



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,

In my letter posted on the website for March 2017, I reflect on what an important month this is for women. There are so many special events this month for us to celebrate. It begins with World Day of Prayer and the annual Programme Advisory Group meeting of the United Methodist Women in Nashville. This is immediately followed by the World Federation World Executive meeting in Chicago. Brenda Smith and Matilda Johnson will then attend the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW61) at the UN in New York. International Women's day, Annunciation day, Mothering Sunday and Ash Wednesday also fall in this month. News of some of these events will appear in this and future issues of this publication.

By the time this edition of the Tree of Life is published, we shall already be in the season of Lent, preparing for the momentous events of Easter. We shall read again the stories of the women who played their part in that story. We shall remember Mary, the mother of Jesus, watching as her son was crucified and later present in the upper room when he appeared to his friends after the resurrection. We may kneel with Mary

Magdalene anointing Jesus with her tears before his arrest and imagine being the first to see him outside the empty tomb. We shall sympathize with Mary and Martha, grieving for their brother Lazarus and longing for Jesus to come and bring hope and new life. We may weep with the women who wept alongside the road as Jesus was led away to Golgotha. We may find we are standing with the small but faithful band of women who gazed on their Lord as he hung on the cross.

So many women, so many tears, just as women weep today for broken lives, past mistakes, disappointed hopes and dreams. I thank God that there are still so many women who refuse to be silenced, and who bravely speak up for their rights, for the rights of others and for the kingdom. I pray that each one of us will find the courage to speak up for what is right and to proclaim fearlessly that Jesus is risen from the dead! I pray that each one of us will echo Mary who announced to the disciples 'I have seen the Lord.' (John 20:18) We can proclaim this good news in any month of the year.

Every blessing,



- Alison Judd



Seeds

Editor's note

In about one month we will celebrate Easter, the biggest Christian celebration, a very contradictory holiday as we suffer with Christ for being rejected, mistreat and killed, but we also rejoice as He rose from death and made salvation and eternal life possible for us.

As the time for Easter approaches, my mind runs to the word SEED. Jesus Himself is a seed. Before He gave His life, Jesus said to the disciples: "Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the

ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds." (John 12:24, NIV) Christianity was born because of a single seed, Jesus Christ, with the message, written in His own blood - LOVE: "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends." (John 15:13, NIV) and in laying down His own life, He produced even more seeds...

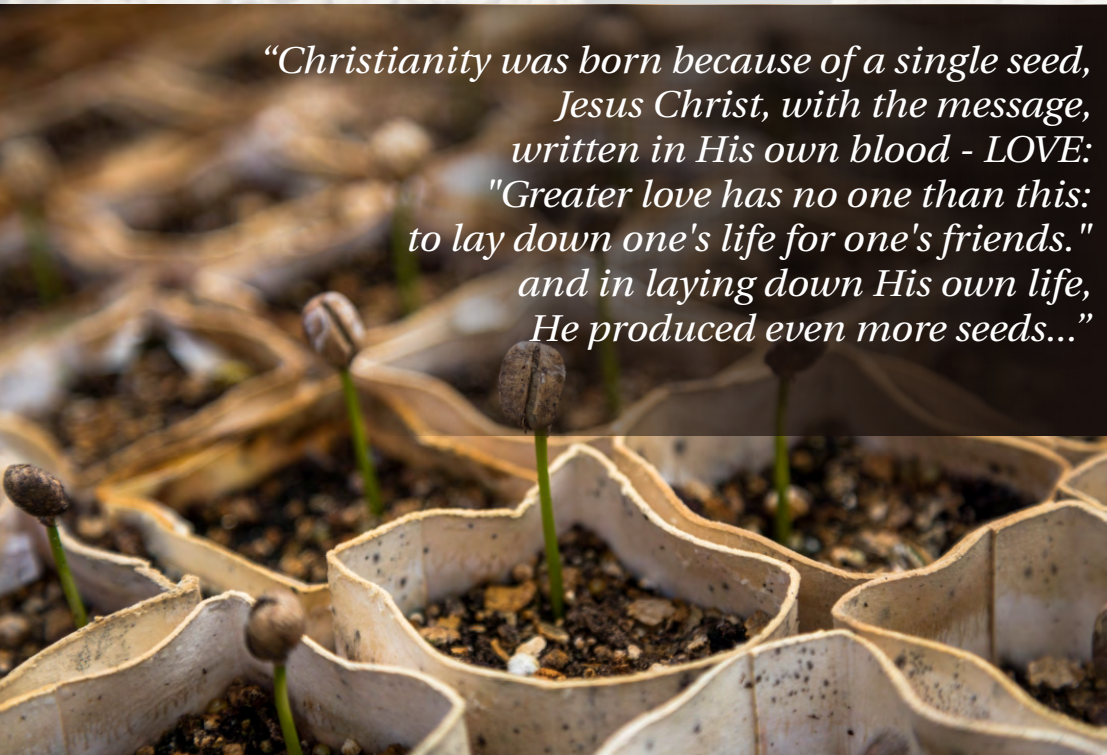
We are His seeds. Probably we will not become martyrs, even though all around the world there are many Christians that die because of their faith, becoming powerful testimonies. But we are still seeds because we leave behind a heritage to our children, family, friends, perhaps even for humanity: we leave the message of our own lives. We

