



THE WORLD FEDERATION OF METHODIST AND UNITING CHURCH WOMEN

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The TREE — of LIFE

Take a break

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President's letter

“On either side of the river...”(Revelation 21:2)

In my little garden, I have a small number of miniature fruit trees. They are still very young, so we have not yet harvested any fruit. But this year, there is plenty of blossom, so we live in hope. Meanwhile a tiny bay tree provides leaves for seasoning our cooking.

The book of Genesis tells us the story that in the Garden of Eden, there stood many trees, including

the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Adam and Eve were told not to eat the fruit of this tree, but they could eat the fruit from any other in the garden. Because of their disobedience, they were banished from the garden, so they would no longer have access to the Tree of Life.

The prophecy of John in the book of Revelation tells us that in the city of God we again have access to the Tree of Life.

We are able to enjoy the fruits of this tree and benefit from its leaves that are for the healing of the nations.

How greatly these spiritual healing ‘leaves’ are needed now! For many, the world is a dangerous place, with nation divided against nation and individuals in conflict with each other. Leaders flex their military muscles at each other to make a show of strength, and ordinary civilians watch and wait, often in fear. Many women and children suffer from the trauma of violence. Many need spiritual, emotional and physical healing.

At our World Executive meeting in Chicago in March, we used a resource called Ketso (www.ketso.com) and the



Photo of World Executive members using Ketso

image of a tree with branches and leaves to share our hopes and visions for the future of our global movement. Ideas were written on the ‘leaves’ and grouped

along ‘branches’ relating to our areas of work. It was clear from the results that we wish to strengthen our identity as the World Federation and raise awareness of our movement so we can be even more effective in our mission to work for peace and justice in a hurting world. Please help us do so by sharing this Newsletter with your friends.

Blessings,

- Alison Judd

Take a break

When I think of the book of Psalms, I think of one of the favourite books of Christian people. It is easy to read and it is beautiful. God speaks to us through Psalms especially when we are down, and God has spoken to me many times through this book, but recently just through one word, which somehow is not really included in the Psalms themselves. This word is Selah and it appears in the middle or at the end of many psalms. One example is Psalm 3, the last verse is 'From the LORD comes deliverance. May your blessing be on your people.' Then, the word SELAH appears. In total it appears 74 times in the Old Testament and its exact meaning is uncertain, but most theologians believe it is a mark or an instruction that means 'stop and reflect' or

'stop and listen,' something like 'Can you believe what I have just said?' It is supposed to mark a break during the song and it shows the importance, the value, of what was said, or it tells the listener or reader to measure the value of what has just been said. It can be interpreted also as a word of praise.

I believe the message of the word Selah is very important:



STOP. Right now, stop! Just Stop and think. Meditate. Stop from your daily routine and think about God, how great He is. Stop and give Him praise, even if your heart is heavy and you have many troubles. Stop and see the value in the things you have, measure your life. Nowadays everything has to be done here and now. We have so many activities: we have a job (or even two or three), we are involved with the Church and in different activities, we volunteer, we take care of our

families, of our friends, we are EVERYWHERE. As women, we burn ourselves out with so many things and in all this uproar, we must not forget to take time to STOP.

Stop from all your activities and spend time with God. Stop and admire God and what He has done in your life. Stop and see the real value. Then, give Him praise.

For sure stopping will strengthen you to continue your life, it will enrich your relationship with God and with your family. Also, do something you enjoy, take a break from time to time and do something YOU like. Not only what the people around you enjoy, what your

husband and kids enjoy, what your Church needs, but also something that makes you happy. I used to do only what was needed and when I took time for me, I felt guilty. But we need time for ourselves to recharge our batteries.

Do not forget, SELAH. Take a break in this busy world. Stop for God and Stop for yourself.

-Ligia Istrate

South Pacific Area Devotional

Women of courage

Often when we read the Bible it is really easy to think that the Jewish people only had men around, that women played no great part in the history of God's people in the world when, in fact, women played a prominent role in securing Israel's future, providing models of courage and persistence.

