



THE WORLD FEDERATION OF METHODIST AND UNITING CHURCH WOMEN

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The TREE - of LIFE

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President's letter

Dear Sisters,

Psalm 25:4 says, 'Show me your ways, Lord, teach me your paths.'

What have you learned over the last year? It has been a year like no other and for many, the most testing time of their lives. Few countries have escaped the effects of the coronavirus pandemic. For some of us it has brought us to our knees in prayer; kept us separated from loved ones; taken away our freedom of movement, our jobs and our ability to meet physically in worship. So, what have we learned? What new pathways has God taught us? I would like to offer some suggestions gleaned from news women have sent to me, and invite you to think about what you have learned over the past year.

The pandemic has taught us the importance of pastoral care for members of our churches and communities. You are developing training and care for those who are suffering through loneliness, bereavement, poverty, domestic violence, or mental health issues. As church, we are learning to be generous in sharing from our own abundance, and to provide hospitality and a safe space for those in danger. Many inside and outside the church are asking questions about faith, life, and death. We need to welcome those seeking answers and stand alongside them, offering hope where we can.

The pandemic has taught us the value of individuals on the front line in health centers and hospitals, food production and waste disposal. We need to give them recognition and a fair wage, whether they are consultants or cleaners, farmers or factory workers,

nurses or refuse collectors. We remember that in God's economy, each person is unique and valued and loved.

We have learned much about the potential of technology over the last year. With church buildings closed, online worship has enabled many to try out different styles of worship, or even to worship for the first time. We can continue and develop this ministry. Online bible studies and prayer groups have increased in many places and God is using these opportunities for learning and sharing our faith. For some, the world has been accessible on a computer screen. However, too much time spent online is not good for you! It is important to maintain a balance and take time out and away from the computer! We also need to be mindful of those who do not yet have dependable internet access.

During the pandemic, many have taken up new hobbies or reawakened dormant creative skills. Many have discovered a new appreciation of the natural world, God's precious creation, and found relief from tension by focusing on the beauty of trees and flowers, rivers, and mountains. For others, natural disasters have caused severe disruption and loss. It is no accident that we are making climate change our priority focus for our August on-line event, when we will consider how best to take action to care better for God's world.

What will the future look like? When will we meet again? There is still much uncertainty, but we do know that whatever is ahead of us, Jesus Christ is waiting to greet us and call us onward. For now, we take the next step forward towards our online event in August. This will bring women together from across the world, to celebrate the new things God is doing in our lives and to envision how we can better care for the planet. I look forward to welcoming you.

Every blessing,

- Alison

A Prayer

God of the past, the present and the future, we place our trust in you. We long to hear your voice, catch a glimpse of your vision for our lives, and be strengthened by your endless love. So, bless us with your Word, empower us with your Holy Spirit, and help us to respond to your invitation to step forward in faith. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



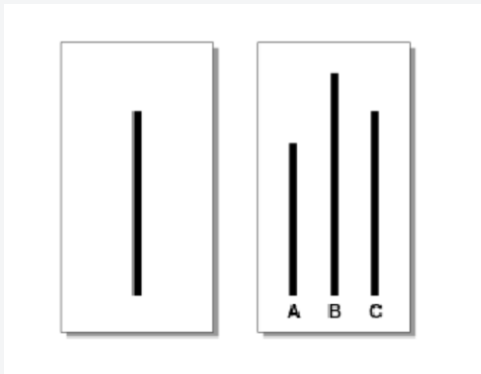
Editor's word:

Conformity

Solomon Asch is a well-known 20th century Psychologist who conducted a series of popular experiments.

One of his experiments would develop as follows: the subject was welcomed into a room, where they would find a group of people – all actors who had previously been instructed what to answer.

The subject was shown two cards with lines (you can see the image below) and their task was to



identify a line from the second card equally with a line on the first card. But before this, several questions were asked and the group would

give the correct answer. Then the cards were shown and the actors would all choose the wrong answer.

When they heard the answers, the subjects of this test became unsettled, agitated, their eyes became bigger, they started to laugh ... but soon enough they would start to question the truth they knew and, finally and sadly, they also would choose the wrong answer.

When I read about this experiment, I remembered Romans 12:2: Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. (English Standard Version)

We should never say something is right because the general opinion says it is or because it is fashionable. Our minds should be transformed not by the world we live in, but by the Word of God. Let us all pray for a real metanoia of our minds (a radical change of mind, 'repentance'), so we will be able to discern and do the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God.

