

## Wonder Women! – Then and Now President's Letter June 2020

Dear Sisters,

Once more I sincerely hope that all of you are safe, well and coping with the current situation. I hope that the papers prepared on a monthly basis by MWA are providing some help to you all, to remind you that you are not alone – even if it feels so at times – and that one day we will all meet together again as MWA members in our Circles and at our MWA Days and retreats.

I think I have mentioned before that I have been given a copy of the Moravian Messenger for April 1950 which contains the first written report or article on the MWA. It is a very interesting article with lots of information which I am able to share with you in my President's letter.

The first Devotional paper theme was "Thy Kingdom Come – Beginning in Me." The following are listed as questions to discuss in the Circles:

1. "Why did Christ's disciples come to Him? Do I come to Him? For what do I come? Do I get it? If not, why not?"
2. To what do I look for my happiness? Do I find it?
3. Do I stir up trouble in my home, with my neighbours, at my work? If I do, why do I act in this way?
4. Do I thank God for the hard things in my life? Should I rejoice in difficulties and trials?

I don't know about you but I'm not sure I would have enjoyed discussing the questions in section 3 very much! I am wondering if any Sister actually publicly admitted to any such behaviours!! I am rather glad that Sr Thornton does not interrogate us all in such depth in our current Devotional papers.

I like the choice of theme however. In 1950, the UK was in the early years of recovering from the Second World War. The Welfare State was just beginning to emerge from the devastation of this war. I think people were contemplating what sort of a country did they want the UK to be. These same "wonder women" who founded MWA were also part of that society, a society which created something new and bold and unlike anything the UK had seen or been before. Perhaps in choosing the theme they wanted to be mindful of the necessity to ensure that a life of faith was not forgotten in all the great strides society was making in caring for people's physical needs.

The first part of the theme title comes of course from The Lord's Prayer, a prayer so familiar to us that it is easy to gloss over the words without really thinking about their meaning and what they might mean for us, in our lives. The second part of the title is designed to make us think and reflect upon the fact that there is a responsibility for all of us who pray this prayer to begin to bring about God's kingdom here in the UK and around the world.

This idea of bringing about God's Kingdom on earth has been very much on my mind in the past few months. We have seen an upsurge in people's willingness to be active members of a community, a recognition that certain occupations often denigrated by society have been seen to be vital to the functioning of our communities. We gather to "Clap for our Carers", we remembered on 8<sup>th</sup> May, those who gave their lives for their country, for us in fact, during the Second World War.

When this pandemic is over – what will our country and communities be like? How do we want our country and communities to be?

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When I pray, I like to use some kind of liturgical material – my mind has a tendency to wander off without some words in front of me to guide my prayer! I have been using the Morning Service from the Iona Abbey Worship Book. The Liturgy contains this prayer:

***Jesus, you have set before us a great hope that your kingdom will come on earth, and have taught us to pray for its coming. Make us ready to celebrate the signs of its dawning, and to pray and work for the perfect day when your will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.*** (p.68).

One thing we can all do during this time of lockdown is work and pray for His Kingdom to come.

The letter for July will be written by Sr Audrey Kendall our Vice-president. I know we don't normally have a letter for August but I thought that in these unprecedented times I would write one. Hopefully, it will be a celebration of the end of lockdown and the beginnings of a return to a time when we can meet again.

In the meantime; ***“The Lord watch between me and thee when we are absent one from another”***

Yours in Christ

Sr Janet Cooper