



# *The* TREE — of LIFE



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# President's letter

## A global family

Dear Federation sisters,

In August this year, my husband Les and I spent a special few days with my birth sister and her husband. We enjoyed relaxing, talking and walking together in and around their home. Although we speak on the phone regularly, we had not seen them for a while, so we had plenty of catching up to do.

When we left, we had already planned the next 'get-together'.

Later, I was invited to attend another family gathering – of around 25 leaders of the United Methodist Church (UMC) and the same number from the Methodist Church in Britain (MCB). We came together in London to celebrate 50 years since the forming of a 'concordat' in 1968, recognising the strong bonds between our two denominations. Since that time, these two parts of the Methodist family have related in rather different ways to the global family of Methodist people. The UMC has become larger, with Conferences stretching across the globe (particularly in Africa, Europe and the Philippines); meanwhile, MCB adopted a mission policy of encouraging Methodist churches it planted in other parts of the world to become autonomous, while maintaining a partnership relationship. So, for example, two denominations of Methodism exist side by side in countries like Zimbabwe and Myanmar. Yet in spite of our different approach, the UMC and the MCB have continued to value their own 'special

relationship' as members of the Methodist family who recall John Wesley's assertion that 'the whole world is my parish'.

The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary event was an opportunity to celebrate our family ties and meet our counterparts in the settings of Wesley's Chapel and Westminster Central Hall London affirming our desire for our two denominations to continue in close relationship. I was delighted to be there with Harriett Olson, General Secretary/CEO of United Methodist Women, who spoke of the

mutual support UMW and Methodist Women in Britain were able to offer as we each re-organised our movements around 2010. I also reflected on the many situations where I have witnessed UMW women working closely with women from autonomous Methodist Churches, particularly at our World Federation Area Seminars in Myanmar (South Asia)



Our World Federation's President, Alison Judd [left] and our Secretary, Mataiva [right], with Shannon Priddy, the UMW President, at the WMC meeting in Seoul, July 2018

and Belfast (Joint European).

As World Federation sisters, we are in relationship with an even larger family, being affiliated to the World Methodist Council. This body includes several church denominations that have Methodism in their heritage but are now Uniting or United (as in Australia, or the Church of South India). Like any family, we can celebrate our special relationships, and we do so with joy and mutual benefit. But we also risk losing touch with some members of our extended family if we do not make an effort to keep in contact. How grateful I am to be able to meet so many of my sisters at our eight Area Seminars! The Tree of Life newsletter is another excellent way of maintaining those bonds of relationship. Please pass this issue of the newsletter on to others you know who may not already be aware of it so that we can support one another in informed prayer as sisters in an ever-expanding, inclusive global family, and continue to work together to 'make Christ known' in all the world.

Blessings,

- Alison Judd



# Our thoughts

*“Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.” (Philippians 4:8)*

As for me, I know I have a continuous struggle with my thoughts. I never stop thinking, I think at all kind of things, ugly and beautiful, important and unnecessary, things of hope and things that make me afraid. All the time, without ceasing. I never find myself at rest or peace in my mind, it is a continuous battle that makes me tired and many times defocuses me from the things I should take care of.

But, one day, I was reading God's special words for His children and the verse above from Philippians struck me: “Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.” This verse is so touching! I have finally understood what I should concentrate my mind on: on what is good: on what other people do or say that is good and on what I should say or do that is good. What a change of perspective!

We find so much evil in this world and it is hard to find peace in ourselves, but God challenges us to keep our state of the mind peaceful and concentrate on good things, even though our circumstances are not good. We face many struggles on this earth:

many people live in war, in hunger, in persecutions, we struggle socially, we struggle financially, with our health and in many other different ways. And God's soft voice is there: Think about what is true, what is noble, what is right... (even though it seems there is not much righteousness to find!).

