

OVERSEAS AND NORTHERN OUTREACH NEWSLETTER APRIL 2018

Dear Mothers' Union friends,

Today is Sunday, and I have returned home from church with St. Paul's testimony ringing in my ears—"For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2). Amongst other things, the preacher reminded us that sharing the good news that Jesus came into the world to save us from the futility of living without Christ should be our top priority. However much we help people to live more productive or more peaceful lives, this grand news is what should underpin all that we do. We are Christians, and our lives and our works should declare that. What a message we have to share with those we see and with those whom we assist with our prayers and giving, even if we will never (in this life anyway) see them.

SOME NORTHERN OUTREACH NEWS

You will recall that in my last Newsletter I gave you a summary of the projects for which grants from our Northern Outreach Fund and the Training Fund for Indigenous Women will be used. I have at long last put that information into a brochure. I would encourage you to be extravagant in your use of this tool. As Anne mentioned in her recent Provincial President's letter, it is a very good way to help people understand that we aren't just a collection of small groups of aging women (and men) who get together once a month for a gossip and a cup of tea. We have once again decided that we won't have it professionally printed (cost and the difficulty of getting it to the people who want it when they want it and in the quantities they want being factors in that decision) but will put it on the AMUA website, and as an attachment to this letter, so you can print it as you need it. Can I urge you, though, to use the highest quality photocopier/printer you can get access to so that the finished product is attractive and doesn't look "home-made." When I give it to people (usually at an MU meeting) I urge them to "read, mark, learn and inwardly digest" and then to pass it on –perhaps to family, neighbours, their Vicar and other members of their church.

OVERSEAS PROJECT (aka "OVERSEAS TARGET FUND")

I have had a number of requests for up to date information about the "Peace and Reconciliation Project", which is the focus of our giving to this fund in 2017-18. Although individual Community Development Workers continue to engage in projects in their areas, Mothers Union has put any further development of this project on hold until the completion of the MULO process. As you know, this "listening, observing and acting" is designed to establish what is already happening in Mothers Union Worldwide, what members would like to see happen in the future and how staff at Mary Sumner House can assist with this. Can I stress that money is **still needed** to continue work already begun in this and other worldwide projects. Do please continue to encourage members in your Diocese to be faithful in prayer and generous in giving.

I have already suggested to some who have asked about this that it isn't necessary for us to have information about specific Mothers Union efforts to encourage Peace and Reconciliation in order to keep the concept alive. Here are a few suggestions:

1. Internationally, members' attention might be focused on their Wave of Prayer partners, trying to learn what the situation is in these countries, whether there is trouble there, what the government and NGOs (including MU) might be doing to promote P&R etc.
2. Groups could write or find prayers for those living in difficult situations or invite someone who has fled a conflict situation to speak about their experiences.
3. In the UK they are looking at what it means to be a peace-maker in our own homes and communities, so that's another possible area to explore, perhaps thinking about areas in their lives where there is a need for some Peace and Reconciliation work to be done, reflecting on what they might be able to do about it and then writing a prayer asking for God's help in bringing it about. If we look around, we will find many opportunities in our own families, communities and our nation.
4. Why not invite members to design posters encouraging peace and reconciliation in their homes and communities? Perhaps this could be a diocese-wide activity? Perhaps a display of these could be organised in a prominent place? (Cathedral even?) Or you could compile a book of prayers, posters, testimonies, poems, photos...I am getting a bit excited here, but I think the possibilities are enormous, and I would love to see this grow and affect us in meaningful ways so that it is not just about what is happening "over there" but impacts our lives too.

With love in Christ Jesus, whose death and resurrection opened the door to peace and reconciliation with God and who enables us to live at peace with one another, *Christine*