can transmit a good message or a bad one. Both my mother's parents, when they died, left us a heritage - two different songs that teach us what is the foundation of the Christian life. My grandfather left this world with the song Christ my Cornerstone:

"My hope is built on nothing less / Than Jesus' blood and righteousness; / I dare not trust the sweetest frame / But wholly trust in Jesus' name. My hope is built on nothing less / Than Jesus blood and righteousness; / I dare not trust the sweetest frame / But wholly trust in Jesus name. Christ alone, Cornerstone, / Weak made strong, in the Savior's love; / Through the storm, He is Lord, Lord of all. When darkness seems to hide His face, / I rest on His unchanging grace. / In every high and stormy gale / My anchor holds within the veil. When He shall come with trumpet sound, / Oh, may I then in Him be found, / Dressed in His righteousness alone, / Faultless stand before the throne."

My challenge for you at this time of the year is to live as God's seed. Leave a good heritage behind.

- *Ligia Istrate*



"Christianity was born because of a single seed, Jesus Christ, with the message, written in His own blood - LOVE: "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends." and in laying down His own life, He produced even more seeds..."

Helen Kim Memorial Scholars

WFMUCW has developed a program in honor of Helen Kim, a young Christian woman from Korea, who envisioned the World Federation, campaigned for women's rights and promoted peace. The program offers young women from around the world training in Leadership Development, inspiring them to speak out and to make a change where they live.

The Helen Kim Memorial Scholarship Program 2016 took place for two days prior to the 13th World Assembly in Houston, Texas. As the fourth group of Helen Kim Memorial Scholars, fourteen young women from eight different areas of the world attended the leadership training program on August 27th and 28th: Rachel Allison (Great Britain) and Wanda Hogan (Ireland) from Europe Britain & Ireland Area; Ligia Istrate (Romania) and Helene Granum (Norway) from Europe Continental Area; Phiwe Ngwadia and Mbali Mnaba (both South Africa) from East & Southern Africa;



Tharika Rajapaskse (Sri Lanka) and Rebekah Daniel (India) – unable to attend as her visa was denied – from South Asia Area; Kyeo Re Lee (Taiwan) and Ruth Amarasuriya (Malaysia) from East Asia Area; Tepuola Waqainabete (Fiji) and 'Onelea Tuki (Tonga) from South Pacific Area; Luiza Pereira (Brazil) and Karen Landa (Peru) from Latin America Area; and Juanika Joseph (St Vincent & the Grenadines) from North American Area.

The program was led by three mentors: Rowena Quintanilla (2001 HKMS, Australia), Mataiva Robertson (2006 HKMS, New Zealand), and Janice Clark (Former World Secretary, England).

On the first day of the program, the Helen Kim Memorial Scholars had the opportunity to meet the WFMUCW 2011-2016 Executive. After the meeting, they learned about the

Federation and how the United Nations is connected with WFMUCW. On the second day, they had leadership training activities, Bible studies, vision time, and lastly brought their gratitude as well as expectations as leaders to the Executive. As Helen Kim Memorial Scholars and as future leaders in each area, they also actively participated during the World Assembly, as ushers for worship, offerings, Bible study sessions, and even 'policing' the use of cell phones during sessions, and taking of photos during worship.

- Ligia Istrate and Kyeo Re Lee

A Helen Kim Memorial Scholar Testimony

I am Ruth Vinoth Amarasuriya and I come from Malaysia. It was a privilege to be selected as a Helen Kim Memorial Scholar and I would like to



share my experience of being part of this amazing program.

