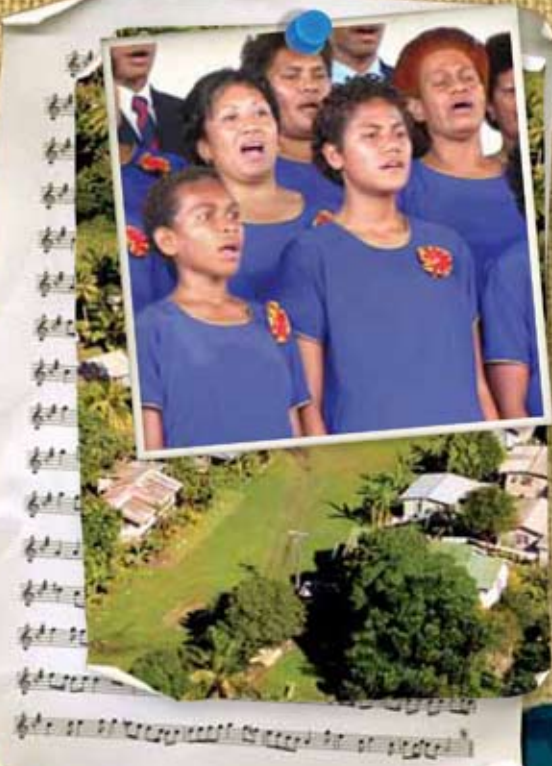




UnitingWorld
connecting communities for life

The Fiji Methodists

Song of Solidarity Appeal



UnitingWorld is an agency of the National Assembly
of the Uniting Church in Australia.

A people singing, A people crying.



Across Fiji's many islands, men, women and children look forward to one week in August. It is the highlight of their year.

For decades, communities have made the pilgrimage to Fiji's capital, Suva, for the Church's Annual Conference and Choir Festival of the Methodist Church in Fiji and Rotuma. Thousands have attended every year of their life. For all who attend, it is a gathering where they feel their faith come alive as they sing of their burdens, hopes and the gospel story.

In 2009, the Methodist Church in Fiji and Rotuma has struggled to operate under strict government regulations. The Fijian government banned the Annual Conference and Choir Festival and charged their national standing Committee with violations of meeting restrictions.

The Methodist Church is trying to dialogue with the Interim Government and contribute constructively to Fiji's future. While the Church continues to debate how best to do that, the Uniting Church remains committed to a vision that is ecumenical and respectful of different faiths and ethnicity. With 300,000 Methodist members in a nation of 900,000, Fiji will be best served to by a Church that makes a positive contribution.

The support initiatives of this appeal aims to add to the voice of the people of Fiji and renew their sense of hope, togetherness and wellbeing.



**“If one member suffers,
all suffer together with it.”**

1 Corinthians 12:26



“Fijians sing because they love singing. Coming from an oral tradition, singing is a major way of retaining their traditions and their history. When the first missionaries came to the islands, the only educational method for retention

was for the people to sing what they have learned... biblical stories and theologies.”

“Preparation begins the month immediately after the previous Conference. Adults youth and children in the congregations fully participate in singing practice, collecting money for transportation and for their free-will offering after they rendered their anthem. [These funds are then] used for the Church’s different programs such as evangelism, social services and education of the people.”

Rev. Jovilla Meo

Chair, Fijian National Conference in Australia

Fiji Methodists

ask for our support

1. Funding workshops and ecumenical engagement

UnitingWorld will organize a series of public theology workshops to enable the Methodist Church to develop contemporary approaches to the issues it faces.

At their request, UnitingWorld will approach the three traditional denominations most largely represented in Fiji and organise key gatherings to share perspectives about the future of Fiji.

2. Sponsoring advisors to develop management, build administrative capacity and provide communications support

- For some time UnitingWorld, in collaboration with others, has been providing advice for the Church to develop its assets in order for it to help alleviate pressure on people who are living in poverty. Your support will enable this to continue and expand.
- A Human Relations advisor will provide planning and HR advice to help the Church identify needs and develop skills to meet those needs.
- With your support, UnitingWorld will fund a qualified communications professional to provide the new leadership with communication support in the short-term and to develop a Communications Unit within the Church.

