



“Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.”  
1 John 4:11-12 (NRSV)

## PARTNER CHURCHES AND ORGANISATIONS

### Justice and service



MCSA members take part in a march against human trafficking

**H**uman trafficking – especially of women into the sex trade – is one of the big issues the Methodist Church Southern Africa (MCSA) has devoted itself to tackling. Leading the charge is Siyabulela Tonono, MCSA’s Justice and Service Field Assistant.

The Methodist Church in Britain supports Siyabulela’s work with a grant of £7,000. Thanks to Siyabulela’s input, human trafficking was one of the key issues on the agenda of the MCSA Mission Congress last year.

“The Congress is an event that happens once every 10 years in the

life of the Church and is aimed at assessing the impact of Methodist work in our connexion,” Siyabulela explains. “It is where the MCSA’s mission agenda is set. The issues relating to human trafficking were eye-opening and challenged many. Local churches were encouraged to find out more about it.

“Through this work I have been exposed to the many challenges regarding the extent of human trafficking and abuse in all facets of South African society. It has been eye-opening and a great challenge, motivating me to work even harder in

*continued on page 2*

## Contents

Partner Churches and organisations  
pages 1-4

Prayer points  
page 5

# Cyclone Gita hits Tonga

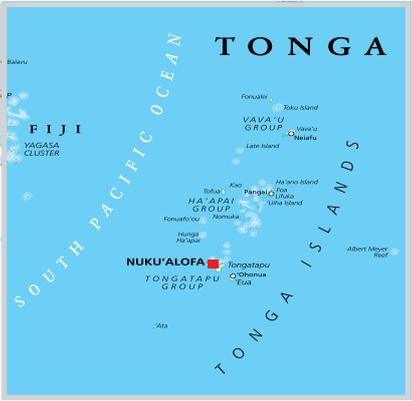
On Monday 12 February, Tonga’s government declared a state of emergency as the Island prepared for an incoming category four cyclone. Thousands of people stayed overnight in temporary evacuation centres, seeking refuge from what was to be the worst storm to hit the country in more than 60 years.

Cyclone Gita battered the island overnight, bringing down power lines and ripping roofs from houses before heading towards Fiji.



On Tuesday 13 February, the Methodist Church in Britain agreed a solidarity grant of £10,000 for the Free Wesleyan

Church of Tonga, to allow it to respond to the extensive devastation the cyclone has left in its wake.



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## Justice and service

*continued from page 1*  
encouraging others to get involved. The cruelty of human trafficking and its effects on people is an injustice that must be eradicated from society. The Church, as an organ of society that has a presence in all communities

throughout Southern Africa, has an important role to play. I believe our contributions through awareness campaigns can go a long way in empowering and educating society to deal effectively with these social ills.

“I am encouraged by the efforts

of all the churches in working on the issue of human trafficking. The interest of the organisations of the MCSA in getting involved and the motivation of all NGOs to work together in this area are a source of inspiration and encouragement.”

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# Lessons from Chile



by the Revd Dr Laurence Graham,  
President of the Methodist Church in Ireland

“It’s a real expression of love that you can share in the work we are doing to welcome others,” said Mariela Correa Montecinos, at the beginning of our meeting on the first day of my visit to the Methodist Church in Chile.

I was quickly to discover that all Methodists can learn lessons from the Chilean Methodist Church. The Church appointed Mariela in October 2016 as National Coordinator for its work with migrants. Methodists in Britain and Ireland pay for her salary via the Nationals in Mission Appointment (NMA) programme. The motivation for this work is that in recent years, more than 80,000 Haitian people have arrived in Chile.

Mariela spent the first period after her appointment visiting every district of the Church,

meeting with men’s, women’s and youth groups as well as whole congregations. Her goal was to share correct information and debunk myths. She noted that people’s prejudices are often based on a lack of knowledge. Part of Mariela’s work is to coordinate the work of many local congregations up and down Chile who are doing what they can to give initial assistance to Haitian migrants and empower them to make their way in life in their new country. I saw Methodist churches in various locations with doors flung wide open to receive Haitians into their midst. In many church halls, there are mattresses stacked up so that Haitians can sleep there until they find permanent accommodation. The Chilean Methodist Church is seeking to register as an NGO so

that it can access more funding for this work.

