



**AUSTRALIAN CHURCH  
WOMEN**



**WORLD  
COMMUNITY  
DAY**

***October, 1972***



Theme :

**"The Human Environment"**

## World Community Day 1972

This Service can be followed through most successfully exactly as set down, but where local conditions demand some adaptation, this must be undertaken by those responsible for ensuring a successful celebration of the day at local community level.

Suggestions are printed immediately following the Order of Service.

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### "THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT"

#### SILENT MEDITATION —

As we approach this service let us remember that we are living creatures and part of God's creation.

Let us meditate on this passage, dated 1692, and found in Old St. Paul's Church, Baltimore. Across the centuries it speaks to us of harmony between man and his environment, and shames us to ask ourselves: "Is it still a beautiful world?"

Go placidly amid the noise and the haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence. As far as possible without surrender be on good terms with all persons. Speak your truth quietly and clearly; and listen to others, even the dull and ignorant; they too have their story. Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans. Keep interested in your own career, however humble; it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time. Be yourself. Especially do not feign affection. Neither be cynical about love; for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment it is as perennial as the grass. Take kindly the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth.

Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune. But do not distress yourself with imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness. You are a child of the universe no less than the trees and the stars; you have a right to be here. And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should. Therefore be at peace with God, whatever you conceive Him to be; and whatever your labours and aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life keep peace with your soul. With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world.

(All rise as the leaders enter the church).

LEADER: The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein.

ALL: For He hath founded it upon the seas and established it upon the floods.

LEADER: Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in His holy place?

ALL: He that hath clean hands and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.

LEADER: He shall receive the blessing from the Lord and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

ALL: This is the generation of them that seek Him, that seek Thy face, O Jacob.

HYMN: "All creatures of our God and King".

Tune: St. Francis. 88.44.88 and refrain.

The original of this beautiful hymn of praise was written by St. Francis of Assisi, 1182-1226.

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| 1 All creatures of our God and King,<br>Lift up your voice, and with us sing:<br>Alleluia, Alleluia!<br>Thou burning sun with golden beam,<br>Thou silver moon with softer gleam:<br>O praise Him, O praise Him,<br>Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia! | 3 Thou flowing water, pure and clear,<br>Make music for Thy Lord to hear,<br>Alleluia, Alleluia!<br>Thou fire so masterful and bright,<br>That givest man both warmth and<br>light: |
| 2 Thou rushing wind that art so strong,<br>Ye clouds that sail in heaven along,<br>O praise Him, Alleluia!<br>Thou rising morn, in praise rejoice,<br>Ye lights of evening, find a voice:   | 4 Dear mother earth, who day by day<br>Unfoldest blessings on our way,<br>O praise Him, Alleluia!<br>The flowers and fruits that in thee<br>grow,<br>Let them His glory also show:  |

5 And all ye men of tender heart,  
 Forgiving others, take your part,  
 O sing ye, Alleluia!  
 Ye who long pain and sorrow bear,  
 Praise God and on Him cast your  
 care:

6 And thou, most kind and gentle death,  
 Waiting to hush our latest breath,  
 O praise Him, Alleluia!  
 Thou leadest home the child of God,  
 And Christ our Lord the way hath  
 trod:

7 Let all things their Creator bless,  
 And worship Him in humbleness;  
 O praise Him, Alleluia!  
 Praise, praise the Father, praise the  
 Son,  
 And praise the Spirit, Three in One!  
 O praise Him, O praise Him,  
 Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

LEADER: From their viewpoint out in space it is easy for astronauts to see the earth as one habitat for one race of men. Let us try to take this space-eye view, and ask ourselves:

What are we doing to our world which may make it unfit for human life?  
 What are we doing to the human race which may lead to its deterioration or even extinction?