My focus is on the beginning of the Book of Exodus. Pharaoh noted the prosperity of the Hebrew people who had resided in Egypt for four centuries, and he feared these resident aliens were a threat to the security of Egypt. So with one stroke he withdrew all privileges and forced them to serve him as slaves through severe hard labour. But this did not slow the growth of the Hebrew community. So, Pharaoh tried other measures (read Exodus 1: 8 - 22) and his obsession gave him no peace. As supreme head of the country he did not want to set an example of downright injustice, so he commanded the midwives to kill the baby boys at birth - maybe claiming they were stillborn. These

women, Shiphrah and Puah, which in Hebrew are the decorative feminine names "Beauty" and "Splendour", defied their orders and allowed the boys to live. It's not clear whether Pharaoh thought that his power and majesty would terrorise these humble women into becoming accomplices, and traitors to their own people. It's not even said that he promised them any reward for



their action. Of course, he is mistaken, and the Pharaoh met a greater force than his: the midwives "feared God". Their excuse for not obeying may have been partly true, but clearly, they lied, and the Pharaoh could not punish them, for in doing so he would have exposed his evil plans. God's reward was that He gave them homes and families of their own. God clearly helped Israel through these risk-taking, courageous women.

Such courageous women live also in our days. A few years ago, in Tonga - a Methodist Kingdom island of the South Pacific - a young secondary student, Kae Tami, contracted a rare facial cancer. She was sent to New Zealand for treatment funded by a world-wide fundraising campaign built on a song she wrote and sang on radio. Returning to Tonga for her last months of life, Tae spoke publicly about her faith. The late King George V presented her on her death bed with a medal of courage. She sang her song for him: "Walk on, walk strong". Tae's words to her mother were: "Don't be sad when I'm gone. I know I'll be with my God. Work to get a cancer ward for children at the hospital. Raise funds for scholarships for girls at my school. Sing my song, wear the T-shirt reminding people to be courageous in all things".

Prayer:

Thank you, God, for choosing us to be your people. Help us to be courageous in all the opportunities that come our way to proclaim your love. Remind us that because you have called us you will equip us in all situations. Amen.

-Ann Connan

News



News from East Asia Area



H o n g Kong

The World Day of Prayer was observed on 11th March

with different denominations at St Andrew Church. The theme, 'AM I BEING UNFAIR TO YOU', concerned the adverse circumstances of Filipino women in their country and overseas and how they struggled to maintain their living as well as their faith in God. The Methodist Food Bank delivers food to the elderly and needy weekly. People in this ministry visit nursing homes and also different Methodist Women



Associations in order to strengthen their relationships among the sisters.

Philippines

The United Methodist Women's Society of Christian Services had its 2017 conference with the theme "TRANSFORMED WOMEN, THEREFORE GO!"

The program emphasizes family evangelism and discipleship, the ministry with drug dependents and people living with HIV, and the ministry with victims of environmental destruction.

Malaysia



EAA Vice President, Mary Devadason, at the conference

The Tamil Methodist Women's conference was held in late February 2017, with the topic "CHILDREN", relating to "The parable of the sower". The aim was to reach out to children from different backgrounds and to teach them the love of Jesus Christ.



EAA Secretary at a Day Trip with the children

Taiwan

Taiwan Women's Society held the World Day of Prayer on 3rd March at St John's Episcopal Cathedral to build a better understanding of Filipino culture and of how the typhoon disaster affects lives.



President of East Asia Area Advice

The story of how Jesus was betrayed by Judas is well known. Did Judas betray Jesus because he was greedy for money or he was disappointed in Jesus's teachings or he lacked faith in Him? Whatever the reason behind it, Jesus was

betrayed by one of his twelve beloved chosen disciples.

