



THE WORLD FEDERATION OF METHODIST AND UNITING CHURCH WOMEN

July - September 2021 / Issue No. 3

# The TREE —of LIFE

## Race of life in faith

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# President's letter

## Dear Sisters,

Did you watch any of the TV coverage of the Olympic Games? Did you marvel at the endurance, the commitment, the courage of the athletes? Were you encouraged or challenged when you saw the Paralympians overcome disability with determination and inner strength? Did you celebrate with them at their homecoming when their families and friends and supporters welcomed them home?

These Olympic Games were different to usual of course. The athletes were still competing in a variety of gruelling events, but many were separated from their normal supporters, their fans, families, and friends. There were only a few shouting encouragements from within the stadium. Coronavirus infection was always a possibility that would prevent a competitor from taking part in their event, for which they had prepared during many months and even years. It must have taken enormous courage to persevere with training and compete in such risky circumstances.

So, what drives these people to such a feat of endurance? Is it the excitement of competition? Is it the desire to break a previously held personal best or a world record? Is it the longing to stand on the podium wearing the bronze, silver, or gold medal on behalf of their country? Or are they driven by the challenge of discovering their own God-given potential? How important is encouragement from others?

Whatever the outcome in their particular event, what a wonderful homecoming it must have been! For those of us who are running the race of life in faith (2 Timothy 4:7 and Hebrews 12:1-2), we too will be welcomed home in triumph. Best of all it is Jesus Christ our Lord who will be there to bring us across the threshold into the eternal life He has

promised us. We know there will be great rejoicing and can imagine a great crowd of witnesses shouting 'Halleluiah, you've made it! You've done it! Your earthly task has ended. Now comes eternal rest, and limitless joy.'

In our communion liturgy we sometimes give thanks for this 'foretaste of the heavenly banquet prepared for all people.'

We can rejoice that two of our former World Presidents, Elizabeth Kissack and Oknah Kim Lah, are now enjoying the 'heavenly banquet' together with a glorious host of saints and witnesses who have been welcomed into a homecoming celebration led by Jesus the Christ.

*'May I run the race before me,  
strong and brave to face the foe,  
looking only unto Jesus  
as I onward go.'*

(Verse 5 from the hymn 'May the mind of Christ my Saviour' by Kate Barclay Wilkinson (1859-1928))

- Alison Judd, World President

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# Editor's word:

I am your shield, your very great reward.

Abraham's life amazes me every time I read it, for certainly, he was a great man of God. Even though nowadays society does not promote humbleness anymore, as it is all about what you become, how much money you earn, what you have achieved, how you look, how your body matches the modelling requirements, how many likes you receive and how many shares you have, in God's world humbleness is still a virtue.

When God called Abraham out of Ur, Mesopotamia, He called him from a very prosperous, rich, fancy city into a humble trip on camels, to a country that was not revealed yet. Later, on the journey, the name was revealed to be Canaan. The Semitic root of this word means to be humble, which is very explicit. Imagine living in a country where you have everything, great infrastructure, great riches, your own estate, and being asked to leave it all behind and travel for months and months to an unknown, poor, unfancy place. I think you need to humble yourself a lot to do this.

But Abraham's story of humbleness continues because he trusted God more than anything, even though he had his flaws. When he arrives in Canaan, there is famine, then family problems begun with Sara, then with his nephew, Lot, and so on. But here something very interesting happens. Abraham asks Lot to part company with him to remain in a good relationship (Genesis 13: 19), but he does not demand any part of the land (land that was promised to him); he lets Lot choose. Of course, Lot takes the best part: Lot looked around and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan toward Zoar was well watered, like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt... So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan (13:10-12) Abraham is left with the desert area and, again, it seems that the blessing is passing by him.