As another verse says: “We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.” (2 Corinthians 4:8-9). Our circumstances should not put us down, they should not lead our lives. The one thing that leads us is /should be our FAITH: “Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So, we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.” (2 Corinthians 4:16-18)

We are too small in this world to know what really happens, but one day we will know. Paul writes to the Corinthians, knowing that Corinth was a main point of mirror manufacturing – but back then, in antiquity the mirrors were not clear as they are now, they showed just an image of you: “For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.”

Also, as it was already said: what we experience now, all the circumstances, all the bad things are temporary, but God and his plan for us is eternal. This idea takes me to Ecclesiastes 3:11 “He

has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end.” That means God has put in us the thought of eternity, but without the capability to understand our lives in this timeless and unlimited situation, without the capability to understand completely why all sort of things happen to us or to others.

That is why we should be the masters of our own thoughts and we should not let our mind fall into despair! Why again? Because we know that God asks us to concentrate on what is good, challenging us to step out of our circumstances and because He tells us that everything is temporal and one day we will find out exactly WHY something happened in our lives. What a great God we have! Just TRUST!

*-Ligia Istrate  
Editor*



*“We should be the masters of our own thoughts and we should not let our mind fall into despair!”*



## The religion of faith

In Romans 10:8-9 is written:  
“The word is near you; it is in your mouth and heart, that is the word of faith we are proclaiming; that if you confess with your mouth that, “Jesus is Lord” and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”

In Deuteronomy 30 Moses speaks to the Israelites about what is written in the Law of God. In Deuteronomy 30: 9(b) – 10, God promised them, “The Lord will again delight in and make you prosperous just as He delighted in your fathers, if you obey The Lord your God and keep His commands and decrees that are written in the book of the Law and turn to the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul.”

God's blessing and His care for His people have a condition: the people must undertake to obey the laws and commands that have been recorded. In Romans 10, Paul explains to the church in Rome how one becomes a Christian and can proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. The redemption of God is as close to you as is

His Word. If you study your Bible you will know exactly what to do to come to faith. Faith is still the only requirement for your salvation. The word of God should be in your heart and your mouth. With your mouth you confess that Jesus is Lord and with all your heart you believe that He died for your sins and that He rose from the dead. This is all that you need to do to be saved.



The word that Moses and Paul say is near us, in our mouths and in our hearts, is all about “Jesus Christ”. This is the message we believe and proclaim. We declare “Jesus is Lord” and believe God raised Him from the dead and we are saved. These three words are important as they were the starting point in early Church preaching. “Jesus is Lord” was the first Christian confession of faith. These three words testify the three essential truths.

1. The deity of Jesus Christ
2. His saving work, and
3. His ongoing all-

embracing rule over His people in the Church.

Christ's disciples did not hesitate to call Jesus Lord. They proclaimed that Jesus is the Lord, they referred interchangeably to Jesus and to the Father and there is clear proof that Paul believed in Jesus's absolute deity.

On the cross Jesus triumphed over all the rulers and powers of evil. He is Lord because He conquered death and sin. He is able and willing to rescue us from sin, Satan, fear and death. Our salvation is due to His victory.

If Jesus is Lord, then He rules over His people. How does He rule over you? How do you acknowledge Jesus's Lordship over your mind, emotions, passions, activities and ethics? Seek to honour Him as Lord over your family, relationships and church and pray for Him to rule over you. As God deepens His gracious rule over our hearts, we are encouraged all of us to embrace this unique opportunity to take this message to proclaim this quinquennium and, together by the Grace of God, we will proclaim and make a difference in our families, churches and communities.

- *Sipiwe Chisvo,*  
*President of Southern and*  
*East Africa Area*



# News



## News from South Pacific Area Seminar: “Hearts on Fire in Fiji”

In July the South Pacific Area Seminar took place in the Shangri-La Holiday resort. The theme was “Chosen people: called to proclaim .... with hearts on fire” and more than 500 delegates participated.



