



THE WORLD FEDERATION OF METHODIST AND UNITING CHURCH WOMEN

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The TREE — of — LIFE

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President's letter

Faith is to Know Jesus Christ

I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death.

(Philippians 3:10)

The Apostle Paul gave up everything in order to know Christ and the power of His resurrection. He was so committed to the gospel that he desired to be conformed to the death of Jesus Christ. To be conformed to His death is to live the way our Lord died. Every believer has access to this knowledge and power. There were three groups of people that followed Jesus when He was on earth:

-The first group was the admirers of Jesus: those people who followed Him around and who were truly amazed at the things He did and taught. They liked what He said and enjoyed quoting Him.

-The second group was the pupils of Jesus: they were nearer to Jesus than the first group. They pondered what Jesus said and studied His doctrines. They

even taught others.

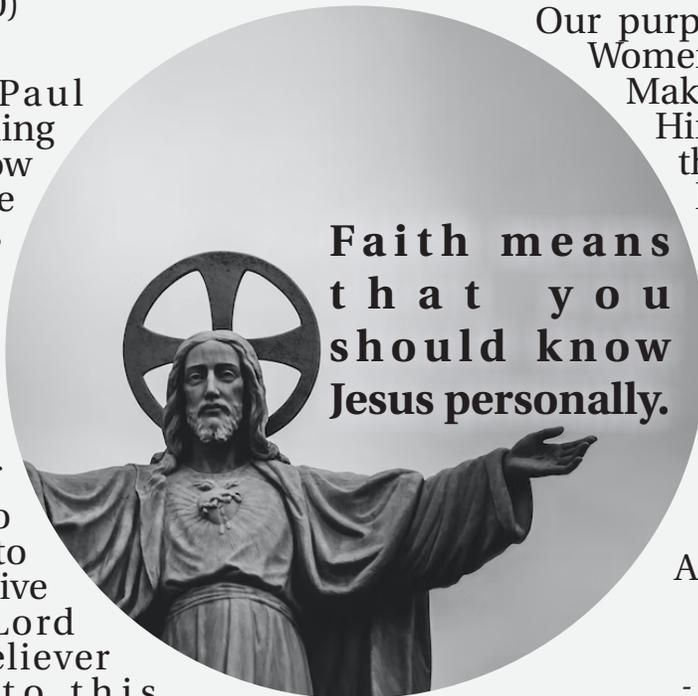
-The third group was nearest to Jesus: His disciples. They were not only excited about what Jesus said and did, but they followed Him, they knew Him personally, and their lives were bound to His.

Faith means that you should know Jesus personally. In which of the above-mentioned categories do you fall? Is knowing Him your highest priority?

Our purpose as World Federation Women is 'to know Christ and to Make Him Known'. We make Him known as we bear fruit that will last. May we get to know Jesus personally as His disciples did and walk along life's way with Him, every day, bearing fruits of Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self-Control.

Amen.

- *Sipiwe Chisvo, World President*



Editor's word:

I know who goes before me, I know who stands behind.

(Lyrics from Whom Shall I Fear - God of Angel Armies, a song by Chris Tomlin)

These powerful lyrics from Chris Tomlin's song "Whom Shall I Fear - God of Angel Armies" resonate deeply with those who place their trust in God.

When we look into the Bible, we find a tangible representation of God's presence and guidance in the form of the Ark of the Covenant. This sacred chest is linked with the early history of the Jews. Covered in pure gold, with a lid adorned with two cherubim, it accompanied the Jews as they wandered through the desert for 40 years and was still existent and used in the time of the kings. In their wandering the priests, carrying the ark, came first, symbolizing the divine presence and leadership, then they left some space, a distance, and then the people would follow. According to the Bible, three things were contained in this special box, things that are so connected with us as human beings.

There were put the stones with the ten commandments – because God is the God of order. These rules (the ten commandments) had the great attribute of leading and shaping the society, and also uniting the Jews because

the people had the same values and laws.

There was Aaron's rod – because God is the God of wonders. Yes, the rod is the symbol of leadership and authority, and it is in this way linked with the tablets, but Aaron's rod was used in front of the Pharaoh when the king of Egypt demanded a miracle, and the rod transformed into a serpent. While the Pharaoh's magicians did the same, the serpent-rod of Aaron swallowed them all. Another miracle that happened with it was when Korah rebelled against the leadership of Moses and Aaron. God commanded that each of the twelve tribes of Israel provide a rod and the one that will sprout overnight represents the tribe that is chosen for priesthood. Aaron's rod, which represented the tribe of Levi, was the one that sprouted and produced flowers and fruits.

And also present in the ark was the mana – because God is a God of provision and in the hardest time, He is the God who provides miraculously for His people. Mana was the food that came from heaven when the Jews wandered in the desert for 40 years, the way in which God took care of His people and kept them alive.

