



THE WORLD FEDERATION OF METHODIST AND UNITING CHURCH WOMEN

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The TREE — *of* LIFE



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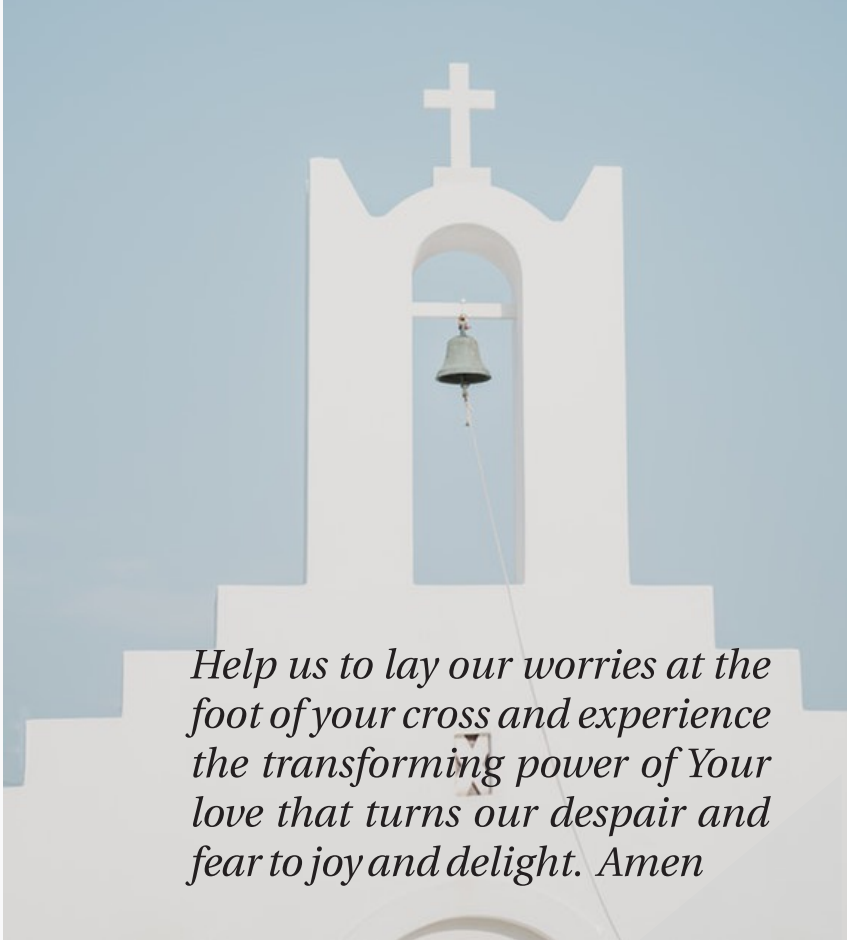
President's letter

Dear Sisters,

I recently received an email with the title 'Alive!' The person who sent it was assuring me that although I hadn't heard from her for a while, she was alive and well and would write to me soon. I responded 'What a relief! I was getting worried.'

Easter is that wonderful time of the Christian year when we celebrate that Jesus is 'Alive!'. The One who was dead is risen and 'alive' for ever, interceding for us and still loving us and working among us in the power of the Holy Spirit. Those early disciples, who were probably getting worried about their future, had spent silent Saturday trying to make sense of recent events. Afraid for their safety, they shut themselves away in an upper room and waited to see what would happen. Some had watched from a distance His cruel death on the cross and had seen His body laid in the tomb. Would they suffer the same fate? They were known to be the friends and followers of Jesus. Would they be the next to be hunted down or betrayed by one of their own number?

What a relief when they heard the news that Mary brought them from the garden tomb! Or at least it was a relief if and when they found it possible to believe her words: 'He's Alive!' It must have been an even bigger relief when they saw Him for themselves. It prompted Thomas to exclaim, 'My Lord and my God!' Yet Jesus said, 'Blessed are those who have not seen me and yet have come to believe.'



Help us to lay our worries at the foot of your cross and experience the transforming power of Your love that turns our despair and fear to joy and delight. Amen

(John 20:28-29)

Sometimes we have to wait for news and it can be hard to cope with the silence. But our faith tells us that even when we don't see Jesus in our midst, or hear His voice, we can have faith that He is risen from the dead and living forever at the right hand of God. And when the time comes, we who put our trust in Him will be brought deeper into His glorious eternal presence at His gracious invitation.

Living Lord,

May we trust in your promise that You will be with us always, even when we do not see You clearly.

Help us to lay our worries at the foot of your cross and experience the transforming power of Your love that turns our despair and fear to joy and delight. Amen.