Soon after, war breaks out in the Jordan Valley and the cities near which Lot settled are conquered by a coalition, and Lot is taken as a prisoner of war. At that moment, Abraham goes after him with an army and brings back all the war prisoners and the fortunes. His morality can be clearly seen following the victory, he was greeted by two personalities of the area. First is the king of Sodom, a city where people were particularly wicked, and he offered Abraham the prey

that was recovered, but Avram refuses: "With raised hand I have sworn an oath to the LORD, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, that I will accept nothing belonging to you... I will accept nothing" (14:22-24)

At the same time, he meets a local king, Melchizedek (meaning "righteous king"), and Abraham receives the blessing of this king from ancient Jerusalem, who was also "High Priest of the God Most High." In this situation, Abraham refused the material blessing of a sinful king and accepted the spiritual blessing of a righteous king.

Right after this episode, God spoke to Abraham and told him not to be afraid - though his fears were well-founded: a new coalition could be formed against him - and that He was "his shield and his very great reward" (Genesis 15:1), as if it was a huge divine gift given for his humbleness.

When you renounce your own comfort, riches, pride,; God Himself, the All Mighty One, the most caring one, the richest one, is your reward and your inheritance. That is most certainly a great deal.



LORD, you alone are my inheritance, my cup of blessing. You guard all that is mine. (Psalm 16:5, NLT)

After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward." (Genesis 15:1)

-Ligia Istrate, Tree of Life Editor

# 'Together, with Hope on the Way'

Methodist Women in Britain have been celebrating their 10th Anniversary this year.



However, plans for the celebration events have been curtailed due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

We therefore decided

that instead of meeting face to face at our annual conference in April, we would hold the event online using 'Zoom,' so 'Together, with Hope on the Way' was born!

Our Keynote Speaker for the weekend was Sister Imelda Poole MBE, who works with the

**Together,  
with Hope  
on the Way**



Mary Ward Loreto Foundation/Albanian Hope, to prevent human trafficking among young people in Albania. Imelda, a sister of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, works to address the root causes of trafficking, including poverty, and is involved with the rescue and rehabilitation of victims of trafficking. In her keynote addresses, Imelda shared some of her experiences and made us aware of the signs of a victim of trafficking. Workshops were held on the first afternoon by three organisations who work with

trafficked people – 'Hope for Justice', 'Stop the Traffic', and 'Railway Children'. They shared news of their work and activities.

On the Sunday morning, opening prayers and updates were led by the Helen Kim



Sister Imelda Poole IBVM  
In Mary Ward Loreto Foundation

Memorial Scholars Rachel Allison, Wanda Hogan, and Phoebe Parkin, the current Youth President. These were followed by a WFMUCW update by World President, Alison Judd. A Bible study followed by Louise Wilson, President of the British and Ireland Unit and worship was led by Hilary Evans, President of MWiB.

The Sunday afternoon was a celebration of our tenth anniversary, led by Hilary Evans, and featured a video celebrating the work of MWiB, a poem written by Hilary and the singing of two hymns, specially written for the occasion, by Hilary and Ruth Parrott, Vice President. For the grand finale each person provided themselves with a cake and a candle and we sang 'Happy Birthday'. This was followed by a firework display – on video of course!

We hope to continue our celebrations next year, 10 + 1 years, proving that we are 'Together, with Hope on the Way'.

*- Ruth Parrott, MWiB President*

# News

WORSHIP / BIBLE STUDY / STORIES / ACTION

GLOBAL ONLINE EVENT  
13TH & 14TH AUGUST 2021

FOR MORE INFORMATION  
[www.wfmucw.org](http://www.wfmucw.org)

World Federation  
of Methodist and  
Uniting Church Women

A NEW VISION  
FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

## The online global online event 'A New Vision for a sustainable future.'

A two-day event was held in August, which was a great opportunity to bring Federation women together virtually, and to gain experience of organising a global online event in case the pandemic prevented us from meeting physically in 2022.

The aim of the two-day event was to celebrate God's activity through the women of the Federation, and to focus on our response to the current climate crisis, which

becomes ever more urgent as the months pass.

A full report can be found on our website:

- A New Vision: Report – World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women ([wfmucw.org](http://wfmucw.org))

### What people said about the event:

Thank you, young ladies, for being ambassadors of climate change, it's wonderful to listen to your stories. I am blessed to hear what you are doing.

Thanks to the team who help invite these speakers to share and make us wake up to the reality of climate change and care for God's creation.