-Ligia Istrate, Tree of Life Editor

“Every part of this law must remain in force upon all mankind and in all ages as not depending either on time or place, or any other circumstances, liable to change, but on the nature of God and the nature of man, and their unchangeable relation to each other.”
(John Wesley)



Praying with necessity

I never fail to be inspired and challenged by stories of Methodist Mission Partners in days gone by. Reading the accounts of their adventures and the difficulties and hardships they faced makes me feel like a real coward in comparison!

I have recently read about the Revd. Bernard Jinkin who served for 30 years in Africa. The little booklet he produced in 1963 is called 'In time of need' and contains testimonies of the amazing answers to prayer he received whilst serving in what is now Zambia. He served in a lonely bush station 50 miles from his nearest colleague and 100 miles from the railway station, and his only form of transport was a bicycle.

Bernard documents how he came to depend on prayer, and how his total reliance on God developed a deep and intimate relationship with his Lord. He differentiates between 'praying with and without necessity' and suggests that many people in the world 'have so much that we have become self-reliant.' He goes on to assert that 'We give lip service to the necessity of putting God first, but in actual practice he is often dragged in as an afterthought.' His stories demonstrate that prayer for him on the mission field was born out of dire necessity and complete reliance on God in every area.

I felt deeply challenged by this thought, and realize that in my own life there are few times when I pray



out of sheer desperation and utter dependence on God. One of the times that I did pray in desperation was when my daughter was going through an incredibly difficult and long labor. For three days and nights I cried out to God for the safety of herself and the baby and was so

relieved and thankful that they were both OK. In another time or place the outcome could have been so different. Another time I cried out to God was when my husband and I were mission partners in

Guyana, when we were on a rickety wooden boat crossing the 20-mile-wide estuary of the Essequibo River so that I could deliver some training to children and youth workers on the other side. The danger of death was very close that day, knowing that if the overfilled and inadequate boat capsized I would most likely be eaten by piranhas or crocodiles before I could drown. Thankfully, God spared us, and we lived to tell the tale, but my prayer life took on a whole new level!

People often tell me that they do not think they pray very much, but I believe that they probably pray more than they think they do. We often have an image of prayer as kneeling at our bedside with hands together and eyes closed, listing our requests to God, but prayer is much more than asking for the things we need or want. At its heart I believe that prayer is about our relationship with God and developing that relationship. Bernard Jinkin gives an example of a small child who has fallen off their tricycle running into the house sobbing and throwing themselves into the arms of their parent for comfort and help. I love that image of us running to God and allowing Him to comfort and strengthen us, as well as telling God about our joys and sorrows in honesty and openness.

We don't even need to use words. Some of my deepest prayer times have been when I have been in such turmoil of heart and mind that I have just cried or groaned or even on occasion wailed before the Lord in desperation, sometimes because of situations I have faced personally, but other times when I have heard stories of suffering in the lives of people around the world. As we cry out to Jesus, I believe He hears the cry of our heart and draws close to us by His Holy Spirit.

I love the story of Martha and Mary in Luke 10, when Mary chooses to lay aside the busyness of the day and simply sit at the feet of Jesus. As an active and driven person this is something I find very difficult, but I pray that for each of us, we will find time particularly in these current challenging days to sit at the feet of Jesus – to tell Him what is on our heart and to listen to His response to us. I pray that we will recognize again our total dependence on God for our very breath and that our prayer lives will help us develop an intimacy and deep relationship with God so that we will know and experience His presence and peace with us as we face each day.

- Carolyn Lawrence, Europe: Britain and Ireland
Vice-President

News



A New Vision for a Sustainable Future

Have you registered yet?

At 11.00 GMT (12.00 BST) on Friday 13th and Saturday 14th August 2021 the World Federation will break new ground. We shall assemble, not physically as we would have liked, but virtually, in our first ever global online event.

'A New Vision for a sustainable future' is our theme as we explore the direction God is leading us, both in terms of our World Federation movement and our response to the crucial

issue of climate change.

We hope you will join us LIVE and 'meet' your World and Area Officers, Helen Kim Memorial Scholars, and others. Be inspired by our keynote speaker Jo Swinney, from 'A Rocha International', and Mollie, Jessica and Maima, young climate ambassadors working for the Methodist Church's 'Climate Justice for All' initiative. Many of our speakers will be young women – and we remember it was a young Korean woman, Helen Kim, who had the original vision of a global movement of Methodist women who would change the world!

Registration is now open via Eventbrite. It is accessible

from the homepage of our website with the 'find out more' button on the first image slide, and then click on the word 'Eventbrite' to begin. Here is the link: <https://wfmucw.org/global-online-event>.

So register NOW and don't miss out. You will be invited to indicate your home Unit/Area and whether you require translation into Spanish, Portuguese, Korean, Russian, French, Mandarin or Cambodian.