Be blessed as you share the good news with others that Jesus Christ is ALIVE!

- Alison Judd

Jesus – our Messiah

The Messiah is the instrument through which the kingdom of God was to be established in Israel and through Israel all around the world. This concept is related to the fact that the Jews are a nation that lives in the future. No other nation has appreciated so much the state of waiting for a period that will come, a time for which they are ready to endure the present reality, no matter what. In this future time, “salvation comes” and the Messiah will triumph above all the enemies of the nation. After establishing this victory, peace and happiness will be with them forever.

Messiah in Hebrew is מָשִׁיחַ, which is translated “anointed one”, the one on whose head was poured oil, meaning that he was set apart for God, consecrated for His work.

There were three categories of people who were anointed in Israel. One is the priests, for example Exodus 28:41: “After you put these clothes on your brother Aaron and his sons, anoint and ordain them. Consecrate them so they may serve Me as priests.” The second category is the kings: “Also, anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel...” (1 Kings 19:16). And the third one is the prophets: “...and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet.” (God to prophet Elijah, 1 Kings 19:16).

All these three functions of priest, of king and of prophet are fulfilled in one person – in our beloved Jesus Christ.

Jesus is the PRIEST – and not just any priest, but the Highest Priest. Through His death the curtain of the Temple that separated the place for the people from the place of God – The Holy of Holies – where only the High Priest could enter once a year on the day of Yom Kippur, when the sacrifice was brought, was broken. That means we have access to God's presence through Christ: “Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.” (Hebrews 4:14) and “We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where our forerunner, Jesus, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek (the priest of Jerusalem before the city was founded, the name meaning is 'King of righteousness').” (Hebrews 6:19-20)

Jesus is the KING. In the Old Testament we see that there was the hope of a covenant for the Jewish royalty that will have no end, a covenant sustained

by God through the Messiah. This Messiah would lead people into righteousness and closeness with God. God has promised David: “When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.” (Samuel 7:12-13) “Meanwhile Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, 'Are you the king of the Jews?' 'You have said so,' Jesus replied.” (Matthew 27:11) “Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.” (John 19:19)

Jesus is the PROPHET. God told Moses: “I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites, and I will put my words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I commend him. I myself will call to account anyone who does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name.” (Deuteronomy 18:18-19) “For Moses said, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you.’” (Acts 3:22) We see He was acknowledged by the Samaritan woman: “'Sir,' the woman said, 'I can see that you are a prophet.’” (John 4:19) And, besides this, what He prophesied was fulfilled: the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70AD and the destruction of the Temple; and when the royal official came to Jesus about his son who was sick, near death, Jesus healed the son and told the official that his son lives – and He couldn't see that, He knew what people were thinking, and so on.

Jesus is the only one who fulfills all three functions. He becomes everything for us. Jesus is the High Priest in the order of Melchizedek, He is that descendant promised to David and the Prophet promised to Moses. He is the Priest. Through His sacrifice, our sins are forgiven, the curtain is broken, and the Father can receive us. He is the King, who came to establish the authority of God and His sovereignty in creation. Through Him, God calls us to a life that is worthy of sons and daughters of the kingdom, to a life of those who ask for His will to be done “on Earth as it is in Heaven”. At the same time, it is Jesus who speaks the words of the Father, expresses His will regarding the future, but also to the personal level for the present time. Praises be to our Messiah! Christ has risen!

-Ligia Istrate, Tree of Life Editor



Europe: Continental Bible Study

The Lord said to Moses: Why are you crying out for help? Tell the people to move forward! (Exodus 14:15)

After the tenth plague, Pharaoh finally agreed to let God's people go!; but he soon repented of this decision, changed his mind, and sent his army in pursuit of the fleeing people to bring them back to slavery – or maybe just to slaughter them on the spot, out in no man's land.

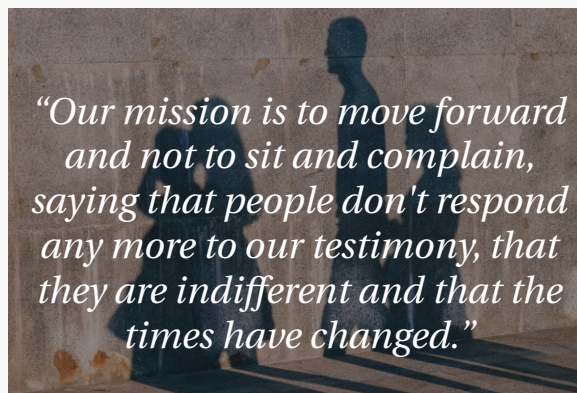
With this possibility in mind and with the Red Sea before them, they were desperate and really felt that there was no escape. As we can see reading the verses that precede our

passage, the people were complaining rather than “crying out for help”. At that point they felt that it would have been much better being slaves back in Egypt than dying in the desert.

