THANK YOU!

UNITINGWORLD UPDATE ISSUE 3 2018



YOU'VE MADE A HUGE DIFFERENCE

They're the first words we learn, wherever we happen to be travelling in the world. Hello, and thank you. Sometimes, it's all we've got. All we need.

Our work takes us to places where we might expect only suffering and hopelessness, and yet what we meet time and again is gratitude. Gratitude from people who are thankful beyond belief for opportunities they never thought they'd be given; a chance to study their way out of hunger; a toilet built with their own hands.

"Please tell them thank you – thank you for helping us, even though they don't know who we are."

The words are spoken with a kind of holy wonder. These are families who look after one another with a fierce love, but the idea that people in countries far away know and love them too is another thing altogether.

For us, gratitude leaps the banks and spills both ways. A smiling mother cooks us corn from her garden and we sit to eat with her husband, father and five children. Later, we find out she has gifted us everything she had to feed her family for the week. Tears in his eyes, a Pastor shares a story of the love that led him back to care for his church, even after feeling a loaded gun against his temple. A child slips her hand into ours and sticks close, her smile a mile-wide. She has never seen anyone with skin like ours before. In these moments, we're not the powerful dispensers of donations and resources and knowledge. We're just sharing the goodness of what it is to be alive; the grace of life in all its messiness and small mercies.

"In all things, give thanks." Paul's words to the church at Thessalonica have as much relevance today as they did two thousand years ago. Gratitude transforms our daily lives as we concentrate on all that is good and gifted rather than all that wearies us and wears us down.

To each of you, we give our thanks.
In the past 12 months together we have reached hundreds of thousands of people with the practical love of Christ, providing:

- **Training to leaders of God's church**
- **Clean water and education to save lives**
- **Loans to start small business**
- **Emergency shelter, counselling and respite in disaster**

In this edition of Update, you'll find details of how your generous giving has helped countless people this past financial year. We give thanks for your **love** and **prayers**, and remain grateful for the **faith that binds us** together as we continue to work towards **the world we all long for.**

UnitingWorld
connecting communities for life

UnitingWorld is the international aid and partnerships agency of the Uniting Church in Australia. Together we work for a world where lives are whole and hopeful, free from poverty and injustice. Because every person matters.

A LETTER FROM INDIA



Dear friends,

Greetings! It's with delight that I share a little about how the Diocese of Amritsar is ministering to communities in Northwest India through the valued support of UnitingWorld.

We work in a unique context, among communities which have been systematically deprived of standard education and healthcare, severely impacting their development and growth. Education in the region has become mostly privatised and institutional, accessible by only a few. Infrastructure is failing, and there are not enough adequate teachers or books. Girls are most affected, as they are considered a burden to the family. They risk abuse and harassment.

Our church ministry, as well as social empowerment programmes, are aimed at breaking systems that dehumanize people and keep them helpless and despairing. With your help, the Church is able to go beyond its boundaries and walk with people in times of need, working together to transform unjust social structures, and provide hope where there is none. As we work alongside our brothers and sisters in the villages, our aim is to help them develop their strengths and capabilities and give them back their sense of identity and self-confidence. Young girls and boys in villages located near the Pakistan border now have more access to quality education and healthcare, and are on their way to becoming agents of change for their own communities.

In all of these efforts, we see God's design in bringing people into deep friendships, connecting individuals who have joined the journey along with UnitingWorld to enable the Diocese to carry out this life-transforming ministry.

Thank you for partnering with us in this work.

Please continue to keep the ministry of the Diocese of Amritsar in your thoughts and prayers.

May God bless you!

Most Rev. P. K. Samantaroy
Bishop, Diocese of Amritsar

Your gifts to our **HOPE HAS MANY FACES** Appeal support Bishop Samantaroy and the work of the church in India – providing training for church leaders and education opportunities, especially for girls. **Please make a gift at www.unitingworld.org.au/hope**

GROWING A NEW FUTURE IN WEST PAPUA

In rural West Papua, close to 40% of people live below the poverty line and the region has the highest rates of HIV and AIDS in Indonesia.

Our local church partner is at the forefront of efforts to contain the HIV epidemic, lift families out of poverty and empower women to have more control over their futures.

Earlier this year we launched an appeal to support our partners in West Papua, and we're thrilled to report that you helped us raise $84,000! This will help us fund our partner's HIV prevention work, as well as their project to help women in the highlands who are struggling to etch out a humble living in a difficult environment.

People like Mama Vita in the remote highlands wanted to say a huge thank you for the support.



Mama Vita selling her crops by the road. She wanted a photo with (much cherished) local Project Manager, Dessy.