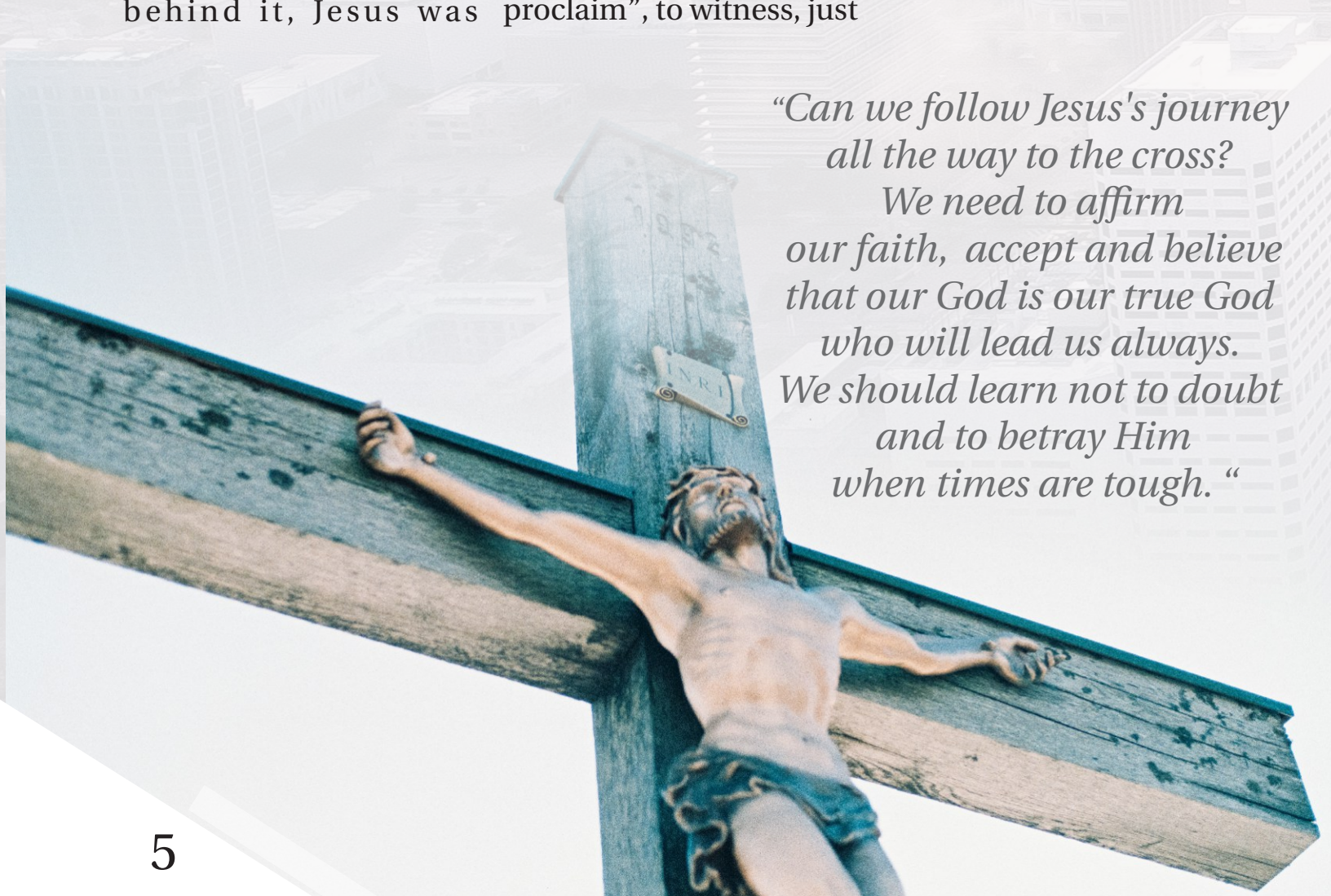
It was Judas's and our sins that crucified Jesus. We can comfortably say that we would never do what Judas did – betraying Jesus. All of us sin, even Christians and even after we are born again and saved from our sins, there will still be times when our flesh will win over our soul and we will fall short of the glory of God. We will give in to our anger, our greed and our lust.

We are the “Chosen people... called to proclaim”, to witness, just

like the disciples. Can we follow Jesus's journey all the way to the cross? We need to affirm our faith, accept and believe that our God is our true God who will lead us always. We should learn not to doubt and to betray Him when times are tough. The journey may be long and filled with challenges but we know He will be walking with us every step of the way and in Him we trust.

-Ting Sing Hong,
EAA President

*“Can we follow Jesus's journey
all the way to the cross?
We need to affirm
our faith, accept and believe
that our God is our true God
who will lead us always.
We should learn not to doubt
and to betray Him
when times are tough.”*



UN Commission on the status of women (CSW61)*

The meeting 'WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN THE CHANGING WORLD OF WORK. Women who worked and believed in their work: Continuing the Legacy' was held in New York between 13th and 24th March 2017 with the participation of Matilda Johnson, our Vice-President, and Brenda Smith, our UN representative. Matilda gave the reflection at the worship at CSW61 about Martha and Mary and there was also a skit about the two sisters, played by Rev.

Frances Campbell (the disciples). The narrator was Ms. Joan Capel.

Matilda challenged the women to ask themselves if they are like Mary or Martha. The text discussed was Luke 10:38-42 and it was emphasized that both Mary and Martha were women of faith, who believed in Jesus's teachings, but who served Jesus in different ways.

When Jesus was travelling to Jerusalem, He stopped in Bethany and Martha received Jesus at her home. This was not an easy thing, as receiving Jesus was expensive, while He was not traveling alone, but with His disciples, yet she did not regard the cost of it. At this time, it was

reflection reminds us that Martha wanted everything to be perfect. She wanted the meal to be one Jesus will always remember. Not just because she is a perfectionist, but because hospitality is a bedrock value in first-century Palestinian village life. Martha expected Jesus to tell Mary to go and help her, but He reprimanded her, not because of her activity but because of her attitude towards it: 'You are worried and upset about many things.' By comparing what she was doing to what Mary was (not) doing, she had become unnecessarily stressed and anxious. 'Only one thing is needed,' Jesus said, showing her that Mary had her priorities right.