This situation makes me think of the thousands of immigrants that today flock to the northern coast of Africa in the hope of crossing the Mediterranean Sea to find a new life and an escape from the misery and death behind them and that in many ways continues to press hard upon

them. But they have no Moses to receive instructions from God and open the sea before them, leading them to salvation.

The refugees today have only unscrupulous people ready to take advantage of their plight and rob them of the little they have left in exchange for nothing other than the passage across the sea and a totally unknown and insecure future. There is no promise of a land flowing with milk and honey, only a slim hope that things might be better because they could certainly not get any worse.



“Our mission is to move forward and not to sit and complain, saying that people don't respond any more to our testimony, that they are indifferent and that the times have changed.”

But let us return to our biblical episode: we see that the Israelites, just recently freed from slavery by the powerful hand of God working through Moses, complain. We may even say that they have a good argument. But they did not take into consideration other possibilities. If God had gone to the trouble of answering their plea and sending Moses to their rescue, why would the Lord abandon them at this point? They only complain about the difficulties, but they do not look to God for help and

guidance.

We too often complain to God when things get rough, when we think that things should go differently, but we fail to seek God's help and we forget that God wants us to be an active part in the saving acts He places along our pilgrimage. He commands us to move forward. We too often prefer to stay where we are, complacent in our well-being, content to be where we are, and maybe even a little bit too lazy to want to go a step forward. We don't want to disturb the calm, we don't want to start something we might be sorry for.

If we look at Jesus, we see that He was always on the move from one place to another, and He also sent out His disciples to the ends of the Earth. There was no time to stay put, no time to lose in proclaiming the good news of salvation. Our mission is to move forward and not to sit and complain, saying that people don't respond any more to our testimony, that they are indifferent and that the times have changed.

The sea is before us and we are called to enter into it, knowing that God will open the way before us to new goals that we never even thought possible. Amen.

*- Lidia Ribet, Europe:
Continental President*

News

Europe Continental

A weekend for French-speaking Methodist women in Montélimar, France

A national conference for French-speaking women took place in the lovely town of Montélimar, the weekend of 16-18 November 2018. 46 women gathered from all parts of France and some from Switzerland, joined by Lidia Ribet, the WFM&UCW President of the Europe: Continental Area.

The women arrived on Friday, and on Saturday morning were taken on a tour of Montélimar and its surroundings. After that, teaching was delivered by Claire-Lise Meissner-Schmidt: "Needs: these swings of life putting us in motion", and the day closed with a space for conversation, sharing and questions, followed by prayer in small groups.

Sunday worship was held in the sanctuary of the Montélimar UMC, with participants of the weekend joining the celebration in the morning. Claire-Lise then continued with further teaching on the topic. She encouraged us to share with

God all our needs; as it is written in Matthew 6, God knows exactly what we need, but the fact that we tell Him binds us with Him. There has to be a dialogue that brings inner freedom and gives place for joy in our souls.

Even though it was just a very short time spent together, everyone left filled with joy and happiness, feeling satisfied, understood, refreshed, and reaffirmed. Thanks be to God!

- Anne-Laure Riess, from
UMC Metz, France

Susanna Wesley commemorated at Ponte Sant'Angelo Methodist Church, Rome



2019 marks the 350th anniversary of the birth of Susanna Wesley, "the mother of Methodism", who was born on 20th January 1669. Although mostly known for

her influence on her sons John and Charles Wesley, founders of the Methodist movement, Susanna deserves recognition in her own right as an accomplished writer, teacher and theologian.

The British Methodist Heritage Committee offered churches this prayer, written especially for use on Sunday, 20 January 2019, the anniversary date, which we used at the service at Ponte Sant'Angelo Rome in our morning worship. The prayer has been written by Jenny Carpenter, Vice-Chair of Trustees at Epworth Old Rectory (the home of the Wesley's, where Susanna raised the Wesley family) and their representative on the Methodist Heritage Committee. It speaks of aspects of the life of Susanna.

Living, loving God, Trinity in Unity, We praise and thank you for the life of Susanna Wesley, Mother of Methodism. Inspired by her regime of private prayer and meditation, may we grow in our devotion to you. Following our conscience as she did, may we think for ourselves and dare to act on Kingdom values.