The Weaving Together Programme preceded the Seminar and was facilitated by three World Officers, and attended by Joy Jino, Area President, Ilaisaane Kapani, Area Vice-President, Tepuola Waqainabete, one of the Helen Kim Memorial Scholars, and Unit representatives from UK, Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and the Solomon Islands. Participants were able to discover more about the World Federation, share reports on their Unit activities and identify priorities

for future action.

At the seminar women could benefit from strong Bible studies, different speeches, testimonies and workshops. Two thought-provoking Bible studies were led by Rev Dr Seforosa Carroll. The first focussed on the resurrection story of Mary Magdalene, showing how (through moving through despair to conversion and on to being commissioned), she became the first to meet the risen Lord Jesus and the first to proclaim the good news. The second Bible study, entitled 'God's chosen outsiders', explored how the Syro-Phoenician woman transformed the perception of Jesus so that he realised his mission of salvation was indeed inclusive – to the whole of creation – and not only to the Jews. She asked, 'Are we prepared to listen to the voices of those who are different from ourselves?' She urged us to avoid exclusivity, and to 'share the gift of life' and 'be sowers of the seeds of hope'. Women also could learn about the International Labour Organisation (ILO), and Climate Change (Rev Jeremiah

Waqainabete) and could hear Mrs Lorini Tevi's testimony, as she challenged the women to be a redemptive community of faith and social justice. Workshops were varied, including plenty of opportunities for song, dance and drama as well as informative topics such as stewardship, YWAM and trauma healing.

The officers are thankful for the hospitality and generosity of the South Pacific people!



Current and former Helen Kim Memorial Scholars



## Dr. Edith Loane



Our World Federation family is deeply saddened to inform you that Dr. Edith Loane passed away on the morning of 17th July. She was a former Britain and Ireland Area President from 1976 to 1981, World Treasurer from 1981 to 1986 and World President from 1991 to 1996. We thank God for her involvement! May she rest in peace!

## Bossey Program

We are pleased to inform you that Esther Chanakira nee Macheka was the chosen one for the Bossey Ecumenical Institute in Switzerland this year. Esther was born in Masvingo, Zimbabwe and she is 32 years old. She is married to Reverend Gift Chanakira, a Methodist Minister currently working in Muzarabani. They are blessed with two children: Divine and Amy. Esther holds a Bachelor of Arts

Honours Degree in Religious Studies and she is an advocate for gender issues, working voluntarily with women and young girls in rural areas. Her desire is to see all women liberated from all forms of oppression and she is a campaigner for the Sustainable Development Goals.

Here is what she wrote to Alison Judd regarding her experience at Bossey:

“Firstly, I want to thank you and the entire team you work with the Women Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women for your financial



support. It was indeed a great experience for me; important to note is that it was my first time to fly and to go to Europe,

I really enjoyed travelling by a plane. May the Lord Almighty continue to bless you all.

The course was of greater importance to me especially meeting with different people from different countries with different beliefs. I have learnt a lot about the three Abrahamic Religions that are Islam, Judaism and Christianity through socializing and lectures. We also visited different places like International Red Cross, World Council of Churches, United Nations and learned how they were and still assisting people in need world-wide, empowering young people educationally, helping refugees and slaves, teaching people to live a healthy life. We even listened to audios given by different people helped by Red Cross. This helped me realise that I can transform the small community I live in by encouraging them to build toilets, dig wells to fetch clean water and educate young people about human rights. I took as many books as I could from WCC and I'm grateful for that. I can read and share with others.

We also visited the Mosque, the Synagogue and a Lutheran church in Geneva. This helped me erase the prejudices I had before participating in their worship services.

Last, but not least, we learnt about the Sustainable



Development Goals in relation to these three Abrahamic Religions. This was of paramount importance to me because I now understand what they

friendly and they created a conducive environment for learning and doing presentations. Their hospitality was splendid. I hope and believe that I

# O k n a h Kim Lah

We want to wish Dr. Oknah Kim Lah, the former World President from 1981 to 1986, a wonderful birthday as she turns 100 on 27th September!

The women of the Federation appreciate her work for us and also for funding Kakdang Welfare Foundation.

