

THE MAGAZINE OF BARNABAS FUND HOPE AND AID FOR THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

barnabasaid

Christian children: helping persecution's youngest victims

The churches of Pakistan: on the borders of radical Islam

Apostasy law campaign: write to the Foreign Secretary

MAY/JUNE 2009



CHILDREN'S LIVES TRANSFORMED

To guard the safety of Christians in hostile environments, names may have been changed or omitted. Thank you for your understanding.

Front cover: Sudanese Christian refugee children outside their Christian school, which Barnabas Fund helps to support. A good education in a Christian environment brings hope for the future

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

But God

When Joseph encountered again, after many years, the brothers who had so painfully rejected him, plotted to kill him, then sold him into slavery, he had no bitterness against them. The subsequent humiliation, false accusation and imprisonment that he had endured because of his brothers' betrayal had left no scar of resentment or hatred; rather they had taught him a quiet trust in God, the God who in all things works for the good for those who love Him (Romans 8:28).

Joseph's faith had matured to the point where he recognized that God had used his brothers' murderous jealousy to prepare the way for the salvation of His people. He knew that God's purposes were higher. "But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God." (Genesis 45:7-8, NIV)

Please hold this perspective in your mind as you turn the pages of this magazine. It is easy to see only the negative and the short term, but we must be on the lookout for how God is at work to bring good out of evil. I myself am praying much at present for Pakistan, the subject of our Country Profile (pages 14-17). As things slide further into chaos in Pakistan, my thoughts go out to the Christian community there. Already marginalised and despised, what will be the effects on them as normal law and order deteriorate, leaving them vulnerable to attack? What will be the effects on them as sharia is increasingly put into effect in the North West Frontier Province? Let us look to see how the Lord is at work.

Not just in Pakistan, but in many other parts of the Muslim world and under totalitarian regimes, the suffering of Christian minorities is increasing. Added to the persecution by non-Muslims is the pain of being let down by many of their fellow-Christians in the West, those who would hush up the sufferings of Christians for the sake of good relations with Muslims.

But suffering for your faith is becoming a reality also for Christians in the West, even the pain of misunderstanding and betrayal by our own brothers. The past months have been a difficult time, as some people have argued that Barnabas Fund should be silent, that we should cease to campaign for justice for Christian minorities in the Muslim world, that we should cease to speak out about how Western society is being Islamised, and that we should cease to defend Christianity against those who seek to re-shape it to conform with Islamic teaching. But our response must always be spiritual, looking to see how God will work for good.

Dr Patrick Sookhdeo
International Director

P.S. I know that many reading this will be going through difficult times themselves, as the financial crisis affects so many. But please remember our persecuted Christian brothers and sisters, whose need is still greater than our own.

Pakistan: Christian Girl Gang-Raped at Gunpoint



The farm in Punjab, Pakistan, where a 13-year-old Christian girl was gang-raped at gunpoint

On 7 February an impoverished 13-year-old Christian girl in the Punjab province of Pakistan was gang-raped at gunpoint by five Islamic extremists.

The incident happened in a village in the Sangla Hill region, as the girl went to put out some rubbish. Two men kidnapped her and took her by force to their nearby farmhouse, where three others were waiting. After being assaulted by them for several hours she was in a critical condition. Eventually her family tracked her down and knocked at the farmhouse, but the men escaped through the back door.

At the request of a Christian lawyer, a judge ordered a medical examination, which confirmed that the girl had been molested. But although a case was registered against the alleged rapists, twelve days after the attack no-one had been detained.

Violent assaults by Muslim men on Christian girls and women in Pakistan are sadly frequent. Sangla Hill has been the scene of several attacks on churches and other Christian institutions in recent years.

Saudi Arabia: Christian Blogger Arrested

Authorities in Saudi Arabia have repeatedly detained a 28-year-old blogger, Hamoud Bin Saleh, for writing about his conversion from Islam to Christianity on his website.

Bin Saleh was originally arrested in January 2008 and held at a political prison in Riyadh, on the basis of his "opinions" and the announcement of his conversion on his blog. Officials detained him again on two subsequent occasions, and they also blocked the blog. He was released in November 2008 at the time of an inter-faith meeting at the UN initiated by Saudi Arabia, perhaps in the interests of good public relations, but he was re-arrested immediately afterwards.

Although the Saudi government seems concerned to present itself as tolerant of non-Muslims, through its sponsorship of inter-faith dialogue, in practice it allows no freedom of religion, and Christians are subject to discrimination, harassment and abuse. Saudi law is based on sharia, which prescribes the death sentence for apostates from Islam. In the summer of 2008 a member of the religious police burned his sister to death after she converted to Christianity. Bin Saleh is therefore in considerable danger, both in prison and outside it.

Kazakhstan: Proposed Law on Religion Declared Unconstitutional

The Constitutional Council of Kazakhstan announced on 11 February that a draft law that would severely restrict freedom of religion and belief is unconstitutional. The head of the Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law, Yevgeni Zhovtis, has said this judgment implies that the current law on religion is also contrary to the constitution.