Don't forget to check the time of 11.00 GMT (12.00 BST) in YOUR location!

Keep watching our social media Facebook and Twitter for updates.

WORSHIP / BIBLE STUDY / STORIES / ACTION

GLOBAL ONLINE EVENT
13TH & 14TH AUGUST 2021

FOR MORE INFORMATION
www.wfmucw.org

World Federation
of Methodist and
Uniting Church Women

A NEW VISION
FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

World Federation Study Day Programme – 2021

This great resource is now available, and we encourage you to read it and use it in your local groups, especially around the Federation Day, 26 October. Please check our website: <https://wfmucw.org/download/world-federation-day-study-program-2021-22>

May this be a blessing for you all!

WORLD FEDERATION OF METHODIST & UNITING CHURCH WOMEN
Study Day Programme - 2021
SOUTH ASIA AREA

TO KNOW CHRIST AND TO MAKE HIM KNOWN

CHOSEN PEOPLE CALLED TO PROCLAIM

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

The World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women supports the Sustainable Development Goals

AFFILIATED UNITS

 Church of South India (CSI) Church of North India (CNI) Methodist Church in India	 Methodist Church of Myanmar (Lower Myanmar)	 Women's Synodical Church of Pakistan	 Methodist Church of Sri Lanka
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National Women's Assembly in Ghana Unit 2021



On the 13th to 16th May 2021, the Ghana Unit of the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women organized a National Women's Assembly with the theme, 'Discipleship: Teaching Everyone to live like Jesus Christ.' Topics discussed included: The Leadership Style of Jesus Christ; How to conduct one-on-one Evangelism; How to do Follow-up after Evangelism; and a talk on the theme.

Seventy-five women from all over the Dioceses within the Connexion participated in the Assembly. The ladies were challenged with the question, 'How are you bringing people into the Methodist Church Ghana? It is important to be a role model like Jesus Christ in the practice of Christianity. Jesus went about preaching and teaching the Word of God. We are to be good examples for children, other women, and men, and by our way of living bring the non-believing husbands to the saving grace of Jesus. The women were encouraged to be submissive, obedient and of good service in the Church, the body of Christ. We were to apply the teachings of Jesus Christ to our everyday lives.

On the topic of the leadership style of Jesus, the facilitator defined leadership, quoting from various sources, as "a process of social influence, which maximizes the efforts of others, towards the achievement of a

goal" (Forbes); "Leadership is the art of motivating a group of people to act towards achieving a common goal" (Susan Ward); "Leadership is influence" (John Maxwell).

Paul, the apostle, says in 2 Timothy 2: 2, "The things which you have heard from me, entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also." Christian leaders are expected to have Christ-like character and teach others to behave like Christ. We are to put off the sinful nature and put on a Christ-like nature

(Colossians 3: 1-17). We should not think of ourselves more highly than we ought to (Romans 12: 3; Proverbs 3: 7). We also find in Luke 22: 25-26, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them... But you are not to be like that." Christian leaders should be eager to serve faithfully.

The qualities of good leadership are shared in the Word of God. King Solomon asked for wisdom to rule his people. God added all other things to him (1 Kings 3: 5-13). Leaders should possess integrity and credibility. With credibility you gain the trust and confidence of the people you are leading, and they go along with your vision.

The leadership style of Jesus involved the following:

1.A servant/service attitude – Jesus washed the feet of His disciples, setting us an example of service to follow (John 13: 1-17). In Matthew 20: 28 Jesus declared that the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve. People tend to have respect for leaders who demonstrate an attitude of servanthood.

2.A humble attitude – "Though He existed in the form of God, Jesus humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even the shameful death on the cross (Philippians 2: 5-8). Jesus said in Luke 14: 11, "For everyone who exalts

himself will be humbled and he who humbles himself will be exalted." Jesus demonstrated this example by washing the feet of His disciples during the last supper in the Upper Room.

3.A compassionate/caring attitude – Jesus fed the five thousand hungry people (Mark 8: 2-3) and healed the ten lepers who cried out to Him to have mercy on them (Luke 17: 11-17) and so on. He embraced the despised and saved the lost. "The Son of man came to seek and save the lost" (Matthew 18: 11-13). And He gave His life as a ransom for all humanity.

4.A forgiving attitude – Jesus taught His disciples to forgive those who offend them seventy times seven (Matthew 18: 21-22). He forgave the adulterous woman: "Has no one condemned you? Neither do I condemn you, go and sin no more" (John 8: 10-11). Jesus also forgave the thief on the cross, and those who killed Him: "But Jesus said, Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23: 34).