A MEDITATION ON THE OPENING CHAPTERS OF GENESIS —  
 LET US PRAY:

FIRST READER: Lord God, we worship You as Creator: You have made all things in the universe and upon the earth, light and darkness, land and sea, the elements and living creatures. You have made us men and women to live in this created universe.

SECOND READER: We have been unworthy of our destiny. We have thought too much of our own gain, and too little of our responsibility to conserve our heritage, the biosphere.

ALL: Father, forgive us for all our failures.

FIRST READER: Thousands of years ago the Hebrew writer saw that You had made man in Your image, lit by a spark of divine life, and had given him dominion over the fish of the sea, and the fowl of the air, the cattle and all creeping things.

SECOND READER: We have been callous and cruel towards helpless animals. We have hunted and killed them not only for food but for sport. We have slaughtered wild and often harmless creatures, wiping out whole species and bringing others near to extinction.

ALL: Father, forgive us for all our failures.

FIRST READER: Like the ancient Hebrews we bless You for "the herb yielding seed and the tree yielding fruit", and for all the gifts of cultivated foods and fibres. We give thanks for the good earth and all the fruits of the earth.

SECOND READER: We confess, Lord, that we have failed to use these gifts to meet the needs of men. We produce too little of this, too much of that. We fail to distribute the crops to the countries where men are hungry. We are guided by the profit motive and not by the needs of others.

ALL: Father, forgive us for all our failures.

FIRST READER: We read that at every stage of creation You looked on all that You had made, and behold, it was very good.

SECOND READER: We stand condemned, Lord, in that we have not cared about the created world. We have cut great quarries in the mountains; we have scooped up the sands of the seashore; we have washed away the topsoil in our search for gold and tin; we have overgrazed the pastures, and cut down the forests; we have polluted the rivers and seas; we have not thought of future generations.

ALL: Father, forgive us for all our failures.

FIRST READER: You created man in Your own image; male and female You have created them, so that a man shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh.

SECOND READER: This most mysterious and glorious gift, the love of man and woman, has been of all gifts most abused. We read that even in the Garden of Eden shame and hostility followed quickly on an act of disobedience. Even today shame and hostility mar the relationships of men and women.

ALL: Father, forgive us for all our failures.

FIRST READER: When the human race had tried its hand at living, You looked upon the earth, and found it corrupt — corrupt and filled with violence, so that You repented of making men.

SECOND READER: Corruption and violence are everywhere today. We confess our share in the evils of our society. We acquiesce in the brutality of war, we pass by on the other side while men and women die of hunger or disease. We give too little; we bestir ourselves too late.

ALL: Father, forgive us for all our failures.

FIRST READER: You gave us the freedom of the world, Lord, but You did not make us gods. It was not our lot to be all-knowing, and our lives were bounded by mortality.

SECOND READER: We have eaten of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. We know too much. Help us to cope with our knowledge. We have learnt to make fearsome weapons of war, which could destroy the world. We are fumbling with the fuse of annihilation. We are learning to control the mysteries of birth and reproduction, tampering with forces which may be beyond our power to control. We stand in peril of our own technology.

ALL: Father, forgive us for all our failures. Give us wisdom, give us love, that we may make amends before it is too late.

ADDRESS or DISCUSSION: "MAN AND HIS ENVIRONMENT".

HYMN: "From Thee all skill and science flow"

Tune: St. Peter. C.M.

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| 1 From Thee all skill and science flow,<br>All pity, care and love,<br>All calm and courage, faith and hope:<br>O pour them from above:     | 3 And hasten, Lord, that perfect day<br>When pain and death shall cease,<br>And Thy just rule shall fill the earth<br>With health, and light, and peace: |
| 2 And part them, Lord, to each and all,<br>As each and all shall need,<br>To rise like incense, each to Thee,<br>In noble thought and deed. | 4 When ever blue the sky shall gleam,<br>And ever green the sod,<br>And man's rude work deface no more<br>The paradise of God.                           |

—Charles Kingsley, 1819-75.