As I stood in the town square of Curico (3 hours south of Santiago), chatting in Haitian Creole with a group of about 30 young Haitian men and women, I realised how important this reception work is. The big challenge coming out of this to us Methodists in Britain and Ireland is how we can be more proactive in reaching out to immigrant peoples and attacking prejudice. We need to do more than just sit and wait for people to come to us. Let us follow the Methodist Church in Chile’s example and proactively reach out to vulnerable migrant peoples in our midst.



ABOVE: Laurence leads a communion service; RIGHT Mariela Correa Montecinos, NMA; RIGHT: Revd Laurence preaching in Creole, Pastor Huguette interpreting into Spanish

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## A handful of rice



Steve Pearce visiting a rice field bought with £17k from the Irish Methodist World Mission Partnership

The Methodist Church of Upper Myanmar (MCUM) and the Myanmar Council of Churches worked under hostile restrictions for many years, and the Church has suffered more than its fair share of splits. There are currently five Methodist denominations, the latest split coming when the ‘Wesleyan’ Methodists formed their own denomination in 1996. MCUM follows the British tradition, proud of the missionaries who founded it and the current partnership.

Irish Methodist World Mission Partnership (WMP) has taken the lead on our partnership with MCUM over the last two years and will do so for one more year. This has been very successful in many ways, both in Myanmar and in Ireland.

Tamu District is in Chin State, where there is a comparatively high number of Christians, maybe 45%, among a total population of 115,000. It has 14 congregations grouped into 5 circuits with 8 ministers and about 4,000

members. The district has started two mission fields with a missionary in each. Mission here usually begins by establishing a children’s nursery offering education to all. The Synod has just decided that a new mission field is to start next year in Rakhine State, where there is so much need and tension.

Over the years, the district has taken steps to buy rice fields. Church members then provide labour, and when the rice is sold, the income is used for mission work. The latest field was bought with £17,000 from the Irish Methodist WMP. The majority of funds for mission, however, continue to be generated by a ‘handful of rice’. Each time a church family sits down to eat, they put a handful of rice aside to give to the Church. This generates a huge amount of money, which goes towards mission work.

The same is true of Letpanchaung District, which is largely supported by the profit from rice fields – two of which were bought with grants from the World Mission Fund. Here too, children’s nurseries are a means of outreach into the community. There are three in the town; one is under construction. Each has 3 teachers and 60-100 children. The nurseries seem well run with enthusiastic governors and happy children.

The Revd Van Lal Mal Sawma, a circuit minister with the district, commented, “One of the best things you have done for us is the rice field project.”



A children’s nursery - a means of outreach into the community

## DONATE TO THE WORLD MISSION FUND

All the Partner Churches, partner organisations, NMA postholders, scholarship students and mission partners that you regularly read about in *World Church News* are supported by the Methodist Church World Mission Fund, through the sharing of both resources and personnel.

You can donate online by going to [www.justgiving.com/mcfworldmission/donate](http://www.justgiving.com/mcfworldmission/donate). Alternately, send a cheque to: the Methodist Church World Mission Fund, Methodist Church House, 25 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5JR. Please make cheques payable to “Methodist Church World Mission Fund”.



Steve Pearce, Partnership Coordinator for Asia and the Pacific, inaugurating the Wesley Ecumenical Research Centre in Mandalay, Myanmar. The Principal of the Methodist Theological College is appealing for books for the centre, particularly about John Wesley's theology. If you or your church can provide any, send them to: The Principal, Methodist Theological College, The Methodist Church Upper Myanmar, 28th Street, Between 68th and 69th Streets, Mandalay, Myanmar.

The college is also looking for someone to organise and lead seminars and workshops about Wesley and Methodism. For more information on this opportunity, contact Rachel at [encounterworldwide@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:encounterworldwide@methodistchurch.org.uk) or call her on 020 74675166.

## PRAYER POINTS



Pray for the Methodist Church Southern Africa (MCSA) as it seeks to help combat human trafficking – especially of women into the sex trade. Pray especially for the work our NMA post holders are doing towards this. Pray also for South Africa as it suffers from extreme water shortages because of drought. Pray for rain!

Praise God for the work of the Methodist Church in Chile with Haitian migrants. Ask God how you can be more proactive in reaching out in love to migrant peoples and speaking out against prejudice.

Thank God for the great work being done within the Methodist Church of Upper Myanmar thanks to “just a handful of rice”.

Please pray for the Pacific Islands in the wake of Cyclone Gita, especially for Tonga and Fiji. Pray for the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga as it seeks to help those affected.