As she gets older it's becoming difficult for her to travel to the city to sell her crops at the market. The local project has helped her be able to grow soy and kidney beans, which are easier to sell by the side of the road near her house. "She always says thank you whenever I visit," says local Project Manager Dessy (pictured with Mama Vita). "The project is helping her stay healthy and live a dignified life as she gets older."

Thank you so much for supporting our important partnership in West Papua.

THREE GENERATIONS OF LOVE

"I'm 82 but it's obvious that the Lord hasn't finished with me yet!"

Over the years, more than $80,000 has passed through Thelma Campbell's charity account. Alongside her daughter and granddaughter, who travel from Rockhampton to give her a hand on Saturdays, Thelma makes cards, jewellery, knits and patchwork blankets all to help raise money for various causes – UnitingWorld projects among them.



UnitingWorld Australian Partnership Coordinator Jenny Guyatt, who had the pleasure of visiting with Thelma and her daughter Heather on the Capricorn Coast in Queensland just recently, describes them as absolute treasures.

"They've been given a whole lot of wool and other recycled materials to use in their craft, so they hardly spend any money at all in order to raise more." Jen says. "They bring together local women through the classes they teach at the CWA and as part of Emu Park Uniting Church they've just been so generous and supportive for such a long time!"

If you have a story to share, or you'd like to book in a visit with an Australian Partnership Team member to hear more about how your gifts are being used, contact us on **(02) 8267 4267** or email Howard Clarke at **HowardC@unitingworld.org.au**

Thank you to all our fantastic fundraisers out there!

NOT GLAMOUROUS, BUT GLORIOUSLY GOOD



This is Reverend Albino Da Costa. He's the Director of Fusona, our partner in Timor Leste working among some of East Asia's poorest people – less than 700 kilometres from Darwin.

Called to serve God's people twenty-five years ago at the height of Timor Leste's occupation by Indonesia, he's equally at home playing soccer with village boys, supervising education visits to homes without water or electricity, and transcribing interviews from Tetum back to English. He also does a mean rendition of John Denver's "Take Me Home, Country Roads" gifted to us on the journey between Dili and Same on a week-long visit that is surely more time than he can afford. Reverend Albino is just like many of the talented partners with whom we work – a jack of all trades who juggles the roles of practitioner, sage, pastoral worker, and financial administrator in an organisation too small to specialise but determined to excel nonetheless. The finances are particularly demanding – projects need to be planned well in advance and yet local congregations have no capacity to fund them. 60% of Timor Leste's people live in poverty.

"We rely on funding from our external donors at the moment," Albino says. "It's hard. Stressful. We want to be concentrating on the work itself, but we need to know we can fund the work, and it all takes time. We know that there are so many other needs. And often this work is not dramatic, or glamorous. It keeps people alive, but it's not often at centre stage."

Why regular giving changes the game

As each new crisis takes the media world by storm with new pictures of desperate people, we're moved to give – and that's great. Except that the majority of long-term, life changing projects never make the news cycle. People like Albino and his team live with the stress of constantly trying to attract the funding. We at UnitingWorld know that when our donors take a longer-term approach to giving, we and our partners are able to make longer term plans and increase our effectiveness.

"I remember when this fact really dawned on me," says one of our regular givers, who wants to remain anonymous. "If there was one thing I could do with my giving, it was providing a source of reliable income every month for people who have enough going on in their lives without the stress of trying to guess where their funding might be coming from next."

Regular giving is the single most effective way you can donate.

It gives both UnitingWorld and partners stability, allowing us to be more efficient. Our partners are better able to build long term solutions for people in serious need. When crises hit, your gifts will have made communities stronger and more resilient so there is less suffering, and they can recover with the confidence that you will walk the journey with them. "I choose to give regularly because I know the impact will be greater overall," another of our regular givers told us recently in a letter.

Please consider becoming a UnitingWorld Global Neighbour and signing up to give regularly. As little as $10 a month will help our partners plan with increased confidence for their life-changing projects, help us cut fundraising and administrations costs and provide clean water, education and leadership training in the world's most forgotten places.
Sign up using the tear off slip or call us on 1800 998 122

FOREIGN AID VS THE FARMERS?



Have you wondered how to respond to social media calls for Australia's foreign aid program to be redirected to the drought crisis facing our farmers? Here are a few points to consider in your discussions on the issue:

- Foreign aid represents less than 1% of Australia's Gross National Income ($0.22 in every $100).
- Australians rightly care about tackling poverty here and in the lives of our global neighbours, and we have the resources to do both.
- As Christians, we are an international people and we are 'blessed to be a blessing' in moments like these. We can be generous 'on every occasion' as Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 9:11. Being part of the global body of Christ means responding both locally and globally.
- Foreign aid isn't just about helping the poor. In addition to tackling poverty, our aid program helps our near neighbours to combat contagious disease, resist terrorism, prevent and prepare for natural disasters, develop their ability to trade with Australia and other nations, support education, as well as foster peace and stable leadership in our region. We all benefit from a safer, more prosperous Asia Pacific.
- When we work together, we can be an unstoppable force for a fairer Australia and fairer world. Let's keep working together for the common good everywhere!

