



The TREE *- of* LIFE

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President's letter

'Go and Tell'

Just a year ago many of us were in Houston, Texas, being encouraged to consider ourselves "Chosen People: Called to Proclaim." I wonder how many opportunities you have taken since then to "proclaim" the faith. I wonder whether you have travelled far to do so or whether you have been able to share the good news of your faith nearer to home.

In August, this year I had the privilege to attend the events in Zimbabwe to celebrate 40 years of autonomy of the Zimbabwe Methodist Church. Thousands gathered in the Sports Stadium in Harare and gave thanks for those who left home many years ago to bring the gospel to the people of East Africa. No doubt they too felt called by God and compelled to proclaim their faith in a risen Lord, empowered by the Holy Spirit to spread the faith through word and action. And then, in 1977, the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe, having gained strength and maturity, became autonomous, still in partnership with the British Methodist Church, but now self-governing and independent. That also is truly worth celebrating! For 40 years, Zimbabwean women and men have responded to the call to ordained and lay ministry and have faithfully preached the

word and served God through the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe. And still they 'go and tell'.

Just a few months earlier, I attended the launch of a new branch of the Zimbabwe Methodist Fellowship in the UK. There are many such groups in Britain, of women and men who have made the UK their home and wish to continue to worship in the style of their church of origin. The launch of the Portsmouth branch of the Zimbabwe Fellowship (not far from where I live) was a real celebration. It was such a wonderful



"Wherever you find yourself today, take each and every opportunity to proclaim the faith through word and action."

Area President Sipiwe Chisvo of Methodist Church in Zimbabwe with Annah Mwadiwa from the UK MCZ Fellowship, celebrating 40 years of Autonomous Mission in the National Sports Stadium, Harare. More information about that event will be on the website: www.ufmucw.org.

experience to have this "foretaste" of things to come even before I set off for Harare. I give thanks that the members of the fellowships also get involved in their local Methodist Churches and become "salt and light" in their own communities, in the UK. Wherever you find yourself today, take each and every opportunity to proclaim the faith through word and action.

Every blessing,

- Alison Judd

Word and Action

I have heard many Christians quoting a saying that is attributed to Francis of Assisi, even though it is not known who said it: "Preach the Gospel at all times, and if it is necessary, use words."

I truly agree that we must show and put into practice our belief, but I do not think that it should be all. It is true that we act according to our own ideology or belief and it is also true that a love that is only proclaimed and not shown is not love. Many times when I think about what love means, I think about Jesus. He not only believed and proclaimed, but he showed through the most

sacrificial act – through His own death - and I am sure we must show Christianity and show love on this earth. James 2:14 says: "What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them?" and verse 20 states "You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless?", for "Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead." (verse 17, NIV)

But I also believe that we have to say it, to express it through words: "Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ." (Romans 10:17, NIV) How will people believe if we do not say a word? "How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of

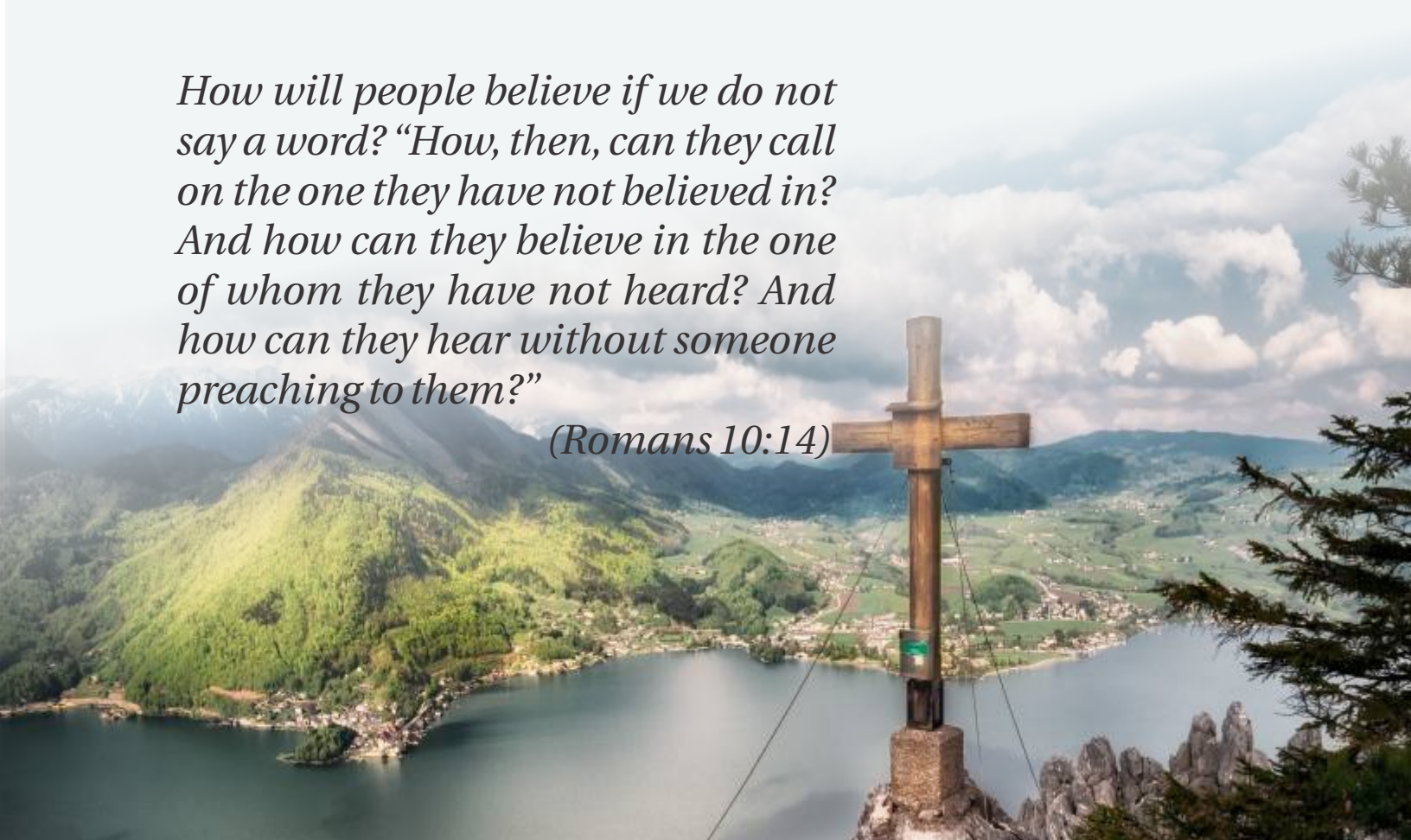
whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?" (Romans 10:14)