3. Enhancing Prison Ministries

More than ever before the contribution of the Methodist Church to the life and culture of the Fijian people is under question and a funding strain. The Methodist Church desires to improve the effectiveness of its prison chaplaincy to support those in need. Your donation will enable UnitingWorld to provide funding to support local chaplains in prisons across the country.

The Uniting Church in Australia has been asked to practically support the Methodist Church to make changes and transition to the future. This includes:

4. Leadership Development

The Methodist Church will select six emerging leaders and, with UnitingWorld, identify ways in which the Uniting Church in Australia can assist to develop their leadership capacity. In addition, UnitingWorld is offering a number of theological scholarships to emerging leaders.

5. Nurturing Ecumenical and Inter-faith Relationships

In a country ethnically divided, the Methodist Church wishes to strengthen its ecumenical and inter-faith engagement. It plans to develop trusting personal relationships among leaders of different faiths in Fiji and to reach across the ethnic chasm that stretches across Fijian society. UnitingWorld will support the Church in developing those relationships through workshops on inter-faith theology, helping to initiate contact between the groups and developing ways by which people of different faiths can actively collaborate. Your support of these initiatives will enable the new leadership of the Methodist Church to guide their Church through change.

**PLEASE JOIN US IN A SONG OF SOLIDARITY,
PRAYER AND GIVING GENEROUSLY.**



UnitingWorld
connecting communities for life

Gifts are NOT tax deductible

PO Box A2266
Sydney South NSW 1235
Australia

Ph +61 2 8267 4267
Fax +61 2 9262 7936

info@unitingworld.org.au
www.unitingworld.org.au



UnitingWorld is an agency of the National Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia.



This brochure is printed on 100% recycled stock.

Yes, I will stand with the Fiji Methodists at their time of need.

\$70 \$160 \$300 \$650 Other \$ _____

All donations are gratefully received

DONOR ID (IF EXISTING)

Mr / Ms / Mrs / Miss / Dr / Rev (Please circle)

FIRST NAME

SURNAME

ADDRESS

P/CODE

()

DAYTIME TELEPHONE

EMAIL

Payment Details

Please find enclosed my cheque made payable to UnitingWorld

OR Please debit my MasterCard Visa

CARD NUMBER

/

EXPIRY DATE (MM/YY)

\$ _____
TOTAL AMOUNT

NAME OF CARDHOLDER

SIGNATURE

Gifts to this appeal are not tax deductible.

Should the funds raised exceed the amount required to meet the needs of our work in Fiji, UnitingWorld will use the excess funds to help people involved in similar projects.

UnitingWorld does not sell, exchange or otherwise distribute any type of donor information for solicitation or marketing purposes.

Please send me information about leaving a Bequest to UnitingWorld.

To donate, complete this form and return it in the envelope provided, call us on 1800 000 331, or visit www.unitingworld.org.au



Raise our Voices

The last Annual Conference of 2008 appointed a new generation of leaders intent on leading the Church in working for peace and a Fiji that is inclusive of all. Those leaders seek to lead gentle change that enables the Church to serve effectively in a pluralistic society.

There is a need for prayer and a response to the call of the Fiji Methodists for support.



"Our sisters and brothers in the Methodist Church in Fiji and Rotuma need our help! As you are aware Fiji is experiencing political and social difficulties which are having a major impact on the life and witness of the Church.

This Church is one of our very close partners and we have traveled with them through many ups and downs for over 160 years, including four military coups! Over 400 Australians have served with the Church in that time.

As well as supporting them with our prayers, and through close personal contacts between our Church leaders, there are emerging opportunities for very practical ways we can show our care.

I strongly encourage you to support this appeal.

St Paul wrote that when one part of the body suffers, the whole body suffers. Let's send a strong message of our solidarity in Christ with our friends in Fiji as they seek to witness to Christ in this testing situation."

Rev Alistair Macrae
President of the Uniting Church in Australia