

**To Mothers' Union Provincial & Diocesan Presidents, and Provincial & Diocesan Community Development Coordinators and Trainers**



September 2017

Dear friends,

Greetings and love from everyone here at Mary Sumner House. We hope that the work of the Mothers' Union is going well in your province or diocese and that you have felt God's presence in all your work.

We want to take this opportunity to **thank you** all for your continued passion and commitment to Mothers' Union in your local area and across the world, and also for your continuing prayers for all of us here at Mary Sumner House.

We thought that we would also take this opportunity to update you on some of the things we are working on at the moment. These are just a few highlights:

#### **Mothers Union responding to the needs of others**

Mothers' Union in **Sierra Leone** is responding to the needs of thousands affected by the mudslides that hit the country's capital, Freetown, earlier this week. Scores of people have been killed and it is estimated that at least 600 people are missing.

The Provincial Council of Mothers' Union in the Province of the **West Indies** has released the following statement in light of Hurricane Irma:

*"We the Provincial Council of Mothers' Union in the Province of the West Indies, representing the Dioceses of Barbados, Belize, Guyana & Suriname, Jamaica & The Cayman Islands, North Eastern Caribbean & Aruba, Trinidad & Tobago and the Windward Islands, wish to send this message of prayer and solidarity to those in our province and beyond affected by the devastation of Hurricane Irma.*

*We have heard with great sorrow news of how the islands of the north eastern Caribbean have been devastated like never before. We mourn with all those who have lost loved ones, especially with one of our own delegates who has lost a family member in the British Virgin Islands.*

*Mothers' Union and Church teams on the ground in the Diocese of North Eastern Caribbean and Aruba (NECA) are assessing and monitoring the situation as it develops and will be identifying how they can respond. Grants are being considered from the Mothers' Union Disaster Fund in the Province of the West Indies and the worldwide Mothers' Union Relief Fund once plans have been made.*

*We continue to ask for prayers from Mothers' Union members and the Church around the world for all those who have been affected by this tragedy and for all those who are acting to respond in the relief effort. We ask for prayers too that Hurricane José, currently gathering strength and predicted to hit the very same islands in the next few*

days, will dissipate so that communities already suffering will be spared further destruction."

We invite members around the world to continue to keep Sierra Leone, the West Indies and all other areas affected by natural or man-made disasters in their prayers at this time.

## Mothers Union in the Media

We are delighted to be partnering with Damaris Media and Universal Pictures to offer you a free resource for the film *Victoria & Abdul*, in cinemas from 15th September. Members, churches and the wider public can download our *Victoria & Abdul* Companion Booklet from our website which explores the issues addressed within the film from a biblical perspective.

*Victoria & Abdul* is a historical drama which reveals the extraordinary true story of an unexpected friendship in the later years of Queen Victoria's remarkable rule. When Abdul Karim, a young clerk, travels from India to participate in the Queen's Golden Jubilee, he is surprised to find favour with the Queen herself. As the Queen questions the constrictions of her long-held position, the two forge an unlikely and devoted alliance with a loyalty to one another that her household and inner circle all attempt to destroy. As the friendship deepens, the Queen begins to see a changing world through new eyes and joyfully reclaims her humanity.

Queen Victoria was Mothers' Union's first Royal Patron and throughout our movement's 140 year history, Mothers' Union has spoken out against injustice and advocated for policy change at all levels. We believe the themes running through "*Victoria & Abdul*", are as relevant today as they were then. We hope that you will enjoy watching this movie, and that this free Companion Booklet will inspire some interesting conversations about it.

The Booklet can be downloaded at: <http://www.mothersunion.org/VictoriaAndAbdul>



## 2018 Theme

Our theme for 2018 is "In Mary Sumner's Footsteps".

We have produced a selection of themed resources to help us celebrate through the year, in large and small settings, which you can find on the website at: <http://www.themothersunion.org/content/annual-theme-resources-2018>

## **16 Days of Activism Resources**

Mothers' Union campaigns around the world, through our 4 million members in 83 countries, for an end to gender-based violence.

Mothers' Union engages each year with the global 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, which runs from 25th November (the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women) and 10th December (International Human Rights Day). Throughout the campaign, members join together with one voice, to raise awareness of and call for an end to gender-based violence in all forms, and in all societies.

This year, Mothers' Union is focusing on the issue of stigma, where society responds negatively to, or by blaming those who are, victims of gender-based violence. We are calling on members and others around the world to talk about gender-based violence, and challenge myths and harmful attitudes around it. We are calling on people everywhere to: break the silence surrounding gender-based violence, lift the shame which is often placed unfairly on survivors, and shift the blame from victim to perpetrator

We have produced a set of resources to allow all members to engage with this campaign. These resources are free and can be found on the website:

<http://www.mothersunion.org/content/16-days-activism-2017>

## **United Nations Commission on the Status of Women**

Mothers' Union has consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (UN), and has attended the Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW) in New York, USA, since 2001. During the two weeks, civil society organisations (CSOs) with 'consultative status', such as Mothers' Union, can seek to influence the content of the agreed conclusions, through advocating with national government representatives. CSOs also run a number of workshops and 'side events' around specific issues of concern. We have been successful on a number of occasions in influencing governments, and our recommendations have appeared in the agreed conclusions of a number of years' negotiations. Mothers' Union is committed to, not only speaking on behalf of the worldwide membership at events such as UNCSW, but to magnifying the voice of members by facilitating their direct participation in them.

We therefore want to provide the opportunity for more members and CDCs to participate at this level and to then use their experience to help support and develop the advocacy work in their province or at the local level.

We are therefore inviting Mothers' Union members and CDCs to apply to us for the chance to attend the Commission on the Status of Women on behalf of Mothers' Union, on a self funded basis in 2018. All are welcome to apply, there is no requirement to hold a Mothers' Union position or office to be considered for this opportunity. Please find the application form and guidance notes enclosed within this mailing.

---

We hope you have enjoyed reading this letter.

With very best wishes,

*The Staff of Mary Sumner House*



Post: Mothers' Union, 24 Tufton Street, London, SW1P 3RB, UK

Tel: 020 7222 5533

Email: [mu@mothersunion.org](mailto:mu@mothersunion.org)

Twitter: @MothersUnion

Web: [www.mothersunion.org](http://www.mothersunion.org)