



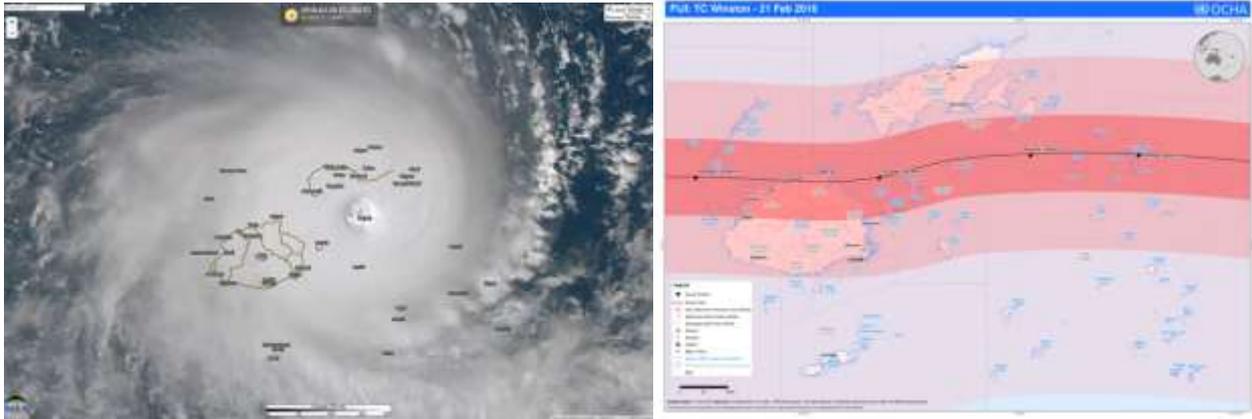
**Methodist Church in Fiji**  
**Department of Communication and Overseas Mission**

Tel: 5445/5446 / 3311477 Ext 153  
Mobile (+679)7721527

G.P.O. Box 357, Suva  
jamesb@methodistfiji.org

**Severe Tropical Cyclone Winston**  
**Disaster Response Brief #1 – 24/02/2016**

Between the evenings of Friday 19<sup>th</sup> February, 2016 and Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> February, Severe Tropic Cyclone Winston – Category 5, unleashed its full fury on Fiji Islands.



Thousands of homes have been destroyed, tens of thousands of people made destitute – without food, shelter or clothing. Schools, halls, churches reduced to rubble. At the start of this report the number of reported deaths was 29. By the time this report was completed the death toll had risen to 42, with more expected. It is without a doubt the worst disaster experienced by the people of Fiji in our history.

*Koro Island - Photo: Fiji Government*



Yet we are reminded that we are in the season of Lent, a time of struggling, to put faith into action and that we are people of the resurrection, where life nor death has the final say. The people of Fiji will rise. We will not only give of our excess but share whatever we have. We are #strongerthanwinston.

In the wake of STC Winston the Church has formed a Disaster Response Committee to lead the Church's response to the humanitarian crisis resulting from the devastation caused the second most powerful storm in the world. The DRC is comprised of the Church's department heads, divisional superintendents and chief stewards from the Suva (i-Taukei-speaking), Wesley (English Speaking), Indian (Hindi-speaking) Divisions, Churchward Circuit (Rotuman-speaking), as well as divisional heads of a number of Methodist Women's Fellowships and leaders of Methodist Youth Fellowships. The Deputy General Secretary is the convener and chair of the committee, assisted by the Secretary for Christian Citizenship and Social Services and the Secretary for Communication and Overseas Mission.

**The committee has 3 objectives:**

- i. Assessment of impact of the STC Winston on the Church
- ii. Develop immediate, short, medium and long term responses in support of current relief efforts, keeping in mind any gaps that may appear.
- iii. Channel overseas fellowship and partner support and assistance to appropriate church and government relief and resilience programmes.

The terms of reference for the committee are to guide the Church in its immediate, short, medium and long term responses to the State of Natural Disaster resulting from STC Winston. The responses must cover:

- iv. Relief and pastoral care to those affected by STC Winston.
- v. Support to Church workers – ministers, deaconesses, lay pastors affected.
- vi. Repair / reconstruction of Church Schools, Community Halls.
- vii. Repair /reconstruction of local Churches.