Faith must be shown through words and deeds together. It is funny that the quote that instructs us mainly to have deeds is attributed to a preacher of Christianity, that was proclaiming the Gospel all day long. But of course, it is easier not to say anything. It is easier to stay anonymous and help others, than to say who you are, what you believe and what you are standing for. Do not forget that Jesus Himself was the embodied Word of God. Words are necessary. Dare to talk! But do not stop there. Put legs to your words and transform them into deeds!

-Ligia Istrate

How will people believe if we do not say a word? "How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?"

(Romans 10:14)



North America Area Devotional

Esther: “For such a time as this”

What are you so afraid of?

Recently a friend of mine went sky diving. She described the experience as amazing! She told me you can't imagine anything else in the world like that feeling. She felt God was with her every step of the way. For her personally, skydiving was an exercise in complete surrender.

Personally, however, I am not so sure I want to jump out of an airplane no matter how exciting it sounds. Her ability to step out of the airplane in faith certainly makes me think about my own faith and how God is asking me to step out of my comfort zone.

In the book of Esther, we see a young woman, an orphan, who rises above the rest to become Queen of Persia. In all this process, she has hidden her Jewish heritage from everyone.

During her time as Queen, Esther finds out about a plot to kill her people: Haman, the king's trusted advisor, harbours a hatred so deep that he issues a decree in the king's name to have all the Jewish people in Persia annihilated. Esther's cousin, Mordecai, makes an appeal to her. He asks her to do a courageous thing – to go to the king,

unsummoned, knowing it is punishable by death.


God's sovereign hand led Esther to step out of her comfort zone. “Who knows if perhaps you were made queen for such a time as this?” (Esther 4:14, NLT)

Esther had to stop and listen to God. Through prayer and fasting, she had the faith and courage to stand up, to face the King, without being summoned, with a plea to save her people.

How do you listen for God? Like Esther, each day we need to be mindful to take time to listen to God. He tells us to “Be still and know that I am God.” (Psalm 46:10) Where is He directing your path? What is

your reaction to His call? Are you all in, or do you hold back? We want to feel in control of every situation. Turning that control over to God and stepping out in faith is often hard for us to do. God's sovereign hand is there at all times. He is the One who placed Esther in a position of royalty to save her people. The places and the people He puts in our lives, each and every situation, is “for such a time as this.” How is God asking you to step out of your comfort zone?

- Tonya R. Tapp



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News



Tamil speaking women with our EAA President and Committee

The East Asia area officers planning meeting

Took place at Kinta River Front Hotel, Ipoh, Malaysia from 24th to 26th July 2017.



