

WOMEN'S DAY

Today is International Women's Day. Originally marked in the USA as a way of advocating better pay and voting rights for women, it was taken up by the Soviet Union, and has spread around the world until now when it is promoted by the UN.

Around the globe some countries give women a public holiday. Other countries treat IWD more as a cross between Mothers Day and Valentines Day with men giving gifts to wives, partners or colleagues. You may not be aware of it, but in the UK there are more events planned today than any other country.

Just over 100 years since its inception, the rights of women are still being addressed. And there is some way to go.

Throughout history women have not been given their proper place nor received due recognition. Even today women face massive inequality around the world, and, despite appearances, our own society does not yet reward women with equal pay, certain sports clubs remain off limits to women, and there are institutions that refuse women to play a major role.

Sadly, the Christian church has been one of the bastions of patriarchy. Even today there are Churches that would relegate women to the background and refuse to allow them to hold positions of authority. Yet this sad state of affairs flies in the face of the original message of Christianity.

Jesus treated women with great respect and even counted women as his followers - something that was unthinkable in a time where women were regarded as property and barely human.

One of the first leaders in the church wrote in the Bible that there was no difference between men and women in Gods eyes (or even between slaves and free people) which was a radical message then and still challenges us today to seek to ensure that all are treated equally. And it's a message that some branches of the church are still grappling with.

Whether its women, or children, or foreigners, or the disabled, or the poor or homosexuals there are always groups of people who seem to be regarded as inferior, and it's the duty of society and the church and all of us as individuals to do something about changing those perceptions.

David Mclachlan - March 8 2012