In the darkest times, remember that God goes in front of you. Until I became a Methodist I had never heard about prevenient grace – and what a powerful truth it is! When you have to go into the unknown and when the future seems so dark, remember God is already there! The God of order, the God of miracles, and the God of provision is already there, creating a path for you in the wilderness of your life.

To the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen. (Romans 16:27)

-Ligia Istrate, Tree of Life Editor

The woman: "A wonderful idea of God"

We are beautiful women for God, in every way: sensitive, affectionate, patient, tolerant, wise, cunning, cautious, bold, strong, and at the same time romantic, empathetic, and sororal. We are a masterpiece that only the Master could create. We give a beautiful color to life, we make you smile, dream, plan, sigh and even cry with happiness.

March 8th is International Women's Day - but one day is not enough to recognize what women are, and words are not enough to describe what each one of us means to the lives of those who are by our side. That is why I suggest you celebrate more during the month of March through different activities.

A woman is synonymous with courage, enthusiasm, goals, and desires, the one that does not stop, because she was born to fulfill God's purpose. We understand that in life we have to be brave and take risks to achieve our goals.

I am blessed by God to have women who have marked my life, the first of which is my mother, that fighting and courageous woman who, even with her limitations, taught me to be a good woman, and many other women who have been a gift from God. In my life, without a doubt, women are a WONDERFUL IDEA OF GOD.

To each of you, may God bless you, to each of you may God keep you, continue to give you more wisdom, support you in your dreams and desires, and may God fulfill the plan He has for each of you. May we never forget how valuable we are, and how important we are, and may we never forget that we are daughters of God. He showed off creating so much beauty in us in every way. We are women of faith. His Word says, "Her children congratulate her; her husband praises her and tells her: 'There are many good women, but you surpass them all.'" (Proverbs 31:28-29)

We are fragile when our heart breaks into a thousand pieces when we have been hurt, fragile when we overflow with emotions in the face of events that others do not value. We are fragile when we bathe our faces with tears, often submerged in pain and sadness when we feel incapable of overcoming circumstances. However, being fragile is not synonymous with uselessness, being fragile does not mean that we are weak or powerless. Women, do you know how

much you are worth to God? You are worth much more than gold. Women, you are important to God, because in your seed you have life, because despite the adversities, that some underestimate us, we get ahead and show with passion that we can. Women, we are important to God, just as Mary the mother of Jesus was, just as Esther, Deborah, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, Hannah, Ruth were, and so many other women who marked the history of the world, women who put their trust in God – and that is why they not only revolutionized their generation but they are also still changing lives and are worthy of admiration.

Women, stand firm on the Rock so that you can plant yourself and remain in the position that corresponds to you. Do you know that others are going to give you the value that you give yourself?

May God motivate women, mothers, female workers, aunts, and grandmothers, so they will be willing to be examples in their conduct, and wise in their speech and their actions. Like Abigail, we can use wisdom for the benefit of all those who are and pass through our path. And, like Sarah, we can use divine grace to be a blessing.

As women of faith, today we have a commitment to our Creator. Each of us exists for only one purpose: to bring glory to God. We were created by Him and for Him. However, there is a battle inside and outside our hearts. There is an enemy who wants to destroy us with his lies. But we have to follow the TRUTH. Not everything is lost. We serve a God who is redeeming all things and He empowers us through His Spirit to live in a way that brings glory to His name, that points to the gospel of Christ. That same power equips us and sends us out to teach other women the way of His truth (Titus 2:3-5).

Today's world and families need more women of courage, faith, vision, and action; Deborahs to rise up to challenge society by modeling and living the principles of the Word of God; women who help restore families through surrendered lives and testimonies that glorify their Creator. We must accompany and show solidarity with so many women who suffer, who are raped, and whose lives are taken away.

Woman, be what you are: the most beautiful work of creation, the image of God for the world.

- *Ivonne Pereira Díaz,*
World Vice-President



News



The second World Executive meeting in Brazil, Foz do Iguaçu

The World Executive met in Brazil for their second meeting as a new board, the first being an online meeting after the World Assembly, last year. The meeting took place from 25th February to 2nd March 2023, unfortunately without two of the executive members, who were ill and had surgeries, the World Treasurer, Mrs. Ngui Ting, and President Emerita, Alison Judd.

The previous meeting's minutes were reviewed, as was evaluation and feedback from the online 14th World Assembly, and reports from the World Officers (World President, Vice-President, and Secretary), the Area Presidents, the Tree of Life Editor, and the Web Manager, were presented. The former World Treasurer, Leu Pupulu, was present at the meeting, and she reported on the financial situation of the Federation.

There were discussions on unit members and new units accepted as members, the Helen Kim Memorial Scholarship and Bossey programmes, and grant-giving to various initiatives. Area Seminars and the 15th World Assembly were also on the agenda, and the new Action Plan, which aims to fulfil the UN Sustainable Development Goals, was debated.