The Council cited Article 39 of the constitution, which forbids any restrictions of the rights and freedoms stipulated in certain other articles. These include Article 14, which states that "no-one shall be subject to any discrimination for reasons of origin, property status, occupation, sex, race, nationality, language, attitude

towards religion, convictions, place of residence or any other circumstances", and Article 19, which requires that "everyone shall have the right to determine and indicate or not indicate his national, party and religious affiliation". The chair of the Council said that the draft law violated the equality of all citizens before the law by imposing different conditions for registration on faiths "previously unknown in Kazakhstan".

Zhovtis said that in response to this judgment the Kazakh Parliament should now abolish all current limitations on freedom of religion and belief, and specifically the ban on the unregistered dissemination of religious views. Officials

encourage intolerance towards religious minorities and towards the free expression of thought and conscience. They frequently flout Kazakh law and violate citizens' rights.

Churches that refuse on principle to register with the authorities face the most serious forms of harassment. On 4 February one pastor was fined for unregistered religious activity, and his church was banned permanently. Previous bans have been imposed for no more than six months. The judge, however, welcomed the possibility that the current law on religion might now be reviewed, and said that the pastor should include this in his complaint against the decision.

India: Continuing Problems for Christians in Orissa

Christians who lost their homes in last year's violence fear they may now find themselves unable to vote in the forthcoming elections.

Thousands fled last August when Hindu extremists attacked Christians in Orissa and several other states. Most of these Christians lost their identity papers, and with them their right to vote in the federal and local ballots scheduled for April and May. The Global Council of Indian Christians (GCIC) estimates that more than 70,000 Christians may be affected.

The GCIC is now lobbying India's Election Commission to ensure that displaced Christians are registered as voters. The authorities in Kandhamal district have said that they will hand out new identity papers, but they will require displaced people to claim them in person. Many homeless Christians, however, are too frightened to return home to their original villages.

It appears too that hundreds of Christian children in Kandhamal are going to lose an

entire year of school because of last year's events. After being forced to languish in refugee camps, they have been unable to attend in this academic year, which will soon be over.

For the Church in Orissa education is priority as a tool for development and empowerment of the population. For this reason it is believed to be a primary target of the Hindu militants. Many victims of the violence have said that when they were being attacked their assailants deliberately looked for their certificates and diplomas, ripped them up and burnt the pieces.

Furthermore, government provision for the refugees appears to be seriously inadequate. For thousands of Christian refugees no new housing has been planned, and they are either still in camps or living with relatives. Compensation payouts of less than £140 per person have forced many Christians to buy shacks in communities other than their own. Others are eking out a living doing odd jobs.

Nor has the anti-Christian violence been altogether eradicated from Orissa. In February a father of two was murdered, and in January two Indian mission workers were attacked and injured.

Barnabas Fund is helping the victims of this violence. ([Project reference 21-723](#))



Many Christians lost their homes and belongings in the anti-Christian violence that racked Orissa last year

Nigeria: Nine Christians Killed as Violence Erupts in Bauchi

An outbreak of violence between Muslims and Christians in Bauchi, the capital of Bauchi state, in Northern Nigeria in February left at least eleven people dead. Nine of the victims were said to be Christians, six of whom were shot and three killed with machetes. At least six churches, perhaps as many as 13, were destroyed by fire, as well as three mosques and over 200 houses. Around a hundred people were injured. At least 3,000 people were displaced from their homes, and many of them took refuge in military barracks.

According to an independent news source in Nigeria, two Muslim factions had agreed to hold prayer at the mosque at different times. When one of the factions continued their prayer service beyond the allotted time, the members of the other faction parked their cars in the car park of a nearby church. When members of the church asked the Muslims not to use the

church's parking spaces, the latter burned down their building. Following the church's destruction, unidentified individuals burnt down a mosque. Muslim extremists accused Christians of the arson (without proof) and began attacking them. Violence appears to have continued for at least three days.

The police gave assurances that those responsible for the outbreak would be punished, and the state governor asserted his resolve to maintain peace. However, some doubt the authorities' commitment to the security of lives and property, especially those of Christians. The chair of the Christian Association of Nigeria in Bauchi, Musa Tula, expressed dissatisfaction over the measures being taken to ensure the safety of Christians in the state. He also disputed the governor's claim that the crisis was politically motivated, attributing it instead to religious tensions.

Nigeria is almost evenly split between a mainly Muslim North and a largely Christian South. Some of the territories that lie along the dividing line explode into violence from time to time. Tensions have been running high in Bauchi since November 2008, when more than 300 people died in Jos, in neighbouring Plateau State.

Christian and Muslim leaders have called for calm and for peaceful co-existence between adherents of the two religions. But various Christian groups have asserted that violence in the North is likely to stop only if the government acts more strongly to prevent the killing of Christians and to bring their murderers to justice. So far the authorities seem to have done little to investigate the attacks, and the federal government has come under pressure to set up an independent commission for the task.

