

**OVERSEAS AND NORTHERN OUTREACH
CO-ORDINATOR & LINK SECRETARY**

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Winter has been glorious for us; a welcome rest from the oppressive heat of summer. However, during any season, we enjoy having our friends in to share a meal with us. Alan has already prepared the soil for planting as soon as the ground heats up. We miss our constant supply of fresh vegetables.

Psalm 21 shows that the writer is rejoicing in God's goodness. This thread of joy is seen through the first half of the Psalm. In *verses 1-6*, the past goodness to the king; in *verses 8-13*, the verses show confidence in God's blessings and His protection in the future.

This Psalm also reminds us that God wants to bless us; that it is right to enjoy life, but there can often be two factors that prevent us from enjoying all blessings he wants to give us. They are guilt and ingratitude. Sometimes we can imagine that we do not deserve the good things God wants to give us, or on the other hand, that we sometimes use blessings selfishly.

However, *verse 7* solves our problems by linking the two halves of the psalm. Because of His unfailing Love, God blesses us even though we may not deserve it. Living in the light of this knowledge gives us the freedom to enjoy all of God's blessings to us.

We praise God for Mothers Union community development work in developing countries around the world. Programmes are based on needs witnessed first hand by Mothers Union members from their own communities. Programmes have been developed to be applicable specifically within the particular local population so that skills developed or social issues addressed are culturally achievable, so that livelihoods of the families will improve and the whole community will benefit.

Because of the varied cultures and customs of many countries, the issues of sex, early marriage, child abuse and female genital mutilation are deemed inappropriate topics of discussion, groups have to work very hard at breaking down barriers and traditional beliefs that may be harmful to children within families and communities.

The Worldwide Parenting Programme is encouraging open discussion on sensitive topics which enable parents to feel more comfortable raising these issues with their children.

KENYA

Incidents of teenage pregnancies Girls are given condoms, but parents and carers avoid discussing sex with their children. The Parenting Programme is encouraging open discussion in the hope that parents will feel more comfortable discussing sex and sensitive issues with their children.

RWANDA

Many of the group members are 'child headed' households and those caring for street children. The group gives members support and opportunities to talk about their issues.

KAMWOCHYA- KAMPALA in UGANDA

Kamwochya is a highly populated slum area of Kampala City. Those members who are involved in the Parenting Programme have begun the concept of "Collective Parenting", which is an effective way for the group members to care for their children. Good results have helped promote this method of care throughout the community.

GUYANA

Parenting Programme facilitators travel to the remote tribal communities of the Amer Indians here. They hope that this Programme will have a significant impact.

IRAQ

MU in Iraq has 3,097 members as the membership has doubled in the last year. Reverend Andrew White, rector of St. George's Cathedral writes:

'There won't be many churches in the UK where you will find soldiers armed with machine guns amongst the congregation for the Sunday services.'

MU president Nawal George says, "We are working hard all the week days; We face risks and threats from terrorists, but we must continue... We are looking for a better future which we hope will come soon."

CAMEROON

The MU membership here is 500. In march 2010, a large fire swept through a large marketplace which contained 700 stalls. Many people lost their livelihood as many of the stall-holders were widows. The Bishop, MU presidents and workers visited the area to assess the damage.

From M.S.H, a Relief Fund was granted to assist MU in the Cameroon to purchase and distribute emergency supplies of food and other items.