The fact that Jesus commended Mary and had a meal with Martha shows that Jesus's concern was for all people. Life is full of tough choices, and Jesus was stressing the relative merits of good activities. It is not that Martha does not have faith in Jesus, quite the opposite as she was the one who professed her faith when her brother died. She said, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.' (John 11:21-22) and she acknowledged Him as Messiah: 'I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.' (John 21:27) Mary is also characterized not only through listening. She also makes a memorable gesture. Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, and 'Mary took a pound of very costly oil of

MARY	MARTHA
Is CONTEMPLATIVE	Is ACTIVE
Is about BEING	Is about DOING
But Mary chose the GOOD PORTION	Martha thought she was going to serve Jesus the GOOD PORTION
JESUS is our GOOD PORTION that will never be taken away	
Time with Jesus lasts, is a gift forever	A meal is temporary
We live in a MARTHA world	
We are: TROUBLED, ANXIOUS, DISTRACTED	
But God built this world to be a MARY's world with MARTHA moments	
When sin entered the world, it turned it to a MARTHA world, in which we have to fight for MARY moments.	
The rhythm of our day is to be MARY first, then MARTHA.	
Spend time with Jesus, then get stuff done.	
Worship like MARY	Then work like MARTHA
Worship God before you work, then you can worship God in your work	
We want MARY's HEART	And MARTHA's HANDS
Source: YouTube	

Monica H. Marshall (Jesus), Rev. Valerie Maness (Martha), Ms. Edith Mayfield (Mary), Mrs. Shirley Thompson and Rev.

Mary stayed at Jesus's feet, listening. Martha wanted another hand in the kitchen. Alyce McKenzie in her

spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair.' (John 12:3) Despite the protests, Jesus protected her: 'Let her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a good work for Me...She has done what she could. She has come beforehand to anoint My body for burial.' (John 12:6-8) Christian friends, 'I wonder, when does one stop serving, to benefit from listening? People have served, to their fullest, have sacrificed time and resources, only to burn out, lose families and friends etc. in the name of serving the church. There is a fine line between the two examples. Finding a proper balance is critical, otherwise two things will happen - 1) one will become discouraged from over serving, 2) one will become bitter because others are not helping to carry the load. Neither option is desirable, so we MUST balance the two examples of Mary and Martha'. We need to be still and listen for the voice of God, in this busy world of ours where we are so busy multitasking every day, but we also must be our sisters' keepers and help make this world a better place for everybody.

Sources consulted:

Alyce McKenzie: Keep it simple: Reflections on Mary and Martha.
Elizabeth Johnson: Commentary on Luke 10:34-42
Looking to Jesus: Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38-42) in IVP New Testament Commentary Series

* 'full reports from Dr Brenda Smith and Vice-President Matilda Johnson are to be found on the Website

-Matilda Johnson

Raising funds for the World Federation



It is the time of year when Unit treasurers are asked to pay their membership dues (the levy). Our World Treasurer, Leu Pupulu, sends out invoices in May based on the number of members in each Unit. At the last World Assembly, it was agreed that the levy should be raised to 10 US cents per member per year. To find out how this money is needed, go to <http://wfmucw.org/wfmucw-finance-and-fundraising-leaflet> to download some helpful information.

Area Presidents are to encourage Units to find imaginative ways of raising

funds. One idea I heard of recently is 'Coin exchange'. Each person is given a small coin and asked to replace it by (themselves or a friend) exchanging it for a larger value coin. These larger coins are then donated to the World Federation. Another idea is to bring donated items for sale at a meeting, the proceeds going towards the Federation. These items could have something in common eg. the colour green, or made of wood, recalling the Tree of Life. You could make crafts or cakes or cards or jewellery and sell them to your friends, telling them about the World Federation as you do so. At each World Assembly, many Units run market stalls with beautiful items for sale to fund their expenses. Could this be done elsewhere? Or how about inviting a few friends to a simple meal, telling them about our wonderful movement, and inviting them to donate to support our work. If you have a good idea for fund-raising, please share it with the rest of us.

Write to

World.treasurer@wfmucw.org
or
World.secretary@wfmucw.org

Meanwhile, don't forget the Donate button on the Website. It works!

-Alison Judd

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