One common line most of us young women say when it comes to Methodist Women's Fellowship in the church is that it is for old women. As a younger woman in my late 20s I too have had that mindset, that I would never join any program or activity organized

by the Methodist Women's Fellowship. However, this all changed for me when I was selected to be a Helen Kim Memorial Scholar.

Prior to the 13th World Federation Assembly, the Helen Kim Scholars had two days of leadership training. Together with me were thirteen other young women from different parts of the world. It was quite an experience to have all of us come from different places with different languages yet serving the same God.

So what have I learnt spending eight days in Houston, Texas? I came to know about this amazing lady Helen Kim and how she

fought for women and started the World Federation that we have today. She truly is an inspiring person who made a huge amount of difference, especially for women. I also got to know the WFMUCW and the work it does with women all over the world. I was truly inspired to hear what is being done in different parts of the world to help, equip and empower women. What is even more amazing is that we even have United Nations representatives to ensure that issues pertaining to women

can be voiced in the UN.

My experience as a scholar opened my eyes to see that the Methodist Women's Fellowship is not only for 'older' women but for all women – young and old. I was challenged to go back home and encourage all the younger women in church to be part of this amazing work and to make a difference. The theme of the Assembly, 'Chosen People: Called to Proclaim', was also a reminder to me that I have been chosen by God to share His love in this broken

world and to make a difference. Most of all, I also brought back precious friendships built during the training and

"I was challenged to go back home and encourage all the younger women in church to be part of this amazing work and to make a difference."

Assembly. It was amazing how the fourteen of us have become good friends despite our different cultures and languages, but I believe that is what happens when you serve the same amazing God. My experience gave me a glimpse of what heaven may be like when different tribes and tongues will come together to bow down and worship our extraordinary God!

- Ruth Vinoth Amarasuriya

The New Executive (part 3)

South Asia Area President: Mu Mu Than Margarette



M u M u Than was educated at St. John's Girls' Convent of Yangon

in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. She specialized in medical-social work, gaining extensive experience over more than two decades at the General Hospital's HIV/VD and Skin Specialist Department of the Public Health Wing. Her career brought her into the Civil Society as Manager of the Red Cross HIV/AIDS Program under Australian funding. Fifteen years of campaigning experience, ranging from the Survivor-Victim Assistance to Risk Education of Land Mines and Cluster Munitions have lead to her being a representative at many international conferences. Raised in a staunchly religious Ecumenical environment, she attended her first WFMUCW World Assembly in 2005 in Jeju, Republic of Korea, as a delegate from the Methodist Church of Lower Myanmar. Her whole-hearted involvement and motivated leadership resulted in her election first as the Vice-

President, and currently the President, of the South Asia Area.

Southern and East Africa Area President: Sipiwe Chisvo



S i p i w e Chisvo is a qualified Counselor, specializing in Family Therapy. She is involved in

the Women's Fellowship in Zimbabwe and served both at Connexional and Circuit level, currently being in the final year as Circuit Steward, a position she has held for a five year term. She is very passionate about the World Federation and loves to spread the word about it. Sipiwe is a wife, mother, grandmother, business woman, florist and she loves baking.

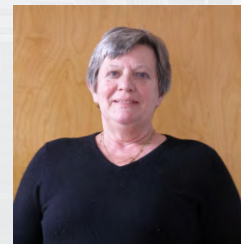
West Africa Area President: Rev. Jemima Amanor



Jemima Amanor is a provider of Social Services for Methodist Church Ghana, which also involves Women's Ministry. She is an ordained minister and a Marriage Councilor, who has impacted the lives of many couples of all ages. Previously, she worked as a Child Development Practitioner for twenty years. Among other roles she has been a Nurse Educator in Public Health,

Ghana Country Director for Compassion International (an international Christian Child Development Organization), and leader of the Child Development Practitioners, impacting the lives of about 40,000 children and their families in many communities in Ghana. She has a Bachelor's degree in Education in Health Sciences, a Master of Arts in Theology and Culture, and a Certificate in Child Development and Advocacy. Jemima participated in the 10th World Council of Churches Conference in Busan, South Korea, in the African Methodist Evangelism Conference in Zimbabwe in 2013, and was part of the 2014 Kirchentag in Germany. Her hobbies are gardening and reading.