This session is an eye opener... raising awareness for women. Very Productive... thank you Alison...

Thank you for organizing this wonderful time together! Thank you for reminding us to be aware and be the change that this world needs! Blessings.

Thank you for such an amazing webinar. May God richly bless you!

I was encouraged by the sheer number of women who logged in from different countries, at different times of their day, to share together as they ate breakfast, lunch, dinner or readied for bed; to see the comments in the chat and Q & A boxes about how God is good despite all the hardships that have been experienced and to

to read and gain inspiration from what others have been doing in their Areas. It was wonderful to be together.

It has been a wonderful time of hearing, sharing, and learning. Great experiences to help us take action. May God go with us and give us the vision to care for our world and make a difference in our walk with God. Thanks to our leaders for such an opportunity to be with sisters all over the world. May we remain one in our goal as we strive to know Christ and make Christ known to the world.

I thank God for this gathering which gave us the opportunity to see our faces again and hear from our leaders and each Area how they cooperate during the pandemic. As we are doing the Master's business entrusted in our hands, may God reward the labour of our hands, in Jesus name.

Thanks for all your good work. Thank you so much to all those who have contributed to these two amazing days. It has been wonderful to connect with women all around the world, to share our concerns and to pray together for the healing of this wonderful Earth. God Bless you all.

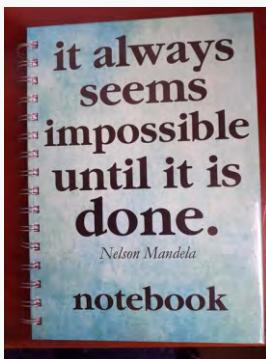
I confess that I was delighted with the World Event and even more delighted to know the care, concern, and love in doing everything in the best possible way... May God bless them and bless us in these difficult times where we are learning unimaginable things... We have already watched the videos and shared them with all of our Latin America and Caribbean Area.

Congratulation and a big thank you!!! It was very good in many senses: first of all many contents such as the "climate ambassadors", the film on Fiji, the many links - I look forward to seeing them on YouTube, but also the technical side; I quote Louise Wilson: "we are not too old to learn new computer skills (forced!)". But it is also a gift that we can profit from these inventions. So, not being able to meet in

Gothenburg it is also a contribution to climate change! It was also nice to see many well-known faces and I could feel that you are a good team.

It was wonderful! I just loved meeting my sisters in Christ from around the world and gaining strength for the journey from their story. I'm looking forward to sharing the YouTube recording with others.

## Prayers answered!



I know I should not be surprised. We serve a faithful God who hears our prayers, emboldens us through visions of amazing possibilities and entrusts to us the work of

sharing the gospel message.

We prayed about our first ever global online event 'A New Vision for a sustainable future.' Some of us met together via zoom to pray each 26th day of the month. We prayed that God would provide for us, and God did not let us down.

Last month, 26th August, we met to thank God for the wonderful experience of our online event. We thanked God:

- That more than 900 registered for the event
- That more than 400 joined live, some in groups watching on one screen
- That everything went smoothly and well
- That it took me hours on the Sunday to read through the chat box messages, mostly very positive
- That the evaluation responses will teach us how to do even better next time
- That the WFMUCW YouTube channel became live on the Saturday morning
- That many more women will be

able to watch our event via YouTube over the coming months

- For the PH Production team
- For the interpreters
- For the HKMS team
- For the live speakers
- For the videos
- For the music
- For the donations
- For the many suggestions of ways we can care for our planet: plant trees, use a bike, think and act 'green', raise awareness about pollution, encourage litter-picking, use the bus instead of the car, ECO church, Green Church, reuse washing water to water flowers and vegetables, avoid food waste, lobby governments ... so many great ideas. Keep posting ideas on our Facebook page.

Now we must not rest from prayer, for we have another online event for which to prepare: our 14th World Assembly in August 2022. Please pray for our Assembly Steering Committee as they adjust the preparations already made so that our next meeting goes as well as, or even better than, the last.

Amidst all the prayers for our own activities, let us not forget to pray earnestly for our sisters across the world who are experiencing enormous challenges of daily living.