OFFERING: (The leaflet which you received with this Order to Service gives information on the World Christian Action project which will receive this year's World Community Day's offering).

(All stand and say together):—

ALL: All that we have is the work of Your hands, O God. May we be good stewards of our inheritance, remembering that whatever we do for Your children, we do for You. Amen.

(Congregation sit).

LEADER: We have opened our minds to the infinite; to the immensity of space and the mystery of creation. We have pondered on the purpose of life and the fate of mankind. We have been appalled at the realization of our folly and sin. As Christians we believe that the key to all problems is to be found in redeeming love as revealed by Jesus Christ. As I read these verses from the Book of Revelation, let us meditate on what the new creation may mean for us as individuals and for the whole world.

Revelation, chapter 21, verses 1-7.

CLOSING HYMN: "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling". Tune: Bithynia, 8.7.8.7.D.

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| 1 Love divine, all loves excelling,<br>Joy of heaven, to earth come down;<br>Fix in us Thy humble dwelling,<br>All Thy faithful mercies crown:<br>Jesu, Thou art all compassion,<br>Pure unbounded love Thou art;<br>Visit us with Thy salvation,<br>Enter every trembling heart. | 2 Come almighty to deliver,<br>Let us all Thy grace receive;<br>Suddenly return, and never,<br>Never more Thy temples leave:<br>Thee we would be always blessing,<br>Serve Thee as Thy hosts above,<br>Pray, and praise Thee without<br>ceasing,<br>Glory in Thy perfect love. |
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- 3 Finish then Thy new creation,  
Pure and spotless let it be;  
Let us see Thy great salvation,  
Perfectly restored in Thee;  
Changed from glory into glory,  
Till in heaven we take our place,  
Till we cast our crowns before Thee;  
Lost in wonder, love, and praise.

—Charles Wesley, 1707-88.

(Remain standing).

BENEDICTION:

LEADER: May the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost rest upon us and upon all our work and worship done in His name.

ALL: May He give us light to guide us, courage to support us, and love to unite us now and for evermore. Amen.

FOR DISCUSSION:

**NOTE TO LEADERS AND ORGANISERS OF CELEBRATION OF WORLD COMMUNITY DAY:** It is left to your own discretion to use either an address or group discussion (approximately 20 minutes). It may be possible to obtain a speaker with some specialized knowledge of environmental problems or modern biology, or discussion groups based on the study material might take the place of an address.

The following conversation could be read in parts by four people seated round a table, as an introduction to the discussion of the questions set out below. After the reading, those present might form groups of eight to ten as an alternative to an open forum.

The Robinson family is seated round the table for an evening meal.

TONY (a second-year science student): We had a discussion today on man and technology. The Professor suggested that instead of increasing the gross national product governments should aim at reducing industrialization, and this would cut down pollution.

MR. ROBINSON: Well, that's obviously nonsense, isn't it? If we didn't have an industrial society, the standard of living would drop — no cars, no T.V.'s, no washing-machines. We wouldn't be able to send you to University.

TONY: It seems to me though that we shouldn't be aiming at such a high standard of living. It stands to reason that exploiting natural resources involves destruction of the environment. We ought to be concentrating on quality of life.

MRS. ROBINSON: The real problem behind pollution is over-population. Did I read somewhere that the population of the world will double by the year 2000? The more people the more pollution — more garbage, more noise.

MR. ROBINSON: Your Mother's right, you know. What's needed in the world is a really efficient programme of birth control — compulsory sterilizing of women with more than two children in India, for example.

SYLVIA (a biologist): Do you really believe that a government has the right to stop individuals from having children? I wish we knew where we were heading in biology.

TONY: Professor Phillips said today that biologists are getting closer to controlling heredity.

SYLVIA: Of course it would be possible to cut down on hereditary defects if we prohibited some couples from having children. But who's going to tell me not to have children?