YES! I WANT TO BECOME A GLOBAL NEIGHBOUR

GLOBAL NEIGHBOUR

Your regular gift will have a huge impact in the lives of the world's poorest.

Please accept my **regular monthly donation** and debit my credit card:

Can provide goats for four families in Bali allowing them to lift themselves out of poverty	$15/month ☐
Can provide accommodation and meals for a girl in India to safely attend school	$49/month ☐
Can give a woman in the Pacific a chance to go to college, giving her the tools to effect change	$100/month ☐
Can provide clean water, sanitation education or toilets for a whole community in PNG	$200/month ☐
My Choice $	☐

OR please accept my **single gift** of:

☐ $15 ☐ $49 ☐ $100 ☐ $200

☐ My Choice $_____

CONTACT DETAILS

I am giving as ☐ an individual ☐ a group or congregation

YOUR NAME

YOUR GROUP/CONGREGATION (IF APPLICABLE)

YOUR ADDRESS

SUBURB STATE POSTCODE

( ) PHONE

EMAIL

PAYMENT DETAILS

☐ I enclose cheque/money order made payable to UnitingWorld

OR Please charge my ☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa

CARD NUMBER

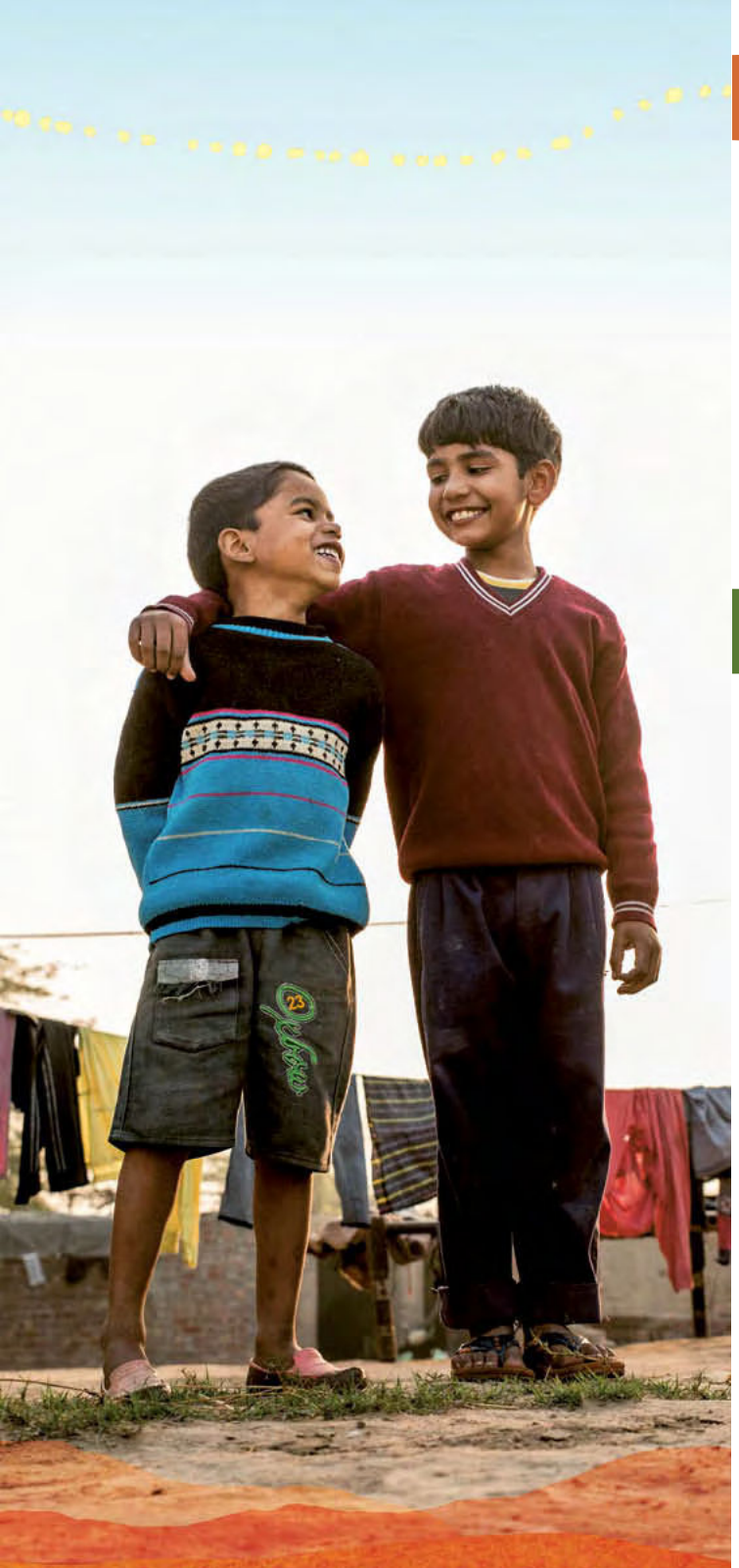
EXPIRY DATE (MM/YY) / CVV

Total Amount $_____

NAME OF CARDHOLDER

SIGNATURE

Regular gifts are debited on the 22nd of the month or next business day. To make changes to your gift at any time, please contact us. UnitingWorld wants to keep you informed about our projects. By providing your information you are agreeing that UnitingWorld may use it to contact you in the future. To opt out, contact us by emailing: info@unitingworld.org.au



Do you believe that **long-term positive change** comes through **connected communities, strong relationships** and **shared resources**?

BECOME A GLOBAL NEIGHBOUR TODAY

EVERYTHING IN COMMON IS COMING!

It's nearly that time again where you can make your Christmas giving help build the world we want to see. With poverty-fighting gifts like clean water, health, education and GOATS, it's a great way to support our transformative work alongside the global church.

WE NEED YOU

Everything in Common wouldn't be possible without our brilliant volunteer stallholders. Hosting a stall is a fantastic opportunity to reach out to your community; selling life-changing gifts and starting important conversations about global poverty during Christmas.

Get in touch and we'll send you everything you need to set up a stall in the leadup to Christmas. We'll also have a great video and PowerPoint for you to advertise your stall!



Last year, your Christmas giving helped us raise more than $350,000 to support our partners. THANK YOU!

Contact: info@unitingworld.org.au or 1800 998 122

NOTES FROM THE NATIONAL DIRECTOR



UCA President Dr Deidre Palmer joined us for our Southeast Asia regional workshop on gender justice

"But I still can't get over how much God loves us, you know?" he says.

The distant softness in his eyes make me realise that the wonder of this truth has struck him before, but each time has the power to move him deeply.