The Lord hears our prayers. Thanks be to God.

-Alison Judd, World President

## 14th World Assembly 9th-14th August 2022

COVID-19 has caused us to rethink how we live, meet, and go about our usual business. We must be flexible, innovative, and creative. The World Executive met recently to discuss the 14th World Assembly considering the Covid-19 pandemic. As you can appreciate, the impact of COVID-19 including travel restrictions and quarantine requirements vary from

country to country across the globe. Some are beginning to open their borders, while others have got a long way to go yet before they can start to even think about opening for international travel. We believe that



for us to hold such an event would create huge risk for both our members and the local community within Sweden. It would also likely attract unwanted worldwide publicity that wouldn't reflect well on us, especially as a Christian organization.

Therefore, the decision to hold the 14th World Assembly in August 2022 will remain but it will be a virtual online assembly and not in person in Sweden as initially planned. This decision was not easy to make but after much discussion and prayer, we firmly believe it is the right thing to do. We must stand together as one – it would not be fair to hold such a key event where only a few could attend whilst many of our sisters would be unable to join through no fault of their own.

Planning is underway on how best to undertake online certain elements/aspects of the assembly such as the installation service, business meetings, Helen Kim program etc.

The World Officers will provide regular updates via our website [www.wfmucw.org](http://www.wfmucw.org), Facebook and twitter. Thank you for your patience as we navigate through this together. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to email me on [world.secretary@wfmucw.org](mailto:world.secretary@wfmucw.org)

I want to acknowledge and thank the respective Area Officers, Unit leaders and local fellowships for your

ongoing work in making our mission and God's ministry seen around the world.

- Mataiva Robertson, *World Secretary*

## Helen Kim Memorial Scholarship Program

It was a long-held dream by many in World Federation leadership that there will be a regular opportunity for young women to attend a World Federation Assembly and experience unique fellowship and community spirit. Prior to the Assembly they also have high quality leadership development training with people with similar interests and involvements from many other countries.

The programme is in honour of Helen

### 1.Criteria:

Two young women from each of the World Federation Areas will be given the opportunity to attend the World Federation Assembly.

This is preceded by a Leadership Development Training Programme, in which they:

- acquire skills from an expert in leadership development.
- participate in community building amongst young women from all Areas.
- build relationships with members of the Executive Committee and the World Federation.
- Meet representative/s to the United Nations.

### 2.Eligibility:

Helen Kim Memorial Scholars are:

- aged between 18 and 30 years at the time of the World Federation World Assembly.
- committed members of a Methodist, United or Uniting Church.
- involved in women's issues and/or church work.
- young women who have shown leadership abilities.
- able to state ways in which they will be able to share their newly acquired skills.
- nominated by a member of their local World Federation Unit; and
- endorsed by their Minister and the Unit President.



Kim, who, as a young Korean woman, had a Christ-inspired vision of a world sisterhood. She dreamt of a time when women could work together 'to promote peace and better conditions in the whole world.' The World Federation of Methodist & Uniting Church Women is the outcome of that vision.

The hope is that the Helen Kim Memorial Scholarship Programme will also inspire young women with visions of a world where there is:

- hope for the hopeless.
- security for the insecure;
- sufficient for the impoverished;
- freedom for the oppressed; and
- a voice for the voiceless.

The Helen Kim Memorial Scholarship is now open for applications. Please contact the World Secretary for an application form. Please ensure all applications are submitted to your Area Officers by the 31st October 2021.

The World Officers are currently working on how best to implement the Helen Kim Programme given that the 14th World Assembly will be conducted completely online.

I would like to encourage every Unit

to submit applications to your Area Officers for consideration. The World Officers will make their decision in December 2021 so that the successful applicants are made aware before the new year.

Thank you for your ongoing work and spreading God's love in the communities you serve. We are facing challenging times, but we know through faith that Christ walks before us, behind us and beside us always.