Europe: Continental Area President: Lidia Ribet Noffke



Lidia was born in Siena (Italy), where her father was a pastor in the Waldensian

and Methodist Church. Being a pastor, Lidia's father moved to different churches, but he served in the Waldensian Church in Milan for fourteen years, and there she was able to start and finish all her studies, specializing as an interpreter. Lidia met her husband in Pisa while he was serving in the US armed forces. At the end of his military duties they went to the United States where he taught

mathematics. Returning to Italy, her husband decided to study theology at the Faculty of theology in Rome and be a pastor. During these early years they had four children and a fifth came later. In Italy all the family was involved in church life. Soon after confirmation, Lidia started teaching in the Sunday School, and later she served as a member of the National Committee for the Sunday School organization. She has worked with women's groups, both locally and nationally, and she has been a member of various national ecclesiastical organizations in Italy: the Federation of Protestant Churches, the Federation of Protestant Women, and the Waldensian and Methodist Federation, for which she served as President for three terms.

Europe: Britain & Ireland Area
President: **Louise Wilson**



Louise has been involved with the WFMUCW since attending her first Area Seminar in

1998. Since then she has attended three European Seminars and three World Assemblies, and served as the Area Vice-President for Europe: Britain & Ireland

from 2001 to 2006. She is a past President of the Methodist Women in Ireland and continues to serve on its General Executive. Louise is passionate about enabling others to recognize and release their gifts in God's service, and has a real desire to see the development of meaningful inter-generational relationships among women. She studied Psychology, trained as a Lecturer in Higher Education, and currently works as the Training & Development Officer for the Methodist Church in Ireland. She is based in the Methodist Theological College where she facilitates courses in Pastoral Care and Prayer Ministry and has oversight of training for Local Preachers. Louise is married to Tom and together they have a son and daughter-in-law, two daughters, and three grandchildren. In her spare time she loves to travel, and also enjoys baking, cooking, reading, theatre, cinema and dining out.



▶ New publicity leaflet

WFMUCW has produced a new publicity leaflet. You can find this on the World Federation's Facebook page – we encourage you to make copies and pass them to friends and relatives, to spread the word about the World Federation.

Download : <http://wfmucw.org/publications?did=153>

▶ Call for donations

In order to carry out its work, the World Federation depends on memberships and donations. We know that you hold our work close to your heart, and we value dearly your ongoing prayers, but if you're looking for other ways of supporting us, you might want to consider making a donation. There is a Donate button on our website just waiting to be pushed!

It is simple to use, and those who donate will get a personal 'thank you' email from the World President!

News



The World Executive meeting in Chicago 6th – 10th March 2017

The World Executive met in Chicago from the 6th – 10th March 2017 for its second Executive meeting. It was a great opportunity to discuss and prayerfully consider the mission of the World Federation going forward. It was also very encouraging hearing about the great work each Area is engaged in.

One of the agenda items discussed was the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and how we can work towards implementing and achieving these goals.

As an outcome of this discussion it was agreed that during this quinquennium, each Area will focus its work on the SDGs as

listed below.

AREA	Focus SDGs
East Asia	11 (Sustainable cities and communities) & 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions)
Europe: Britain & Ireland	4 (Quality education), 5 (Gender equality) & 10 (Reduced inequalities)
Europe Continental	1 (No poverty), 5 & 16
Latin America	3 (Good health and well-being), 5 & 10
North America	3, 4 & 5
South & East Africa	1, 2 (Zero hunger), 4, 5 & 13 (Climate action)
South Asia	5, 6 (Clean water and sanitation) & 10
South Pacific	13, 14 (Life below water) & 15 (Life on land)
West Africa	1, 3 & 4

It has been inspirational to hear of the SDG work that many Units are already involved with. We look forward to our time together at both the Weaving Together Programme and the respective Area Seminars that are upcoming. We encourage you

to go online for all World and Area updates and to access many other resources that are available.

- Mataiva Robertson
(World Secretary)



The **TREE**
-of **LIFE** 

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ROMANIA

United Nations CSW61

Brenda Smith will represent the World Federation at the 61st session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW61) to be held at UN Headquarters in New York (13th - 24 th March 2017). We wish them well for this event.

- *Mataiva Robertson (World Secretary)*

Vice-President Matilda Johnson together with Dr





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