



Program written by
North America Area

Methodist Women Impacting the World for 75 Years

The 75th Anniversary of the WFM&UCW

PURPOSE: Recalling and celebrating the work of the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women. The information shared today comes mainly from the book Methodist Women: A World Sisterhood which is no longer in print. While this summary can never replace that authoritative history, it helps place some highlights in electronic form for future use by the WFMUCW. We hope it will help you appreciate the efforts of the last 75 years that we celebrate today while looking to the future. (All page numbers are found in this type bracket {}. They reference the above book.)

Because of the length of the program, you may want to use as much as you can depending on the time you have.

SCRIPTURE SUGGESTIONS: Revelations 22:2

AIM OF FEDERATION: to aid in establishing Christ's kingdom among all peoples and in all areas of life; to share the abundant life of Christ through evangelism, healing ministries, education and social services; to assist in the promotion of the missionary spirit throughout the world parish; and to seek with women of all lands fellowship and mutual help in the building of a Christian community.

MOTTO: "To Know Christ and To Make Him Known."

PROGRAM PREPARATION: 6 readers, world map, poster boards with flags of countries representative of our president's home countries, markers, printed program for audience, song leader and musician, printed copy of Tree of Life emblem (not the newsletter), clothes line or something on which to hang the flags. Names of world presidents can be added to the flag of their respective country.

- USA - Evelyn Riley Nicholson, Mrs. Franklin Reed, Edith W. Ming, Myrta Pfeiffer
- South Korea - Oknah Kim Lah,
- Brazil - Ottilia de O. Chaves,
- Germany - Luise Scholz

- Australia - Freer Latham, Ann Connan
- Philippines - Dr. Pratrocinio Ocampo, Chita Millan
- United Kingdom - Elizabeth Kissack, Rosemary Wass
- Ireland - Dr. Edith M. Loane
- Pakistan - Rev. Dr. Khushnud Azariah



Pakistan



Philippines



United Kingdom



Brazil



South Korea



United States of America



Ireland



Australia



Germany



Tree of Life

PROGRAM

READER 1: Women have always been an important part of the church throughout its history, but not quite in the same manner as in the last 75 years due to better communication and travel opportunities. Women have always been resourceful and committed in what they set out to do. Though women have always been the caregivers many have found the opportunities to develop their gifts professionally, in business and have taken their place alongside men as policy and decision makers and leaders, locally, nationally and globally. It is important to be reminded and to celebrate our past so that we can go forward with God's guidance and be more committed.

Hymn: We've a Story To Tell To The Nations - verses 1 and 4

(Put up the South Korean flag)

Our story begins with a young Korean woman named Helen Kim who in 1923 after she received her higher education studies in the US starting at Ohio Wesleyan University where her spiritual awakening began and continued until her Doctorate degree at Columbia University. Through fervent prayer one night she heard the voices of Korean women crying out, she felt the need for a women's world fellowship of all Christian women.

(Put up the flag from the United States)

Helen was invited by Evelyn Riley Nicholson, the President of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the U.S.A., to one of their meetings held in Des Moines, Iowa. There Helen stated, "... two reasons why the unification of women into a stable organization was so necessary: It is our bounden duty, hand in hand with the men to better the world. Past history gives us sufficient proof that it is not safe for us to entrust the welfare of the world entirely to men."

(Methodist Women: A World Sisterhood, {4})

In **1924** Mrs. Evelyn Riley Nicholson placed Helen's vision on the meeting agenda of the Women's Foreign Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church. She called for the organizing of national branches with much local autonomy but articulating them into a world sisterhood.

The idea of a world federation of Christian women working for peace was picked up by women of China and the US. By **1929** the International Department was formed at the 60th Anniversary of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, U.S.A. in Columbus, Ohio, U.S.A. "Missionaries and delegates from fourteen countries voted to unite in a new adventure of faith of world sisterhood with the purpose To Know Christ and To Make Him Known". {5} The sisterhood grew rapidly and on October 26, **1939** delegates from 27 countries formed the World Federation of Methodist Women and chose "To Know Christ and To Make Him Known" as the motto. {5}