Vasantha garlanding Mrs. Ting, EAA President

An evening with the EAA President, Mrs. Ting and her Committee was held at the Tamil Methodist Church in

Ipoh on 25th July 2017. About 200 ladies from the Perak District Methodist Women gathered for this fellowship. The programme started with a Word of Welcome by Miss Nisha, former Asian Young Women's Leadership Training candidate. Mrs. Ting, was garlanded by Mrs. Vasantha, MW President of Tamil Settlement, Ipoh. Perak District MW President, Mrs. Jebagany, led the opening prayer and Mrs. Margaret, Mrs. Koh, Mrs. Chang and Mrs. Mary delivered their greetings and reports. The highlight of the day was the message and greetings from our EAA President, Mrs. Ting. In her

address, she challenged our



Chinese speaking women with our EAA President & Committee

women to be faithful in serving God and to work on the SDGs. East Asia Area will concentrate on: 1. Sustainable Cities & Communities - Recycling / Reducing Litter. Work for a clean and safe environment with green spaces. 2. Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions. This quinquennium, every

Church, Unit and Area shall engage in proclaiming the love of God through social action that focuses on at least one of the Sustainable Development Goals, enable creative worship that draws us closer to God, and build relationships with others that help to make Christ known. Closing prayer and benediction was led by Rev. P. Sandireaseharan, Perak District Superintendent and the Senior Pastor of the Tamil Methodist Church, Tamil Settlement, Ipoh. This memorable day ended with a fellowship dinner. All Praise and Glory to God!

In His Service,

- Mary Devadason,
EAA Vice President

Helen Kim Memorial Scholars

We are very happy to announce that two of our Helen Kim Memorial Scholars (2016-2021), Ligia Istrate, our ToL Editor, and Rebekah Eve Daniel, recommended and supported by the Federation, participated in two different courses organized by the World Council of Churches. Both young ladies are thankful for this.

Bossey Programme: “Sharing the Faith in a Multi-Cultural and Multi-Faith World”

starts with listening.” This is what we did all the programme – we listened to one another and we learnt from one another, so at the end, we were much richer in understanding, knowledge, love and friendships. We have learnt



At the Muslim Centre of Inter-Religious Dialogue

The programme was held in Switzerland, at the Ecumenical Institute of the World Council of Churches, in Chateau de Bossey, very close to Geneva. The group that attended was composed of 12 participants, mainly pastors, priests and ministers, led by two professors from the WCC. The schedule included morning prayer, led by us, different seminars, much sharing from personal life, and special visits. As one of my colleagues remembered, at the beginning, Rev. Dr. Martin Robra told us, “This event is about creating meaningful spaces for sharing and the participation of young people beyond the boundaries of the faiths and cultures. But it all

how each one of us, as Christians, share the faith in this world that is challenged with so many problems, but we have also learnt how other Religions share their faith, meeting Jews and Muslims. For me, the two most special moments were the meeting with Father Ioan Săuca, the Director of the Ecumenical Institute, who is a Romanian like me. I think his teaching will remain with me a long time: he challenged us to live our Christianity and to share it in a simple way as Christianity in itself is enough. The other special moment for me was meeting Carla Khijoyan, that works for peace-building between religions in the Middle East, and this is

actually my heart.

As part of the programme, we visited Taizé in France, a Christian community organised around monks, dedicated to sharing a simple



Ligia Istrate, near Bossey

message of Christianity, mainly to young people. These young people go to live there from a week to several years in order to know God better and to help this community through serving. People live there in prayer and quietness; they study the Bible, sing very simple Christians songs, eat very simply and live very simply. This reminded me of Father Săuca's words, Christianity attracts and we do not have to make it more attractive. We were at Taizé for one day, together with another 3500 young pilgrims from around the world, and it was very touching!

I can just say that the Bossey seminar was a wonderful

experience and inspiring for all of us from the group. Our Faith is very precious and we have to show it through words and deeds and we must all work to build a peaceful society, no matter the different religions, different cultures and different colours of our skin.

-Ligia Istrate

Y A T R A Programme: "Passionately Christian and Compassionately Interreligious"

was completed in Indonesia with participants from fourteen different countries in Asia. The word "Yatra" is the Sanskrit word for journey, and this course was our journey from embedded theology to embodied theology. We expanded our understanding of other faiths in our conversations with theologians, Hindu priests, Muslim scholars, Buddhist monks, other facilitators and visits to religious places. We saw that each faith commonly recognised bondage and sought liberation and wholeness.

In the Indian context, with Hindutva (an ideology seeking to establish the hegemony of Hindus and the Hindu way of life) on the rise and visibly



My two-week journey with the YATRA (Youth in Asia Training for Religious Amity) course

insecure cultural and religious identities, including linguistic struggles, I learnt that I must engage in dialogue with our



neighbours, armed with the knowledge of the spaciousness of our God.

The course made us passionate followers of Christ and moved us to tears and provoked us to be vulnerable in such a way that we will extend our arms and take up our cross against oppression and suffering along with other faiths. Our interactions with activists working for peace, LGBT rights, the disabled, and trauma healing, gave avenues of action for the fire of compassion and passion for Christ that had been kindled in us.

The words from this transformative learning that still resonate with me are that God our friend says, “Let us, all of us, break bread together in fellowship and joy.”

-Rebekah Eve Daniel

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proofreading the text for each issue.

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