Two other events occurred at the executive meeting: after much work, the women were rewarded with a 2–3-hour trip to the wonderful Foz do Iguaçu Falls, and the Helen Kim Memorial Scholars who had received the scholarship during the Pandemic, met face-to-face for the first time, at the same hotel as the Executive. This enabled the young women to participate in the HKMS program in



The World Officers: World Secretary, World President, and World Vice-President

person, but also it gave them the chance to get to know the new Executive and to spend time together. All were present, except the scholar from Myanmar, who unfortunately could not get a visa to leave the country. Here you can read the testimony of one of the young women present in Foz do Iguaçu:

Greetings to you!

All my life I have lived in Monrovia, Liberia, West Africa, without a thought of leaving to go as far as Brazil, which is about 38-40 hours flight away from my home.

When I first heard that I would be leaving for Brazil in a few days, I was certainly happy, and I couldn't stop thanking God because it was an answered prayer.

My time in Brazil is one of the best experiences of my life. I was excited to associate with all those amazing young people from across the globe. I also appreciated the people of Brazil because they are so loving. We were the only black people on the flight from Amsterdam to Brazil, (I traveled with the Area President and with another HKMS), and they were very



The HKMS

mean to us, so at that moment, I felt like this is how we are going to be treated in Brazil also. Anyway, it was far different than I thought; the first Brazilian we met at the airport was the first person to start showing us that Brazilians are very good people. Imagine, we didn't ask her for help, but she went out of her way to help us find a way out. When we got to the hotel everyone else was so good as well. This made me feel like I was home. Going to see the waterfall was another best part of my stay in Brazil. It was my first time seeing a

waterfall and it was my first time traveling out of West Africa.

Thank you to the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women for the support, and the opportunity that was given to me to be one of the HKMS and to have all those amazing young women as my new sisters.

*God bless you,
-Yvonne Marpain Domah*

The executive meeting and the HKMS program culminated in a harmonious joint gathering, graced by a divine service led by the HKMS, followed by an enjoyable dinner together, and culminating with a solemn holy communion.

- Ligia Istrate, ToL Editor

Changing and Adapting in the British Unit

I don't think that it's any secret that the number of Methodists in Britain is smaller than it once was. On the one hand, there is a good spirit amongst Methodist Women, with a strong program and lively events. But our membership tends to be older women who, obviously, don't go on forever! This is also the demographic that has been most affected by Covid, which has meant that members have been slower to commit to activities again, especially if they are not close to home. One of the consequences of this is that MWiB (Methodist Women in Britain) is exploring which ways of working are best in the world as we now find it. People love



The Executive +

being back in one place together – so how much do we continue to make online provisions? What is the balance between activities that attract our established members and those that might appeal to new members – maybe a younger demographic? What 'issues' interest younger women and how do we get the message out about what we are doing – and how do we involve younger women in the planning?

Another challenge we face is finding people 'willing and able' to undertake some of the responsibilities of running our organization. It is obvious that change is needed, but change can be hard – especially when you have good reasons for what you did in the first place. When MWiB was set up, we created a structure with one trustee from each District so that every part of the country could feel involved and represented. However, it has become difficult to fill every role. We needed to face reality and put in place a smaller and more nimble leadership team while meeting all the legal requirements of British charity law. This has been a taxing process! But we think we are coming to the end with a new structure that allows us to be creative and responsible as we go forward.

One of the consequences of this is that we will no longer have a single President. Instead, Methodist Women in Britain will have two co-leaders who can share the work and responsibilities between them. Surrounding them we will have a reformed leadership body that can get more involved in the whole business of 'leadership' while, at a local level, 'ambassadors' will only have the role of developing ideas and offering two-way communication between local groups and national leaders.

When you think of Methodist Women across the world, please hold the British movement in your

prayers as we move forward in faith and hope.

- Barbara Easton, President of Europe: Britain and Ireland

Europe Continental Area: New leadership in Estonia



This year (2023), Pille Mägila, has left the Estonia Unit President position after sixteen years of faithful and dedicated service. She has said she will stay on the board, so she still plans to be active in women's activities in this small northern European country. In December 2022 there was an all-day women's fellowship in Estonia; they listened to presentations, made Christmas decorations, and elected a new board for the Estonian unit. The translation was done for English, Estonian, Russian, and the deaf. Pille Mägila handed over the role of chairwoman of the board to Amy Tserenkova. The church sincerely thanked Pille for her faithful work, and we wish Amy blessings in her new assignment.