Happy birthday!

mean and my role as an individual to make sure that we will realise these goals by 2030.

Switzerland is a nice country. Professors at Bossey were

covered everything in this short summary. Don't hesitate to ask where you need clarity.

I thank you!"



Present World Federation President, Alison Judd and the Former World Federation President, Oknah Kim Lah



# Prayer on SDG No poverty - Zimbabwe

Millions of people in Zimbabwe are living below the poverty line. There are so many factors leading to this number. Many people are living in shackles of poverty, BUT our 2030 vision is NO P O V E R T Y .

*I believe in the God of impossibilities, who can create a way where there seems to be no way. I pray for a*

*complete economic turnaround in Zimbabwe that will uplift the living standards of the population. I pray for gender equality and equity in all spheres of life. May the good Lord give us wisdom to consider equal opportunities to education for both boys and girls. After acquiring tertiary education, create employment for your people oh, God, so that even the poor will value education because now it is pointless to most parents to sacrifice (sell their cattle) to educate a child who will remain unemployed after learning. Lord God, only education can break*

*boundaries and eradicate poverty. This only can be done if equal opportunities are given when it comes to employment. Heavenly Father bless our hands so that whatever we do, it will be blessed and we will earn a living from different projects. Remember also countries like Iran, Russia, Myanmar, Egypt, Jamaica, Somalia, Trinidad, and the whole world when it comes to the issue of poverty, for with You, oh God, we are more than conquerors. Amen.*

- Esther Macheka,  
Bossey scholar 2018





## Contact details you may find useful

Role	Area	Name	Email
World President		Alison Judd	world.president@wfmucw.org
World Vice-President		Matilda Johnson	world.vice-president@wfmucw.org
World Secretary		Mataiva D Robertson	world.secretary@wfmucw.org
World Treasurer		Leu Pupulu	world.treasurer@wfmucw.org
World President Emerita		Ann Connan	president.emerita@wfmucw.org
World Archivist		Judith Siaba	world.archivist@wfmucw.org
Editor, Tree of Life		Ligia Istrate	treeoflife@wfmucw.org
UN Representative		Dr Brenda Smith	un@wfmucw.org
Area President	South Pacific	Joy Jino	southpacific.president@wfmucw.org
Area Vice-President		Ilaisaane Kapani	southpacific.vice-president@wfmucw.org
Area President	North America	Princess Pegues	northamerica.president@wfmucw.org
Area Vice-President		Sandra Gadson	northamerica.vice-president@wfmucw.org
Area President	Latin America	Leila Barbosa	latinamerica.president@wfmucw.org
Area Vice-President		Jessica Solar	latinamerica.vice-president@wfmucw.org
Area President	East Asia	Ting Sing Hong	eastasia.president@wfmucw.org
Area Vice-President		Mary Devadason	eastasia.vice-president@wfmucw.org
Area President	South Asia	Mu Mu Than	southasia.president@wfmucw.org
Area Vice-President		Evelyn Mercylin	southasia.vice-president@wfmucw.org
Area President	Southern & East Africa	Sipiwe Chisvo	seafrica.president@wfmucw.org
Area Vice-President		Patricia Mapani	seafrica.vice-president@wfmucw.org
Area President	West Africa	Rev Jemima Amanor	westafrica.president@wfmucw.org
Area Vice-President		Aniema Udofia	westafrica.vice-president@wfmucw.org
Area President	Europe:Continental	Lidia Ribet	europa.president@wfmucw.org
Area Vice-President		Lilla Lakatos	europa.vice-president@wfmucw.org
Area President	Europe:Britain & Ireland	Louise Wilson	britainireland.president@wfmucw.org
Area Vice-President		Carolyn Lawrence	britainireland.vice-president@wfmucw.org



Editor: Ligia Istrate

[ligiaistrate@gmail.com](mailto:ligiaistrate@gmail.com)

Cover design, interior design:  
Cristian Istrate

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