**Affected Areas and Assessment**

The committee discussed and identified the following divisions of the Church which would be affected by STC Winston:

- |                     |                           |
|---------------------|---------------------------|
| a. Lau              | m. Saivou                 |
| b. Cicia            | n. Matailobau / Wainimala |
| c. Vanuabalavu      | o. Tavua                  |
| d. Lomaiviti e cake | p. Ba                     |
| e. Lomaiviti        | q. Lautoka                |
| f. Koro             | r. Namoli                 |
| g. Cakaudrove       | s. Vuda                   |
| h. Savusavu         | t. Nadi                   |
| i. Bua              | u. Nawaka                 |
| j. Bau              | v. Yasawa i yata          |
| k. Verata           | w. Yasawa i ra            |
| l. Ra               | x. Vatulele               |

- y. Wailevu
- z. Navosa i yata (TBC)
- aa. Navosa i ra (TBC)
- bb. Rabi (TBC)
- cc. Urban Squatter Settlements in the Suva – Nausori corridor

The committee resolved that on the ground assessments be carried out at the earliest with representatives from the church head office and communications department. The following will be deployed as soon as possible to conduct on the ground assessments in coordination with Divisional Superintendents and Circuit ministers and in consultation with the local District Officer:

- a. Rev. Semisi Turagavou / Jacob Rayawa – Vanua Levu
- b. Rev. Ili Vunisuwai / Sakaraia Saumailagi – Ra
- c. Rev. Tikonatabua – Tailevu
- d. Rev. Iliesa Naivalu / Maravu Naivalu – Tavua to Nadi
- e. Rev. Buisena Ravoka / Bogivitu – Koro  
(Moved by Rev. S. Turagavou / Seconded Rev. I. Naivalu)

### **Immediate Assistance**

It was noted that the current relief efforts from the National Disaster Management Office is as follows:

- i. Food Rations
- ii. Water
- iii. Shelter
- iv. Sanitation
- v. Accessibility

Rev. Bhagwan has communicated with the Director – NDMO/DISMAC who has greenlighted our response on the proviso that it is in consultation with District Officers.

As part of a gap analysis the committee identified the following items to be collected by unaffected divisions and distributed to communities in affected divisions:

- i. Clothes
- ii. Beddings and sleeping mats
- iii. Cooking utensils and pots
- iv. Kerosene, Kerosene Stoves and Kerosene Lanterns
- v. Water
- vi. Crops for replanting (such as dalo tops)

The meeting resolved that all the following divisions be asked to contribute clothing, bedding and mats and water and specific divisions be allocated with particular relief items:

- i. Nausori – Cooking Utensils
- ii. Rewa – Cooking Utensils
- iii. Naitasiri – Cooking Utensils
- iv. Makoi – Kerosene
- v. Vunidakua – Cooking Utensils
- vi. Wesley – Kerosene
- vii. Suva – Kerosene
- viii. Indian Division – Kerosene
- ix. Lami – Kerosene
- x. Suvavou – Kerosene
- xi. Kadavu – Crops
- xii. Veiwakani ni Ceva – Crops
- xiii. Nabua – Cooking Utensils
- xiv. Kinoya – Cooking Utensils

- xv. Rotuma – Kerosene
- xvi. Serua – Crops
- xvii. Namosi i wai – Crops
- xviii. Vatukarasa – Crops

- xix. Nadroga – Mats
- xx. Moala – Mats /Crops
- xxi. Totoya – Crops
- xxii. Matuku – Crops

This information is to be disseminated as soon as possible for collection next week. Divisional Superintendents in the Suva – Nausori corridor are asked to meet with DGS on Friday morning 26/2 at 10am.

Church HQ will manage collection and distribution. Items are to be delivered to Jubilee Hall. Women's Department will coordinate sorting with assistance from Youth.

There will also be a dedicated appeal offering on Sunday March 6<sup>th</sup>.

### **Short Term Assistance**

1. Support of church workers:
  - a. Shelter / food / etc
  - b. Possible relocation
  - c. Covering of Stipend (to be recommended to Standing Committee)
2. Training in Disaster Chaplaincy for trauma counselling in communities
3. Repair / Reconstruction of Church Schools
4. Donations to Government and Red Cross for relief work not covered by MCIF

### **Mid-Term Assistance**

1. Repair/Reconstruction of Church Youth/Women/Community Halls
2. Repair/Reconstruction of Church Workers' quarters

### **Long – Term**

1. Repair/ Reconstruction of Churches
2. Disaster Chaplaincy included in ministerial formation
3. Disaster Preparedness/Response/Resilience Policy to be developed for the whole Church.

### **Donations**

The Church has received offers of assistance from:

- i. Uniting Church in Australia
- ii. Methodist Church in Britain
- iii. United Methodist Church – USA
- iv. Methodist Church in New Zealand
- v. Korean Methodist Church
- vi. Overseas Fellowships – Australia, UK, New Zealand and others

For transparency and accountability, the committee resolved that a separate Cyclone Relief Account be opened for donations. Signatories are to be the usual trustees for the Church.

Funds from this account will be used to in the Church's disaster response as described above, as well as to make donations to Government and Red Cross relief efforts.

**Additional**

In addition to the above discussions by the committee, Methodist Youth in the greater Suva area are assisting in the packing of relief rations by Red Cross and other organisations. Local Churches have already begun collections for relief.

We are grateful for any support. Please continue to pray for us.

Rev. James Bhagwan  
For MCIF – Disaster Response Committee