On 7th May, the UK General Election resulted in the first Conservative majority Government in 18 years. The results revealed that the Conservative Party won the election with 331 seats, followed by the Labour Party with 232 seats and the Scottish National Party with 56 seats - the largest gain in the election. The Liberal Democrat Party won a total of eight seats, losing 49 of those previously held. Ed Miliband and Nick Clegg, leaders of the Labour and Liberal Democrat parties respectively, resigned, and both parties will now undergo the process of selecting a new party leader. Parliament officially reconvened on Wednesday 27th May at the State Opening of Parliament.

Mothers’ Union will continue to re-establish positive working relationships with returning MPs, as well as informing new MPs about our work and building relationships with them. After the General Election, Mothers’ Union sent copies of the Bye Buy Childhood 2015 report to all MPs, and have already received some responses.

If you have not already made contact with your MP about the Bye Buy Childhood campaign you may want to consider doing so. There are some helpful tips about engaging with political representatives in the Bye Buy Childhood Engagement Pack, which can be found at: www.byebuychildhood.org. You can find out who your current MP is on the Parliament website at: www.parliament.uk.

Please pray for our new Government, that they may govern with wisdom, justice and courage, and for peace and stability in our nation.
New Beginnings

In the political arena, this June marks a time of new beginnings. The new Government has set out in the Queen’s Speech their agenda for this coming Parliament. There are some unfamiliar names amongst the MPs, who are finding their feet in their new roles; both within their constituency and in the House of Commons. In the wider world of politics, too, the Republic of Ireland is entering a new chapter following the result of their vote to allow same sex marriage.

For Christ’s disciples the happenings at Ascension and Pentecost heralded a fresh experience of the purposes of God. Christ’s physical presence with them was replaced by the sending of the Holy Spirit who would empower and guide through what lay ahead. The day of Pentecost marked the birth of the early Church and sparked into action the events which would lead to the spreading of the Gospel throughout the world.

As we ponder the significance of both political and spiritual circumstances, we find security in the constancy of God. We rejoice in the paradox that his faithfulness never ends whilst his mercies are new every day. We pray for our world in the name of Christ, forever the same; we challenge injustice trusting in his grace, continually new.

The Lord’s unfailing love and mercy still continue, Fresh as the morning, as sure as the sunrise.

Lamentations 3:22-23

ASA Ruling

On 6th May the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) ruled against an advert placed by the fashion brand Miu Miu, after an official complaint was made that the advert was inappropriate, and sexualised a model who appeared to be a child. The advert which featured a young looking model in oversized clothes, reclining on a bed with crumpled sheets was found to be in breach of rules 1.3 on social responsibility and rules 4.1 on harm and offence of the CAP Code.

The ASA stated “We considered that her youthful appearance, in conjunction with the setting and pose, could give the impression that the ad presented a child in a sexualised way. Therefore, we concluded that the ad was irresponsible and was likely to cause serious offence.” Prada SpA, who owns the Miu Miu brand, stated that they did not feel that the ad which featured a 22 year old model was inappropriate or sexualised childhood. The ASA ruled that the advert must not appear again in its current form. You can view the detailed ruling by the ASA at: http://tinyurl.com/onapdwv.

For more information on the work of the Advertising Standards Authority and other regulators, as well as for information on how to make a complaint please see: http://www.parentport.org.uk/

Please pray for those responsible for regulating marketing and safeguarding children from inappropriate media.
Citizens of the Republic of Ireland have voted in favour of a new law allowing same sex marriage, in a referendum held on Friday 22nd May. The results which were announced on Saturday 23rd May showed that 62% of voters were in favour of changing the law to allow couples of the same sex to marry, whilst 38% voted against the proposals. The Irish Government has now announced that it will fast track legislation as a result of the referendum, meaning new laws enabling people to marry regardless of their gender may be in place by September.

Frances Fitzgerald, Minister for Justice, also announced that legislation will make allowance for couples who already have in place a notification of intention to enter a civil partnership to convert this into a notification to enter a marriage if they wish, in order to allow them to marry as soon as possible. The new law will allow religious denominations the freedom not to solemnise a same sex marriage in a religious ceremony if they do not wish to do so.

Please pray for wisdom for those implementing this legislation, and for those who will be affected by these changes.