MRS. ROBINSON: Advice is one thing. I wouldn't like to see compulsion.

TONY: Restricting the birth of children with bad tendencies is what Professor Phillips called **negative eugenics**. Then there's **positive eugenics**, encouraging the birth of children with good qualities, like breeding better plants and animals.

MR. ROBINSON: How would you do that, apart from natural selection?

TONY: Well, he talked about sperm banks, and, eventually, ova banks. He admitted it is still pretty theoretical, but he said we ought to be thinking about it. There's an even more astonishing possibility, called "cloning". One day biologists might be able to produce any number of individuals, all alike, with the same genes.

MRS. ROBINSON: Not in my time, I hope.

MR. ROBINSON: It reminds me of "Brave New World." It would introduce all sorts of unforeseen problems. No, it is too horrible to contemplate.

MRS. ROBINSON: Is that what they mean by genetical engineering?

SYLVIA: No, not really. I think genetical engineering refers to the possibility of manipulating the genes themselves. Once we start on this, we could alter them for the worse, just as easily as for the better. Frankly, the whole idea terrifies me.

TONY: What puzzles me is: What is a good human being? Who's to be the judge? Bigger? Stronger? Healthier? Does that make him a better human being? What about Beethoven, Milton? They might never have been born.

MRS. ROBINSON: What are we born for, anyway? What makes life worthwhile, not just for us in Australia, but for all people? I'm sure it isn't prosperity that makes life worthwhile. Freedom from hunger, certainly, and freedom from real want, and disease; but we also need freedom to think, the chance to read, to enjoy art and music, the right to choose a job, to worship as we believe. And we need to believe in something bigger and better than ourselves.

MR. ROBINSON: I suppose you would think I was square if I said that this is really a religious question. After all, Jesus said, "I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly".

SYLVIA: You might say conservation of the environment is a religious thing, too. It's all a matter of responsibility, caring for others rather than quick profits. Stewardship of creation . . . Replenishing the earth . . . they're Biblical ideas.

TONY: They're modern ideas, too. When you talk about caring for others rather than quick profits, lots of my friends would go along with you.

### QUESTIONS

1. List the environmental problems in your area. Are there any special problems of pollution? or of conservation?
2. Who is responsible for dealing with pollution? Is it primarily the Government — Federal, State, or Municipal? Or is it up to the managers of mines or factories? What about the ordinary citizen? What part does public opinion play?
3. Has industrialization gone too far in the Western world, as Tony suggests? Does this include Australia? How can the countries of Asia, Africa and South America — the so-called Third World — raise the standard of living of their people, and yet avoid the worst consequences of industrialization?
4. How can the world cope with the population explosion? Improvements in agriculture have given us a breathing space, but the problem remains acute. Is it possible to slow down the process by family planning? Can people be persuaded to limit their families by education, or by economic incentives? Do you believe a government has the right to stop people having children?
5. If research in biology is raising the sort of questions discussed by the Robinson family, what should we do about it? Can we create an informed public opinion? Should we ask the theologians to think about the nature of man and the purpose of life in this new context? Should we ask lawyers and legislators to think about legal limits and restraints? Should we ask the biologists to consider whether at any point they should say, "Thus far and no further?"

Background Reading, "From Here to Where?", "Technology, Faith and the Future of Man," by David M. Gill. Report on an exploratory conference, W.C.C., Geneva, June 28-July 4, 1970, available from The Australian Council of Churches, 3rd Floor, 401a Pitt Street, SYDNEY, N.S.W., 2000. Churches \$1.75.

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This Service has been prepared by the Australian Council of Churches' Committee on Co-operation of Men and Women in Church, Family and Society and produced by Australian Church Women.

All offerings for the World Christian Action project (see accompanying leaflet) should be forwarded to the Treasurer of the State Unit of Australian Church Women in your own State.

The establishment of Australian Church Women was authorized 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 (July), and World Community Day (October); it 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.