Aware of her programme of teaching her children, girls and boys alike, may we value and nurture all in our care, sensitive to individual needs. Encouraged by her determination to build up the faith of her family and the parish of Epworth, England, may we lead others to follow

Christ more closely. Discerning the Holy Spirit moving powerfully in the life of the nation as she did, may we be open to new challenges and expect great things from you. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ and in the power of the Spirit. Amen.

At a special service on the morning of 20th January, Pastor Tim Macquiban offered the introduction to the service, talking about Susanna's life. The guest preacher was Pastora Mirella Manocchio, President of The Work for the Evangelical Methodist Churches in Italy, who shared about her trip to meet with the partner church, the Methodist Church in Ghana. There she met women from the Susanna Wesley Fellowship, in their distinctive dresses and scarves, bearing the image of Susanna. Ponte Sant'Angelo has several Ghanaian members, including Mary Owusu, who works as portiere at the condominium, which includes the church. She shared her own tribute to the work of the Fellowship under the inspiration of Susanna Wesley. Pastor Tim asked her what they saw in Susanna as a role model for Methodist women. She said: "She was a hard-working woman, supporting her husband (Rector Samuel Wesley) and raising her large family with limited resources".

The participants were happy to remember the life and testimony of Susanna Wesley,

who has been a pillar on the journey of the people called Methodists, and she will continue to be an inspiration for many women the world over.

-Angela Macquiban from the English-speaking Methodist Church - Ponte Sant'Angelo, Rome

End Poverty in All Forms Everywhere. East Asia Area 2019



The service End Poverty in All Forms Everywhere was held during the month of January 2019 among the Tamil speaking women (that make a total membership of 1553) in all the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Church in Malaysia.



Poverty is not only the lack of income and resources, but includes hunger and

malnutrition, limited access to education and other basic services, social discrimination and exclusion, as well as the lack of opportunities.

The women were reminded to go out into the world in peace and love, to seek, knock and to ask not for challenges to match their wisdom, but for wisdom to match the challenges. The women decided to take action:

1. Some women have identified underprivileged families and decided to support them with food.
2. To teach in the literacy centre and give free tuition for the less fortunate children.
3. To give scholarship loans to the needy students.
4. To serve in a home for the elderly.
5. To provide hostel facilities when necessary.
6. To support a ministerial student at a Seminary.
7. A mission trip to Sri Lanka and to support the ministry in Kuching, Sepulut and Tebong, to enable the people from there to proclaim the Gospel.

-Mary Devadason, East Asia Area Vice-President

The dam in Brazil



Helicopters dropped flower petals last week over the site of the dam collapse in Brumadinho, Brazil to honour the victims. Credit: Andre Penner/Associated Press

"On January 25 2019, a mining dam that sat above Brumadinho, a town in south-eastern Brazil, collapsed and unleashed the tidal wave of waste and mud that engulfed homes, businesses and residents in its path." The 169 victims were workers of the mining company responsible for the dam (Vale S.A., one of the most important in the country) and also locals. 141 people are still missing. In addition to the loss of human lives, there has been immeasurable environmental damage, including the death of animals and the contamination of water.

Facing such tragedy, the first reaction is to ask who to blame. The formal investigation has just started, but many experts point out that the dams used for discarding mining tailings are not only the cheapest but also very unsafe. It would have been possible to predict it, as only three years ago a similar incident happened in another Brazilian town.

These facts bring us to a sad conclusion: what a short memory we have! When something of this magnitude takes place, at first we

are intensely moved and interested in all the details, but overtime,

with the delay in obtaining an answer concerning accountability, we tend to just forget everything about it, taking a risk of letting greed, money and power once again threaten God's creation.

As Christians, we learn in the Bible to preserve our memory and to serve a God who does not forget His promises. We also learn from Jesus that loving others is a great commandment. To love is to weep with those who weep. Love takes pleasure in the flowering of truth. Love does not neglect, it does not forget.

While we mourn for the lost lives, let us be faithful to the God who, in the whole Bible (and still today), calls us to love and, therefore, to remember.

An Appreciation: Dr. Edith Loane

It is a little while now since our sister Dr. Edith Loane sadly left us. My own connection, association and eventual friendship with Edith, goes back a long way, as far as 1975 in fact! Edith was the Ireland Unit Correspondent at that

time and the World Assembly was going to take place in Dublin in 1976. A Local Committee had to be set up, and I was just one of that committee and that is when I first met up with Edith. Edith had first attended a World Federation Assembly in Denver in 1971, discovering the role that a world organisation could command even within the United Nations, and being made aware of the significance of such a role.

Over the years that followed on from that World Assembly, Edith held many senior roles: World Treasurer, World President, etc.