- Lilla Kardosné Lakatos, President of Europe: Continental

Tonga special event

Until recently, the focus of the Advent Season in Tonga was the celebration of Christmas. In 2012, the National Intercessors, a group of mostly Free Wesleyan Church women led by the founder, Her Majesty Queen Nanasipau'u, began to publicize their vision from the Lord. Tonga, according to the vision, needed to prepare for the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and she was to share the vision with the

rest of the world. This became the centerpiece of the annual National Day of Prayer at the start of Advent.

The Intercessors' vision introduced a paradigm shift in the focus of the Advent Season. That meant the celebration had to include both Christmas and the Preparation for

Eternal Life, when Christ returns for



Photo credit: Andrea Aimy Toatea Facebook

the Final Judgement, as expressed in Psalm 98.

The image above depicts the March for Jesus event, which took place on December 5, 2022, and was led by Her Majesty Queen Nanasipau'u. The March was the first part of National Prayer Day, followed by Her Majesty's message on being ready for the Lord Jesus' return. The majority of people responded to the call for repentance, acceptance of God's healing power, and readiness for the

Lord's return. God be praised! It was a joyous Spirit-anointed occasion! Tonga's Free Wesleyan Church youth joined the Tonga National Netball Team "Tala" in the March for Jesus.

- Rev. Sela Latailakepa, the
Tonga Unit International
Secretary

The Commission on the Status of Women 67

The 67th Commission on the Status of Women, the principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women took place in New York from 6 until 17 March 2023.

Joan Capel (our Representative to the UN in New York) and Ivonne Pereira Diaz (our World Vice-President and UN Facilitator) represented the World Federation.



6-17 March 2023 INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE
CSW67 EDUCATION IN THE DIGITAL AGE
COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN Progress toward gender equality

Picture advertising the event, taken from the UN site, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw67-2023>

News from other areas

The Federation's women have asked for prayer for various situations around the world, such as Turkey and Syria after the 7.8 earthquake, the Russian-Ukrainian war, New Zealand after cyclone Gabrielle, wildfires in Chile, and other life-threatening situations in Haiti, Burkina Faso, Yemen, Congo, South Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, and Afghanistan, among others.

Announcements

The Handbook 2022-2026

We gladly announce to you that with the help of President Emerita, Alison Judd, the new handbook (the official working document for 2022-2026 quadrennium) of the WFUMCW has been produced and has been uploaded to the

website under publications/handbook.

The link to view the handbook directly through the website is: <https://wfmucw.org/download/world-federation-handbook-2022-2026-2>

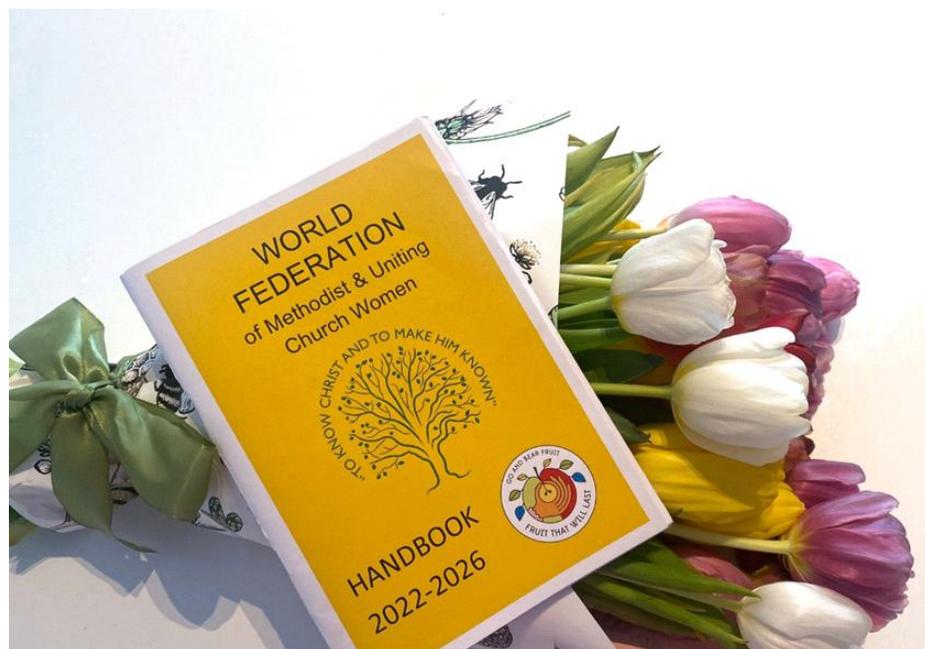
The First Friday Letter



The World Methodist Council publishes the First Friday Letter, a monthly publication, on the first Friday of every month, highlighting news that is relevant to all of the member churches, not just the Council.

The link to access the First Friday Letter is: <http://firstfridayletter.worldmethodistcouncil.org/>

If you'd like to submit a story for consideration, please send it by the last Monday of the month to communications@worldmethodistcouncil.org.



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