

# PRESIDENT'S LETTER

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July / Aug / Sep 2011

Dear Sisters,

*Greetings in the Almighty name of Jesus Christ. As I write to you I suddenly burst in to song "my chains fell off, my soul was free..." I suppose it is one of those significant moments where you feel the presence of the Lord and want to share with others your faith and love for God. His splendour never ceases to amaze me as I go about my work.*

*In a matter of days, fifteen NZMWF members will gather in Johannesburg, South Africa for the 12th World Assembly during the Federation's 72nd year. I reflect back to my time as the Helen Kim Memorial Scholar and remember Dr Helen Kim who championed the cause of women as powerful promoters of peace in the world. Amazingly, 5 years on I remember the 11th Assembly in South Korea as if it were only yesterday. It has been quite a journey and I look forward to sharing about this year's World Assembly experience District in my next letter.*

*The past few months have been very eventful and inspirational also. I would like to share about certain events that have taken place since I last wrote you.*

*Firstly, I want to share about the Taranaki Pentecostal celebration service. The Methodist, Anglican and Catholic churches of New Plymouth joined together for a combined service to celebrate Pentecost – it was a wonderful time of fellowship and we were also very blessed to have New Zealand author Joy Cowley join us as the guest speaker during the service.*



*In the last few months I have also been fortunate enough to be able to spend precious time with different Districts, namely the Bay of Plenty, Manukau, Waitemata, Auckland and Northland Districts.*

## **Bay of Plenty**

*Jeanne (Liaison Link) & I had a wonderful time at Te Puke, where we enjoyed meeting President Veronica and the rest of the BOP District members who were able to attend the meeting on the Saturday. A time of engaging and discussing visions and missions – we had a splendid time and I thank BOP for our time together. We spent the night in Mt Maunganui with lovely hosts Ted & Liz Dooley and on the Sunday attended Church in Mt Maunganui where we were able to meet with the local fellowship and to hear their stories. Rev. Brian Eagle's delivered a powerful sermon which left me thinking again about the injustices we continue to face.*

## **Auckland / Manukau / Waitemata**

*On the 2<sup>nd</sup> July, Kerry (Vice President/Chaplain), Leu (Vice President/WFMUCW Link) and I visited Auckland to attend a combined Auckland / Manukau / Waitemata District meeting. We had a terrific time fellowshiping with all the members who were in attendance and engaged with some great discussion regarding the way forward for the NZMWF and other important issues such as the Millennium Development Goals and potential special projects for the future. Thank you also to the Manukau Executive for organising this combined rally – it was truly lovely.*



While in Auckland I also was able to visit Margaret Gordon at Auckland Hospital. Although Margaret is struggling with her health she was still able to inspire me greatly. I ask that we continue to uphold Margaret and others who are not well, in our prayers.

### **Northland**

On July 27<sup>th</sup> Leu and I visited the Northland District in Whangarei. It was special to be with the Northland District on this particular occasion as it was their last gathering as a formal District. I had the privilege to hear their stories and their history. On behalf of the NZMWF, I thanked the Northland District members for their many years of service to the work of the NZMWF. Members will still continue to work within their local fellowships so we are grateful for their continued support and love.

Suluama (NCW Link) and I recently met with Christian World Services (CWS). CWS expressed their extreme gratitude and appreciation to the NZMWF and all its members for continued support over many years. With the Government having ceased funding for foreign aid projects, CWS have come to depend on financial support from organisations like the NZMWF and APW in order to reach out to communities in need throughout the world. There will be a few changes within CWS which I hope to discuss further at National Council during the Special Projects presentation.

As you may already know the National Council of Women (NCW) are now located in their new premises in Wellington. Thank you to members of the Wellington District who were able to attend the opening ceremony. There are a number of remits that have been prioritised by the NCW to lobby at both local and national level. I encourage you all to please access their website on [www.ncw.co.nz](http://www.ncw.co.nz) for further information. Our very own NCW Link, Suluama Feaunati has written an article for the upcoming issue of the circular. If you have any thoughts or feedback you would like to share please contact Suluama with your comments.

At the Smethurst July meeting, Leah Taylor & Rev. Gloria Zanders completed their term on the committee and I want to echo a heartfelt thanks to them both for their service to the Smethurst cause. They have been wonderful stewards of the Smethurst funds over the years which has benefited many Methodist women. It has been a privilege serving alongside them both and I look forward to other opportunities to do so in the future.

Recently I received a letter from Leah Taylor (of Otago MWF District). Leah's letter spoke of a wonderful moving ceremony (officiated by Rev Greg Hughson and Rev Siosifa Pole) that took place at the Mornington Methodist Church on Pentecost Sunday. Rev Greg Hughson had recently attended the World Council of Churches International Ecumenical Peace Convocation in Jamaica and reported on his moving experience. As part of the ceremony a kowhai tree (donated by the Mornington MWF) was planted outside the Mornington Methodist church to mark the culmination of the Decade to Overcome Violence and to pledge the continuation of their own commitment to world peace. It's great to hear about the effort various local fellowships and their respective congregations are putting in to mitigate social injustice both locally and globally.

I also want to express my gratitude to each District for your feedback to our proposed response to the Canterbury cause. Some Districts have already made contact so we're grateful for your continued love and support. Let us continue to uphold our Canterbury brothers and sisters in prayer.

I enjoy hearing from local fellowships and Districts. Please feel free to write, email or phone me about what is happening in your community. May God bless you all and keep you warm as we continue through these winter months.

I leave you a verse from 'The Tree of Peace' by Colin Gibson

**Christ is our peace, Christ our release  
From fear and hatred, lust for power;  
Christ is that young and green tree,  
Growing for you and me.**

Shalom,  
Mataiva Robertson

