



**World Federation
of Methodist & Uniting Church Women**
in special consultative status with the UN

Europe: Britain & Ireland Area



October 2014

Dear Sisters,

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour!

We write as President and Vice - President of the Europe: Britain and Ireland Area of the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women to greet you on this special occasion. It is now many years since Dr Helen Kim, a young Korean woman, first shared her vision of a global movement of Methodist women working together for a world without poverty, inequality and injustice.

On 26 October 2014 we celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the signing of the original charter that brought together women from 27 countries into the first world-wide sisterhood of Methodist women. Since its birth, that movement has grown into a much larger one, including women from 70 nations and from different denominations (though all with Methodism in their heritage). Now that movement has influence at United Nations level as well as within each conference of the church as we raise awareness about issues relating to each of the Millennium Development Goals. Today, women from all over the world, seeking to 'know Christ and to make Him known' are working together to usher in the kingdom of God.

In our own Area, we have been privileged to have produced three World Presidents: Elizabeth Kissak, Edith Loane and Rosemary Wass. Janice Clark served as World Secretary; Pam Klimke as World Archivist. How blessed we have been with our leaders over the 75 years! I would ask you to be on the look-out for our future World and Area officers who will take up their responsibilities at the 13th World Assembly in Houston, Texas in August/September 2016. Please be prayerfully vigilant and encourage anyone you know who might be called by God to serve in this way for the next quinquennium. If that person is you, then do get in touch for further information.

The Helen Kim Memorial scholarship has been in existence since the Loughborough assembly of 2001. This programme, offering leadership and experiential training, has been instrumental in encouraging younger women to get involved in the World Federation and many are still in touch with each other and active in their Area. In this current quinquennium, we have been particularly blessed in our Area as Rachel Fallows in Ireland, and Rachel Coates in Britain have been wonderful, enthusiastic advocates for the movement, offering their full commitment and sharing their skills in their Units. You can read about the brilliant workshop they led with Murielle Wilhelm (HKMS for Europe: Continental) at the joint Areas Seminar in Rome in June 2014. Just go to our Area Page of the World Federation website www.wfmucw.org.

I do hope you have seen the leaflet produced recently by the current World President, Ann Connan, to promote the movement. Please use it to encourage your friends to get involved and work with us to 'know Christ and make Him known'. It can be downloaded from the British Unit website: http://mwib.org.uk/about-us/wfmucwmain/item/694-wfm-ucw_brochure.html

Maureen Young, Area Vice-President, and I are exploring ways in which our two units might form stronger bonds of fellowship and (to use the theme of our last Area Seminar) move 'Forward together in hope'. We ask for your support and invite you to share with us your thoughts and visions for developing relationships in our Area. One thing we need to do together is produce an Area banner for the next World Assembly. Ideas for a design (1.5 metres x 0.75 metres) should be sent to either Maureen or myself by 1st June 2015. The chosen design will then be commissioned to be ready for Houston in 2016.

During this quinquennium, our world officers have participated in every Area Seminar, leading an effective and inspirational Weaving Together Programme for Unit leaders prior to each Seminar and encouraging us in our work. Ann Connan our World President, has participated in several World Methodist Council meetings and World Council of Churches assemblies. I hope you are aware that Ann writes about her travels on our behalf and that these reports can be found on the WFMUCW website along with her suggestions for prayer, and photos of every event.

The ongoing work of the WFM&UCW has a financial cost. While we are able to communicate more easily and cheaply than in previous decades via the internet, travel and accommodation costs are great. Your executive officers endeavour to travel as cheaply as possible, sometimes spending hours in airports in order to use a budget price ticket; the Tree of Life is now spread around the world electronically but the design and preparation of this wonderful resource still incur expenses. The Helen Kim Memorial Scholarship needs funding to enable the next group of young women to attend the programme at the 13th World Assembly in Houston Texas. Brenda Smith, our representative at the United Nations also needs funding for her work on our behalf. Each Unit is asked to pay a levy of 4 cents per member per year but this is not enough for the work we want to do. Your donations are still needed. These can be made through your Unit treasurer or direct to the WFM&UCW world account by using the Donate button on the website www.wfmucw.org

Your prayers are also needed. Please pray especially for those women, our sisters in the Federation, who suffer daily issues of poverty and hunger, homelessness, violence and gender discrimination, disease, lack of educational opportunities, inadequate medical care, rising sea levels due to global warming. The World Federation prayer (written by executive members 1986-91) is reproduced below for your use:

World Federation Prayer

Creator God, rooted in your loving care
nurtured through your Son Jesus
challenged by your Holy Spirit
we are in the world to bring peace with justice,
reconciliation in love, and hope for all people.
May our lives extend as the branches of our Tree of Life,
bearing fruit of Unity and Love.
We offer praise and thanksgiving
through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen

My thoughts are drawn to that wonderful passage from Paul's letter to the Philippians chapter 1 verses 3-11 which include the words ' I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to think this way about all of you because you hold me in your heart.....' (NRSV)

We do thank each one of you who prays for us as we seek to fulfil the roles of Area President and Vice-President, and for the two Rachels and all the other Unit officers who show such great commitment. The work continues because we have been called by God to 'Know Christ and make Him known'. We make Christ known as we share in the work of the World Federation. The task is enormous but we go on in faith and hope and in the strength supplied by the Holy Spirit. We go on in spite of our weakness and failures because of the assurance of God's grace in our lives. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

Bambelela! Never give up. Christ is our hope!
Let us share that hope as we celebrate our 75th Anniversary.
Every blessing,

Alison and Maureen

Alison Judd (Area President) and Maureen Young (Area Vice-President)