



INTERNATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

WOMEN'S MINISTRIES

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Dear Friends,

Several years ago, not long after moving to London, Lyndon and I set out for our local corps (church) one Sunday morning only to find that our route was blocked and there were hundreds of people lining the streets. We soon realised that the London Marathon's halfway point was a short walk from our home and so, following a number of failed attempts to break away from the crowd, we decided to join them.

Thousands of runners came past – strong athletes and dedicated fundraisers who had trained for something exceptional – and were cheered on by roars of encouragement from the roadside. We were witnessing something special. Within minutes, I heard my own voice among the calls of the supporters, saying, 'Keep going! You can do this!'

All of us long to be affirmed and encouraged by those around us. After all, we have been created to belong to something greater than ourselves. All churches are designed for community, both with those who sit beside us every Sunday and those who are yet to know that they have a place among us. It is where we are known and loved. We are welcome to share the highs, lows and in-betweens of life, and receive support to face it all. On reflection, we didn't miss church that morning – we experienced church on the street!

As we welcome a new year, I turn my mind to women serving in ministries of love and care, transforming lives all around the world. I thank God for each of you, your faithful efforts and the untold Kingdom impact you make.

Your impact could be felt in the weekly coffee served with a smile, a text message to a struggling friend, the monthly portion set aside for overseas donation, or in prayerful conversation over Bible study. However you live out your faith, your contribution is felt and valued in our mission to see women mutually enriched through local and global connections and support.

Paul's words in Colossians 3:9-17 call us to live as those raised with Christ. We must cast off behaviours that don't serve us or others well, and instead clothe ourselves in compassion, humility, patience and love. This is more than a personal choice or a kind gesture; this is the hard work of becoming a Jesus-centred community.

We are chosen, holy and dearly loved. We belong to the Lord, and we have been given to one another as salt and light, to serve as many parts of one body. We are called to grow into hope-filled communities, where the peace of Christ rules and his Word dwells richly among us.

Let us hold firmly to a faith that builds others up. Let our fellowships be marked by grace and loving support. Like the shouts of encouragement that carried the marathon runners to the finish line, may our actions be bold and our words be life-giving. May we continue to cheer one another on in love, believing that we will see lives transformed in the name of Jesus.

Blessings,

Commissioner Bronwyn Buckingham
World President of Women's Ministries

WILLIAM BOOTH, *Founder* LYNDON BUCKINGHAM, *General*

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