5.A self-denial/sacrificial attitude – Jesus was prepared to suffer for those He led. He taught His disciples, "He who wants to follow Me must deny himself, take up his cross and follow Me" (Matthew 16: 24) "Jesus said to him, if you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor... and come and follow Me" (Matthew 19: 21).

6.A loving attitude – Jesus showed His love for mankind by coming to die for us, on the Cross. "In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent His only Son into the world that we might live through Him" (1 John 4: 9). Jesus stated in John 15: 9, "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you."

To be a successful Christian leader, live by the Word of God and apply the principles of leadership from the Word (Joshua 1: 8-9). Be exemplary in speech, conduct, love, and purity, and be inspired by the ultimate rewards that will accrue from your good leadership.

-Rev. Jemima Amanor, West Africa Area President

PRAYER and reflection

*Spirit divine, attend our prayers,
Make a lost world Thy home,
Descend with all Thy gracious
powers,
Oh, come great Spirit, come!
Amen.*

Covid-19 changed the whole world. It changed economies, lifestyles, education, even religious worship. It brought about fear, anxiety, uncertainty, mistrust, suffering, unemployment, poverty, sickness, and death. However, we are reminded in Deuteronomy 31:8 that “the Lord Himself goes at your head, He will be with you. He will not let you down or forsake you. Do not be afraid or discouraged” (Revised English version). Likewise, in Isaiah 41:10, the Lord says, “So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God, I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand”. As Christians we should not be afraid, but rather “strong and courageous...for the Lord, your God, goes with you wherever you go” (Joshua 1: 9). In Philippians 4:6-7 we are reminded that we should not be anxious about anything.

We need to pray in any situation, make our petition, our requests to God and be thankful. By so doing, we will receive the peace of God in our hearts. In John 14: 26-27 Jesus expands this message further, by stating that “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you. I do not give as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid”. Romans 5: 1-4 says “we should glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance, perseverance character and character, hope”.

Federation sisters, this pandemic we are now experiencing is not a new phenomenon. In the Bible, in both the Old and New Testaments, several references are made to pestilence on the people: 2 Chronicles 7:13; Luke 21: 12; Revelation 6:8. The World Health Organization (WHO) and various scientists and health personnel have disseminated information on measures to combat the spread of the virus, by wearing of masks, hand washing, social distancing, staying at home, isolation and quarantine. Interestingly, in the Bible some of these measures were also indicated, for example: quarantine in Leviticus 13: 1-8, 21, 26, 31; King Uzziah lived in isolation when he was struck with leprosy until his death (2

Chronicles 26:21); social distancing was also indicated in Luke 17: 12, the episode with the ten lepers who called out to Jesus to take pity on them.

In The Gambia, I have witnessed our Christian community and individuals having a closer relationship with God. In the absence of fellowship and worship together in the church, Christians have taken it to family and/or individual closed-door worship. There is an increase in prayer groups being set up via WhatsApp or other social platforms. It is quite evident that the fear of the devastating consequences of the pandemic has awakened some sort of urgent need for one to be well with God.

Federation sisters, let us all reaffirm our faith, hope, and trust in God, and make Psalm 23 and 56 our daily prayer.

I take this opportunity to ask us all to continue to pray for our sisters and brothers in India and Myanmar, and countries around the world where Covid-19 has taken its toll on humanity. I pray that the good Lord will bring restoration and peace to all. Amen.

*-Matilda Johnson, World Vice-
President*



As Christians we should not be afraid, but rather “strong and courageous...for the Lord, your God, goes with you wherever you go” (Joshua 1: 9).

DOUBLE CONGRATULATIONS!

Methodist Connexion. I am humbled and grateful to be chosen.'

Congratulations too, to Mataiva Robertson, on being

made an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit in the Queen's Birthday Honors 2021 for service to women, youth and the Pacific community. In addition to her faith-inspired work with the World Federation, Mataiva is recognized in New Zealand for

her determination to speak out about taboo issues like domestic violence and suicide. She also supports those in need of housing in New Zealand, and access to clean water in Samoa. Mataiva says,

'I felt a strong pull towards social justice, and that's where everything else just falls into place.'

We are thankful to God for



Matilda Johnson

Our heartfelt congratulations to Matilda Johnson, who has been nominated and elected Lay President designate of the Methodist Church The Gambia at their recent annual Conference.

Our sister will be commissioned into office next year, God willing at a service to be held at the Wesley Cathedral. Matilda writes: 'I thank God that He has called me to serve in a higher position in the whole



Mataiva Robertson

these women of faith, and pray God's continued blessing to be upon them.

- Alison



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