READER 2: On 26 October, **1939** the charter was signed and the World Federation was officially launched in Pasadena, California, U.S.A. "The World Federation was organized during the 70th (and final) Anniversary Meeting of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society." (*Put up The Tree of Life*) The theme of the meeting was "The Tree of Life". The Tree of Life was suggested by the Chinese Methodist Women's organization as well as the scripture which gives us guidance, Revelation 22:2 "On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations". It is an evergreen, signifying continuous life and vitality. Its branches stretch upward and outward, symbols of our thought and action reaching upward to God and outward to our neighbors. The twelve fruits of the tree are (1) Evangelism, (2) Medical Work, (3) Education, (4) Literature, (5) Children, (6) Youth, (7) Home and Family Life, (8) Rural Projects, (9) Economic Justice, (10) International Friendship, (11) Temperance, (12) World Peace. These are symbols of those graces of Christian service that will always be found in the lives of those who are rooted in Christ." The Tree of Life idea came from Lucy Wang who was the first Chinese president of the Hwa Nan Woman's College, later named People's Normal College by the Communist Government. On October 28, 1939 the Tree of Life was adopted as our official emblem.

The World Federation elects the following women as officers: President, Mrs. Thomas Nicholson; V.P., Mrs. Franklin Reed; Secretary, Mrs. C.P. Colgrove; Treasurer, Mrs. J.W. Masland all of the U.S.A. {9-10}

World War Two brings great disruption to correspondence and the loss of several countries involvement due to their invasion by the U.S.S.R. But we continue to work and pray for peace.

Song: Down by the Riverside

In **1944** the General Conference of the Methodist Church meeting in Kansas City, Missouri, U.S.A. did not give the World Federation time to publicly introduce itself to the entire General Conference, so 60 women gathered over lunch and a business meeting. Mrs. Thomas Nicholson serves now as Honorary President. The following officers were elected: President, Mrs. Franklin Reed; Vice Presidents, Mrs. R.J. Wade, Mrs. D.N. Ensell and Mrs. J.N.R. Score, Treasurer, Mrs. J.W. Masland; Recording Secretary, Mrs. A.C. Johnson all of the U.S.A. {12-13}

While they attended the Ecumenical Council meeting of **1947** in Springfield, Massachusetts (September), "... a group of women formed an ad hoc committee on women's work." Their proposed constitution, "... provided that the committee would be a standing committee of the World Methodist Council." {18}

HYMN: HOW FIRM A FOUNDATION

READER 3: Again, the **1948** General Conference of the Methodist Church held in Boston, Massachusetts, U.S.A. did not make time available for the World Federation on the floor. As a result, planning continued for a two-or three day Assembly. In January 1948, the Treasury had \$3,800 to finance the Assembly.

At the Assembly, following devotions from Evelyn Riley Nicholson, the first World Federation President, they sang "How Firm a Foundation". Twenty nine official delegates revised the constitution, re-elected the same officers with Laura Reed as president and, "called for the promotion of peace and goodwill through understanding, mutual respect, and Christian love" to be the focus from 1948-1952. {13, 15-18}

As the membership grew to include autonomous Methodist Churches it was felt after the 1948 Assembly that the units might prefer to meet in connection with the World Methodist Council instead of the quadrennial General Conference of the Methodist Church. With this change the World Federation began to have more of an impact in the global church.

Oxford, England hosted the **1951** World Methodist Council meeting. "... [T]he British women invited all the women delegates to the council meeting, wives of delegates, and representatives of the World Federation of Methodist Women, to an informal tea. There

they talked about the type of world-wide organization they would prefer for the Federation. ... This was not a decision-making group, but a friendly, informative meeting. "... The feeling was that it would be better to have an independent organization affiliated with the World Methodist Council." {19}

(Put up the Brazilian flag)

The next Assembly was held in **1952** in Berkeley, California with 32 delegates representing 26 countries. Mrs. Eloise Woolever, a guest from the United Kingdom at this assembly, reported on the 1951 Oxford meeting with the hope that the World Federation might become an ecumenical world-wide organization, which would include all churches of the Wesleyan tradition. {20-21} It was decided, "That All May Be One" be the focus for 1952-1956. The officers began to represent the international nature of the World Federation: President, Mrs. Otillia de O. Chaves, Brazil; V.P. Mrs. Bess Arrington, U.S.A.; Secretary, Miss Saturnina Lara, Philippines; Treasurer, Mrs. J.W. Masland, U.S.A. {20}

During this quadrennium President Chaves and her executive worked on making the World Federation an affiliated organization of the World Methodist Council.

