

## MWA PRESIDENT'S LETTER JUNE 2015

### WITH GOD IN THE GARDEN

Dear Sisters

I am sure I have mentioned this previously, but quite close to where I live there is a beautiful park with a river and a little wooded area and joining onto the park is a canal with a lovely tow path to meander down. I love to go for walks around this area, because it is very close I can sometimes be up early and walk for half an hour before church or work. Early in the morning, the park and tow path is populated by dog walkers and runners with the occasional cyclist and they are a friendly bunch of people. Most of them smile and say hello, make a comment about the weather or the beauty of the surroundings. During that walk I often feel like I am a member of a club, albeit just for a few minutes. When I return home I feel enlivened, not only by the exercise and the enjoyment of God's world but also by the brief human interactions I have enjoyed.

Most of us like to feel that we belong somewhere and that if we go somewhere we will be welcomed. If you have ever been somewhere and not felt welcomed, you will understand just how isolating and upsetting that can be.

The questionnaire which I undertook regarding MWA at the end of last year revealed that some women and girls in our congregations feel that MWA may not be for them as they were not sure they would be welcomed at the Circle meeting. Some respondents did not know whether there was a Circle associated with their congregation and as I had asked people to name their congregation, in many cases a Circle did exist!

We often don't realise that we are excluding people, by our venue, by our time of meeting, by our conversation, by the customs of how our Circle is run – but these can all be barriers to people feeling welcome.

Perhaps in the next MWA year we could try to ensure that MWA is advertised and promoted in our congregations – perhaps an open meeting where we do things a little differently than usual. The postcards produced for MWA could be used to promote this special event.

I am writing this the day before Pentecost, the day when the Holy Spirit enabled all people of every race and language to know Christ. True inclusivity! I pray MWA can be a truly inclusive organisation.

Have a lovely summer, Norma will be writing our concluding letter of the year.

Sr Janet Cooper

