled to teach,
wise counsel, brave to act, loving to help.

Give to it—

Members who are generous in giving,
faithful in prayer,
diligent in worship,
Christlike in witness.

So grant that, preserved by your help and goodness the Church may indeed be the Body of Jesus Christ. This we ask for your Love's sake. AMEN.

—(Prayers for the Christian Year, William Barclay).

HYMN: Tune: Hampton.

O Lord our God, arise!
The cause of truth maintain,
And wide o'er all the peopled world
Extend her blessed reign.
Thou Prince of life, arise!
Nor let Thy glory cease;
Far spread the conquests of Thy grace,
And bless the earth with peace.
Thou Holy Ghost, arise!
Expand Thy quickening wing,
And o'er a dark and ruined world
Let light and order spring.
All on the earth, arise!
To God the Saviour sing:
From shore to shore, from earth to heaven,
Let echoing anthems ring. —AMEN.

IV. RENEWAL IN AND BEYOND HISTORY

"For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the son of God". (Romans 8: 19).

God is continually at work seeking to complete His Creation.

We as Christians must take our part in seeking to bring in the new. We who have "the first fruits of the Spirit" as described by Paul "groan" as we work in the strength given by the Spirit to bring in the Kingdom of God. Groaning is good if it leads to creativity — if it is the pain of child birth. We are part of the process of evolution; history in action.

The Christian must take his part with confidence in the great technological transformations of creation, in the processes of society in history, and in the worship of the Church.

God cannot complete His creation by Himself. Finally we look to the time when all things shall be made new.

READING: Revelation 21: 1-5.

ADDRESS: (Optional).

HYMN: Tune: Jackson.

I'm not ashamed to own my Lord,	I know that safe with him remains,
Or to defend his cause,	Protected by his power,
Maintain the glory of his cross,	What I've committed to his trust,
And honour all his laws.	Till the decisive hour.
Jesus, my Lord! I know his name,	Then will he own his servant's name,
His name is all my boast;	Before his Father's face,
Nor will he put my soul to shame,	And in the New Jerusalem
Nor let my hope be lost.	Appoint my soul a place.

OFFERING AND DEDICATION:

PRAYER: In unison.

O God, the Creator and Father of all mankind, who, by Thy Holy Spirit hast made a diversity of peoples one in the Confession of Thy Name: Lead them we beseech Thee by the same Spirit to display to the whole earth one mind in belief and one passion for righteousness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

—(Church of South India Common Worship).

BENEDICTION:

Now may the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. AMEN.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION IN SMALL GROUPS:

Section I. Read 1 Corinthians 1:23.

1. What do you understand as the Scandal of the Cross?
2. Do you believe the Gospel of the Cross and Resurrection is relevant to this generation?

Section II.

1. Are we as Christians, any different from the rest of humanity?
2. What do you understand by the word Grace? e.g. the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

Section III.

1. Is a "state of tension" a necessary quality in the life of a Christian?
2. To be a Christian is to live the New Life in a world that is not yet ready for it. Discuss the Beatitudes in this context.

Section IV.

1. What are some of the signs of Renewal in the world today?
2. How can the Church be made meaningful in a world in process of rapid universal secularisation?

The service has been prepared by the Tasmanian Church Women, and produced by Australian Church Women, C/- Victorian Council of Churches, 37 Swanston Street, Melbourne.

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 the State Units and prepares two services annually, Fellowship Day on the fourth Wednesday of July, and World Community Day on the fourth Friday of October. The Australian Church Women encourages support of the Women's World Day of Prayer, and promotes the Fellowship of the Least Coin. Through the Committee on Co-operation of Men and Women in Church, Family and Society, it is linked with the Department of this name in the World Council of Churches in Geneva.

The offering taken at this Service will be used for the work of the Australian Church Women, and in particular the Winifred Kiek Scholarship. Money collected should be sent to the treasurer of the State Unit in your own State.