Three committees were appointed. The Policy Committee suggested that the World Federation meet in a unit outside the United States. The Findings Committee determined that there were six needs: (1) adult literacy, (2) recruitment of personnel, (3) development of national leaders, (4) training for Christian family life, (5) deepening of the spiritual life, and (6) need to bring exhibits from each unit to the next meeting. {20}

"On August 14, **1954** ... the ad hoc Committee on Women's Work of the World Methodist Council formulated a proposed plan of affiliation of the World Federation with the World Methodist Council (WMC). It was accepted by the committee and later by the World Methodist Council." {21} This plan included: membership for all women's organizations related to Sections of the WMC not currently in the World Federation; confirmation of World Federation officers by the WMC; President of the World Federation be an ex-officio member of WMC Executive Committee; that the World Federation meet in the same place and preceding the World Methodist Conference; a report of the World Federation's program and activities be made to the World

Methodist Conference; “That the Sections be urged to see that there is an adequate representation of women in each Section of the World Methodist Council.” {22}

The President, Otilia de O. Chaves, sent this proposal worldwide from Brazil for delegates to discuss before the next Assembly. Along with the proposal she wrote, “I always understood that the W.F.M.W. was not a movement of the Methodist Church of America only, but since its beginning it was meant to be a world organization, over and above any particular group. It was with that conviction that I accepted the position I now hold.” {23}

SONG: THEY WILL KNOW WE ARE CHRISTIANS BY OUR LOVE

READER 4: The World Federation of Methodist Women becomes global and the Assemblies are renumbered and meet every five years.

(Put up the German flag)

The **1st** Assembly of the World Federation was held in Lake Junaluska, North Carolina, USA in 1956 in conjunction with the World Methodist Council. Luise Scholz, from Germany, was elected president for the next quinquennium. Among the groups that met, one “... discussed the meaning of the United Nations, for Methodists in various countries, and how best to exchange information between the units so that women can help one another.” {34}

In business: the World Methodist Council extended an invitation to the World Federation to become affiliated with the WMC. It was unanimously accepted.

An Invitation of Membership was then extended by President Chaves to, “... all representatives of other Methodist Churches to join the World Federation of Methodist Women in its new relationship.” {35}

The first issue of the Newsletter was first published in 1957.

Delegates and guests from 40 countries attended the **2nd** World Assembly held in Oslo, Norway in **1961**. The theme was "Jesus Christ is Lord".

The WFMW had a representative at the United Nations Status of Women Commission in Teheran, Iran in 1965. This is also the first time representatives of the WFMW began attending and participating in UN Conferences, especially regionally.

(Put up the Australian flag)

In **1966** the **3rd** World Assembly was held in Wimbledon, London with the theme: "To Know Christ and To Make Him Known". Freer Latham from Australia led the Assembly as president.

Steps are taken throughout the quinquennium (5 year term) for accreditation with the Non-Governmental Organizations of the United Nations. For example two representatives attended the workshop for African women in connection with UNICEF Executive in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in 1966.

(Put up the Philippine flag)

The **4th** World Assembly held in Denver, Colorado, U.S.A. in **1971** had the theme: "Christian Women in a Changing World". President Dr. Patrocinio Ocampo, Philippines, presided.

During the business meeting it was shared that seven units had joined at the Wimbledon Assembly under Freer Latham's presidency bringing the total to 59 units in 54 countries.

At the **5th** World Assembly held in Dublin, Ireland in **1976** under the theme of "Women in Christ's Redeeming Work" the "World Federation Day" was initiated. Units were asked to observe this celebration in the September/November quarter of each year using study material which was to relate to issues raised at the Assembly. This wonderful program continues today with minor changes. President Myrta Pfeiffer, of the U.S.A., presided.

(Put up the United Kingdom flag)

READER 5: Elizabeth Kissack of the United Kingdom was president during the **6th** World Assembly held in Hawaii, U.S.A. in **1981**. The theme of this Assembly was "New Dimensions".

In **1983** the World Federation of Methodist Women received consultative status in Category II with the United Nations Economic and Social Council. Three WFMW women were appointed, one each to serve at the UN Centers in Geneva, Mrs. Renate Bloem;

Vienna, Mrs. Ingegerd [Topsy] Nausner ; and New York City, Mrs. Sook Byoung-Dai Hahm. These women reported information on Women and Children's Affairs to the WFMW and put forward related World Federation initiatives. It took a long time but we finally achieved consultative status.

To really show our diversity; in **1986** the **7th** World Assembly was held in Nairobi, Kenya with a theme in Swahili "Kukua Katika Kristo" (in English, it means "Grow in Christ"). Oknah Kim Lah from South Korea presided.

