

# THANK YOU!

UNITINGWORLD  
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## 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.



# 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](mailto: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

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



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UnitingWorld is an agency of  
the Uniting Church in Australia.

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