Commemorative Days - June

1st June – International Children’s Day
1st June – Global Day of Parents (UN commemorative day)
1st – 7th June – Child Safety Week (Child Accident Prevention Trust)
1st June – 14th June (The Fostering Network)
4th June – International Day of Innocent Victims of Aggression (UN commemorative day)
8th – 14th June – Carers Week
12th June – World Day Against Child Labour (UN commemorative day)
15th June – World Elder Abuse Awareness

Carers (Scotland) Bill

As Carers Week is celebrated from 8th - 14th of June, Mothers’ Union will be watching the Carers (Scotland) Bill as it makes its way through the Scottish Parliament. The Bill, which was introduced on 9th March this year, takes into account some of the effects that caring can have on family life and aims to make better provision in law for those who are carers. The changes which are proposed by the bill include a duty for local authorities to provide support to those who care, as well as clarifying the definition of a carer.

You can view the Bill in its current form at: www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/86987.aspx

Please pray for the Scottish Parliament as they consider this bill.

Staff Update - Farewell to Reg Bailey CBE

June sadly heralds the last full month of Mothers’ Union Chief Executive, Reg Bailey CBE, with the organisation, as he retires in July after 17 years of service. Reg has made an invaluable contribution to the direction and success of Mothers’ Union during his time with us, including the work he has done on the commercialisation of childhood through the Bailey Review. He will be very much missed! The selection of a new Chief Executive is currently underway.

Please pray for Reg and his family as they look to the future, and for the selection of a new Chief Executive.
State Opening of Parliament

On 27th May, Her Majesty the Queen presented the new Government's plans at the State Opening of Parliament. The Government will introduce a number of new bills, including:

- **Full Employment and Welfare Benefits Bill**, which will freeze the main rates of a number of working-age benefits, tax credits and Child Benefit; reduce the level of the benefit cap and remove automatic entitlement to housing support for 18-21 year olds (UK wide).
- **Childcare Bill**, which will give families where both parents are working an entitlement to 30 hours a week of free childcare for their three and four-year olds, for 38 weeks (England only).
- **Housing Bill**, which will extend Right to Buy levels of discount to housing association tenants; require local authorities to dispose of high-value vacant council houses; and introduce a statutory register for brownfield land (UK wide).
- **Education and Adoption Bill**, which will allow local authorities to make arrangements for their adoption functions to be carried out on their behalf by one of the local authorities named or by another agency (England only).
- **Policing and Criminal Justice Bill**, which will ensure 17 years olds detained in police custody are treated as children; prohibit the use of police cells as places of safety for those with mental health problems under 18 years of age; introduce improved protection for children, including a criminal offence of ‘wilful neglect’; and close a legal loophole so that live-streaming of child sexual abuse online can be punished in the same way as recorded images (England and Wales).
- **Charities (Protection and Social Investment) Bill**, which will strengthen the powers of the Charity Commission; and give charities a new specific power to make social investments (England and Wales).

- Enterprise Bill
- Energy Bill
- Immigration Bill
- Trade Unions Bill
- Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill
- HS2 Bill
- Scotland Bill; Wales Bill; Northern Ireland Bill
- EU Referendum Bill
- Extremism Bill
- Investigatory Powers Bill
- Psychoactive Substance Bill
- Armed Forces Bill
- Votes for Life Bill
- Buses Bill

In addition, the Government will work towards proposals for a British Bill of Rights, address energy security, take measures on immigration, devolve further powers, carry out a defence review and increase rights of victims of crime.


**Lobby Logs for Bye Buy Childhood Campaign**

Don’t forget to send us your Lobby Logs from the Bye Buy Childhood Engagement Pack. If you have made contact with a political representative as part of the Bye Buy Childhood campaign, simply complete the Lobby Log and return it to us at: Bye Buy Childhood Campaign, Mothers’ Union, Mary Sumner House, 24 Tufton Street, London SW1P 3RB or email it to: policy@mothersunion.org

The Bye Buy Childhood 2015 report and the corresponding Engagement Pack can be accessed on the website at: [www.byebuychildhood.org](http://www.byebuychildhood.org).

**Consultation on Gender Equality**

The European Commission are currently looking for responses to a public consultation on equality between men and women in the EU. The consultation, which is open to everyone, came out of a European Commission forum on the ‘future of gender equality in the EU’. To respond to the questionnaire as an individual, please go to: [ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/GenderEquality2015](http://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/GenderEquality2015) and complete the questions.

To find out more about the work of the European Commission see: [ec.europa.eu/index_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/index_en.htm)