In 1986 the first history book was published Methodist Women A World Sisterhood: A History of the World Federation of Methodist Women 1923-1986. Editorial Committee: Rosemary Keller, General Editor; Myrta Pfeiffer, Chairperson; Francis Nall, and Oknah Kim Lah, ex officio. This is a treasure for us to have a copy in the Archives.

(Point to the U.S.A. flag)

Edith Ming, from the USA, served as president for the **8th** World Assembly in Singapore in **1991**. The theme was "Jesus Christ: Strength for Today-Hope for Tomorrow".

In 1993 the World Federation was involved in forming a working group on the Girl-Child, bringing to the UN the plight of vulnerable girl-children.

Prior to the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, China in 1995 the WFMW had a team in attendance at the NGO Forum on Women, headed by Vice-President, Emmy Lou John. The Conference resulted in the Platform for Action, the most comprehensive statement on Women's Rights, holding governments accountable. Included in the Platform for Action is a paragraph on Religion and Spirituality, strongly supported by the WFMW. Renate Bloem our NGO representative from Geneva, Switzerland worked extensively on this issue within the platform. In 1994 the World Federation was elected to the board of CoNGO (Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations) for the second time.

(Put up the Irish flag)

Edith Loane was president for the **9th** World Assembly in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in **1996**. The theme was "Come Holy Spirit, Weave Us Together". In business: at the 1996 World Assembly the body voted to approve the title change of our organization from "World Federation of Methodist Women" to the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women. This new title gives visual recognition to the reality of our membership

which includes many United and Uniting Church women that are now part of our organization.

The 'Bossey' program was introduced at this time. This new program was designed to send representatives from Areas to attend short courses at Bossey Ecumenical Institute in Switzerland. This program is financed by legacy funds designated by The Womens' Division, USA, now officially called United Methodist Women.

The WFM&UCW Archives are dedicated at the World Methodist Museum at Lake Junaluska, N.C. in 1997.

Renate Bloem, World Federation United Nations Volunteer Representative in Geneva, Switzerland was elected President of CoNGO in 1998.

In 2000 Ethel Born wrote [From Memory to Hope: A Narrative History of the Areas of the World Federation of Methodist Women](#). This book is a continuation of our history.

(Put up the Pakistani flag)

READER 6: Khushnud Azariah of Pakistan was president at the **10th** World Assembly held in Loughborough, England with the theme "Go in Faith and Share God's Healing Grace". This great celebration was held in **2001**.

In business: the Helen Kim Memorial Scholarship program was developed after a visit to Korea for the 100th anniversary of Ehwa University where Helen Kim had been its Director/President. It brings young women to Assemblies to engage them in the work of the World Federation. Our first team of young women attended this Assembly.

(Point to the British Flag)

President Rosemary Wass from Britain presided at the **11th** World Assembly in Jeju Island, South Korea in **2006**. The theme was "Women Making a Difference".

During Rosemary's quinquennium the World Federation joins "Thursdays in Black". By dressing in black on Thursdays you join this weekly protest to demand a world without rape or violence. This movement was started by the World Council of Churches during the 1980s.

The "Weaving Together Programme" is started and brings as many World officers as finances allow to each Area Seminar and provides leadership training with Area Officers and Unit Presidents in advance of each Area Seminar.

A program named "Senior Friends" was initiated to give recognition to those women who have given extended and outstanding service to the Federation. Also the Federation sets up a web site for the first time.

(Point to the Philippine flag)

President Chita R. Millan, Philippines, welcomed all to the **12th** World Assembly held in Johannesburg, South Africa in **2011**. "Bambelela, Christ is our Hope" was the theme. Bambelela (an African word) means *Never Give Up*. Focusing on UN Millennium Development Goals was our guide for the workshops. A platform for action regarding each of the UN Millennium Development Goals was adopted with ideas for local units to study and carry out in an effort to meet the goals by 2015.

(Point to the Australian flag)

Ann Connan from Australia was elected as the new president for the quinquennium 2011-2016. She has been representing us well throughout the Methodist world with God as her guide. The world officers are working on the theme for our next World Assembly that will be held in Houston, Texas, U.S.A., August, 2016 in conjunction with the World Methodist Council.

PRAYER: Dear God, may you continue to challenge, encourage and guide us so that we can be the light which will bring the issues of women and children throughout the world to the forefront of people's consciousness so that we continue impacting the world for another 75 Years. Amen!

SONG: WE ARE ONE WITH THE SPIRIT