I'm not in some exotic foreign land, connecting across cultures. I'm in the suburban Sydney home of an old friend, listening as he regales me with tales of his youth. In his twenties, he and his wife answered a call to practice medicine in a remote village in India, with two kids under two. A hospital raided by hyenas. They are now in their eighties, but the love of God burns brightly in them and they are faithful supporters of UnitingWorld.

When I first went to India, I met Christians who despite being less than one percent of the population and from the most socially marginalised castes, were extremely active in a range of social ministries. They ran schools, hospitals and fought human trafficking. And their leaders stood out for me. They felt a sense of urgency about their faith that I didn't. Many of them came to faith in their teen years or young adulthood, and they still spoke with a sense of wonder of their discovery. They used phrases like "before I knew Christ" and "when I came to know Jesus" as if of a watershed moment of transition. When they spoke of the gospel, it sounded like this amazing, powerful, dangerous thing they couldn't believe they'd discovered and couldn't wait to share. They were not fresh converts, but seasoned leaders of the church.

The Christians I met in India assumed that people just didn't know that God loved them, and that it was their job to fix that. They remembered how abruptly and miraculously God hijacks your life and sets you on a different path, and they just took it for granted this is what God wanted for everyone. Living in Australia, surrounded by people who live as if Christianity has been tried and found wanting, I have allowed myself to forget the truly radical and earth-shattering nature of the truth that I believe.

We belong to God. We are truly beloved just as we are, created in God's image. We're precious, of infinite value. There is grace enough to heal all our brokenness. Love enough to fill all our longing. This is what Jesus came for, lived for and died for – so that we could know this truth. And we don't just believe it for ourselves, but believe it for every other person near and far. So we cannot rest while poverty, oppression and injustice keeps people from knowing God's love for them. Because the love of God is not just a message to be heard, but a reality to be touched, tasted and lived; made tangible by the actions of God's people.

At UnitingWorld, we often wonder how we can better share the life-changing stories we encounter, better inspire people to join in the global movement of transformation that is the story of God's church at work. I'm convinced now that if I am to follow God's call to act, I must again and again awaken the shocking recognition of who God has called me to be – a beloved child of God.

So as I thank you for your faithful support, I also wish for you a moment of wonder and awe. That you can pause and say "I still can't get over how much God loves me" and let that incandescent truth set you on fire.



Dr Sureka Goringe,
National Director, UnitingWorld

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