Even as President Emerita, she took an active part in all things connected with the World Federation, introducing and setting up the Helen Kim Memorial Scholars, and overseeing the Manuals on Women's Leadership Training and Spirituality. Locally, Edith was continually involved too, and previous to her time as World President, she was the Chairperson of the National Women's Council of Ireland, a body representing more than 150 different women's organisations.

As World President, Edith had automatically been a member of the Presidium of the World Methodist Council and in the year 2000 she became a Founding Member of the World Methodist Council Honourable Order of Jerusalem Award. Since that time, I have been recalling many episodes of the World Federation family that I and many others have been involved in, with Edith.

Together with her husband, Oscar, she had three daughters: Barbara, Ruth and Karen, and a son, Geoff, and ten grandchildren. Edith was always a 'people' person, with a



contagious enthusiasm and a finely-tuned mind, along with a sense of humour that she brought to all she did. She was not only dedicated, but had a joy and buoyancy that all who knew her will happily recall.

As a world family, the World Federation, we have had and still have the privilege of reaching out to each other across the world, supporting each other emotionally, physically and especially spiritually, and this incredible bond of support is the very essence of the World Federation. What a privilege then it has always been to meet so many women and discover anew what we all have in common. We remember especially Edith, and give our thanks for her life and also for those other women who have laid the Corner Stones of the World Federation, together their strength and their dedication serving to inspire our Faith as part of the World Federation.

The words of the ancient Irish hymn, 'Be Thou My Vision,' say so succinctly, so briefly, yet so exactly, what Edith embodied, and what we all have in common; just simply: 'Be Thou My Vision, oh Lord of my heart...'

- Pamela Klimcke



Prayer

*Father, thank
You for*

modelling us as Women. Thank You for putting us apart as unique women of faith in our Federation.

Help us walk with You during another season of Lent up to the celebration of your glorious Resurrection.

May we, in these forty days, abandon every distraction and focus on the Cross and on all that You have sacrificed for us. Renew our mind, body and soul, and may we be tuned in thought, word and deed to You. Help us to be steadfast in all that You would like us to do, especially during times of temptation. Nudge us and bring us back to You when we stray from You. You were tempted Lord, and just as You never succumbed to it, help us to be the example that You set for us, however

difficult it may be for us, knowing that by Your grace we can overcome temptation.

Help us renew our vows to You, to comfort, strengthen and uphold women who go through so much travail in life, physically, mentally and spiritually. In our busyness help us to stop and care.

Teach us to forgive as You forgave us. Teach us to love as You loved us. Break us, mould us, fill us with everlasting joy and peace.

May our love for You grow deeper during the period of Lent and as we celebrate your Glorious Resurrection.

Amen

-Evelyn Mercylin, South-East Asia Vice-President

Safe and Secure

O to be safe, safe to fall asleep at night
Knowing that I have a shelter over my head.

Knowing that I will not be abused
Knowing that my daughter will not be violated.

O to be safe, safe to walk around the town, the
village

Knowing that I will not be stalked or solicited
for sex.

Knowing that my daughter will not be
kidnapped

On the way from school or going to the farm.

O to be safe, safe to speak my mind
Knowing that my voice will be heard.

Knowing that my daughter will have the right
to decide

And will never be a child bride.

Women, we have to make our cities, towns,
Villages, communities and homes safe.

Safe from threats, attacks and harassment.

Safe from rape, trafficking and female
prostitution.

We need to build our capacities, empower
Others and educate our sisters and daughters.
Teach them that a safe secure world is a better
world

Than one full of fear, insecurity and suffering.

- Matilda Johnson, World Vice-President

2019 Executive Meeting

The third World Executive Meeting for the quinquennium 2016-2021 took place between 18th and 22nd March 2019 in Hong Kong. The opening devotions were led by the World President, Alison Judd, on the wedding at Cana. The agenda was approved and the minutes of the last meeting in Chicago were accepted. All the executive members were present, except Margarete MuMu Than, the South Asia President, whose husband is very ill (so please pray for him). Instead came Evelyn

Mercylin, the Vice-President. Also, Joy Jino, the South Pacific Area President couldn't come as she had problems with her passport; she was replaced by the Vice-President Ilaisa'ane Kapani. All the officers, the presidents and the ToL Editor presented their reports, and the Archivist's, UN representatives' and Web master's reports were received.'

Dr Sandra Gadson was welcomed as the new North America Area President.

During the meeting important decisions were taken and many matters were discussed regarding the next World Assembly. The meeting closed with worship led by Alison Judd picking up the theme from her opening devotions and Holy

Communion, offered by Rev. Jemima Amanor, the West Africa President.

-Ligia Istrate, ToL Editor

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