- Mataiva Robertson,  
World Secretary

## Elizabeth Kissack – a life well lived



WFMUCW was organized with a vision and purpose: to know Christ and to make Him known. Faithful Women elected to the positions of responsibility held on and passed on the Baton of Faith to other faithful women. We praise God for such women. Their faith journey is inspiring and they have left their footprints on the sands of time.

We remember one such person – Elizabeth Kissack – the 9th President of the World Federation of Methodist Church Women (1976- 1981). She passed on to glory in the Isle of Man in June 2021 at the age of 105 years. During her tenure as President, she had a vision to enable the World Federation to become an NGO at the United Nations which was endorsed at the World Assembly in 1981.

Her life was long and well lived and we thank God for her life and faith, love and service to Jesus Christ. May she rest in peace, for God's Word is an assurance for "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord...they will rest from their labour, for their deeds will follow them." (Revelation 14:13). Our prayers go to the family as they grieve for their loved one. Surely the "Lord is close to the broken hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit".

*-Dorothy Sampath Kumar,  
Former Editor of Tree of Life*

## Dr Oknah Kim Lah – a great leader

The World Federation sisterhood is giving God thanks for the long and distinguished life of one of their inspirational leaders, Dr Oknah Kim Lah, who died on 30 August, 2021.

She was born on September 27, 1918 in Goseong-gun, Gangwon-do, Republic of Korea. Oknah Kim was educated at Toshisha Women's University in Japan and earned her Master's degree in Theology from Yonsei University.

She served as President of the Korean Methodist Women's Society Christian Service from



1967 to 1974. From 1974 to 1981 she served as President of the World Federation of Methodist Uniting Church Women of East Asia area. She later served as President of the World Federation of Methodist Uniting Church Women from 1981 to 1986. Kakdang Welfare Foundation training centre was established by Oknah after she had retired from her World Federation leadership role in 1986.

The President of the World Methodist Council Rev J C Park said: 'Many Korean citizens as well as Korean Methodists have mourned her death with great admiration for her enormous service for the women, the youth and the elderly people in Korea.'

The funeral service is available to watch on this link  
<https://youtu.be/UEt0JGnycWE>

*-Secretary of the Korean Women's Society of Christian Service, Seoul.  
Published on: <https://wfmucw.org>*

## A Personal Tribute to Oknah Kim Lah by Ann Connan

One of the first issues I raised with my new Executive after my installation as World President in 2011 was the Federation Hymn. This was difficult to sing, and I suggested we find a new tune. I needed to contact Oknah Kim Lah, World President from 1981-1986, who was the author of the words. I had never met Oknah, but had read and heard of her, and I was in awe. During her Presidency, the Federation received consultative status as an NGO member of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, and the History of

the Federation was published. So, I wrote to her with my idea of a new tune. She gave me her blessing to change whatever I liked! The result was a slight change in the words and a new tune - easily sung. I loved her for her generosity.

In 2013 I attended the World Council of Churches Assembly in Busan, Korea, with East Asia President Laureen Ong. Oknah knew I was there and arranged for her friend, Haesun, to bring her from to meet me. I was overwhelmed that this Past President, whom I respected so much, wanted to meet me. We sat in the little café, Oknah holding my hand tightly, and chatted about our times as Presidents. Mine was fraught with difficulties

because of financial problems and Oknah was sympathetic. She told of always travelling First Class to the more than 60 countries she visited because her husband was a generous businessman and paid! And of doing lots of shopping after each meeting: "My husband will pay to get it home!" Oknah was then in her 90s, her grooming had her in her 70s, and she giggled like a 30-year-old!

Next morning after worship it was suggested she leave. "Oh, no," said Oknah, "I'm going to Bible Study with Ann". And she did - still holding my hand!

We continued to write and send greetings to each other until just before her death at almost 103

years of age. She shared with me her work in Korea after her time serving the Federation. The Kakdang Social Welfare Foundation had four arms: Volunteer Training, Hospice Care Training, Death Education, and Global Cultural Education. Korea honored her for this work because she was a truly remarkable woman. But to me she was a warm, generous friend, genuinely interested in me.

We give thanks to God for Oknah's commitment to the work of the Federation and rejoice that she is now in God's welcoming arms.

- Ann Connan, President Emerita



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