Barnabas Fund is helping the victims of this violence. ([Project reference 39-795](#))

Back up a lone voice: give him more influence

It is astonishing how few Western politicians seem ever to have spoken out to condemn the Islamic law of apostasy, the law which specifies a range of punishments including the death sentence for adult Muslims who leave their faith.

But one exception is Britain's Foreign Secretary, David Miliband. In the House of Commons on 7 October 2008, responding to a question about human rights in Iran, he said, "We deplore the way in which the Iranian Parliament is also now discussing a draft penal code that would set out a mandatory death sentence for the crime, quote unquote, of apostasy. If adopted, that would violate the right of freedom of religion, which is also an important basis of any civilised society." (<http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.com/pa/cm200708/cmhansrd/cm081007/debtext/81007-0001.htm>)

But politicians in Western democracies are in a better position to make things change if they can show how much popular support they have. You can help David Miliband's lone voice to have more influence by writing to support him on this issue.

Write to David Miliband to thank him for his comments condemning the proposed introduction of the death sentence for apostasy in Iran. Tell him that you support him fully on this and ask him to take every opportunity to speak out against the Islamic apostasy law being implemented in any form or any country.

You do not have to be a British citizen or live in the UK. If Mr Miliband receives a surge of letters from around the world on this issue, he will be encouraged to return to this subject.

Start your letter "Dear Mr Miliband" and send it to:

The Rt Hon David Miliband MP.
Foreign Secretary.
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.
King Charles Street.
London SW1A 2AH

If you know of other politicians who have already spoken out against the Islamic apostasy law, write and encourage them too.



David Miliband, British Foreign Secretary



Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, President of Iran

Background to Mr Miliband's comments

Last year the Iranian parliament gave provisional approval, by a majority of 196 to 7, to a bill that mandates the death penalty for apostasy from Islam. Previously Iranian judges could impose the death penalty in such cases only on the basis of Islamic law and fatwas, not on the basis of Iranian law.

The bill lays down a mandatory death sentence for any male Muslim who converts from Islam to another religion, and lifelong imprisonment for female converts from Islam. The bill then went to be reviewed by parliament. Before becoming law it must also be approved by the

Council of Guardians, a 12-member legislative body with the power to veto any bill that does not conform to Islamic law or the constitution.

This part of the bill conforms exactly to the Shi'a version of Islamic law (sharia) except that sharia would add that a woman apostate should be beaten with rods while she is in prison. However it does appear to contradict Article 23 of the Iranian constitution, which states that "no one may be molested or taken to task simply for holding a certain belief". Iran is a signatory of the international Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which guarantees freedom of belief.

German petition available now

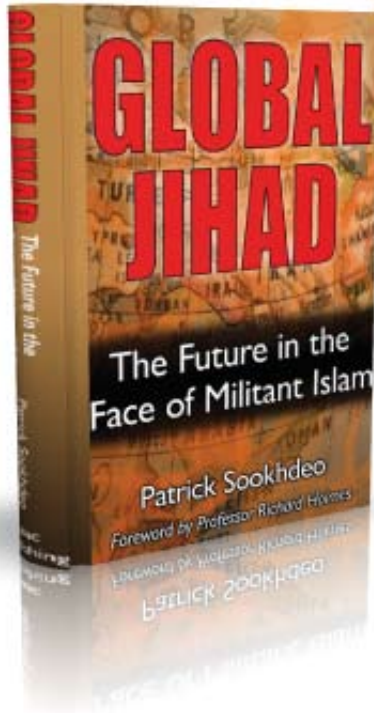
A German version of Barnabas Fund's petition for the abolition of the Islamic apostasy law "Why should they be secret?" is now available on our website. <http://www.barnabasfund.org/whysouldtheybesecret>

Eine deutsche Fassung der Petition des Barnabas Fund für die Abschaffung des islamischen Apostasie-Gesetzes: "Warum sollen sie schweigen?" steht nun auf unserer Webseite zur Verfügung.

Please keep gathering signatures for our petition to abolish the Islamic apostasy law with its death sentence for those who leave Islam. <http://www.barnabasfund.org/whysouldtheybesecret>

In this edition we focus on *Global Jihad*, an important work by Dr Patrick Sookhdeo, International Director of Barnabas Fund, on the driving force behind Islamist violence. Also featured is another book by the same author on a related theme.

***Global Jihad: The Future in the Face of Militant Islam* Patrick Sookhdeo**



The worldwide growth of Islamist terrorism is a phenomenon of our age. But this is not the first time that violence done in the name of Islam has surged across the world.

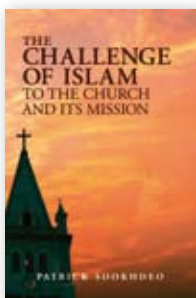
In *Global Jihad*, Patrick Sookhdeo takes an in-depth look at the teachings of Islam, past and present, that provide the driving force for Islamist terrorism. Drawing on a wide range of sources, including many Muslim writers, he identifies and examines those aspects of the Islamic faith that motivate men and women of violence. He also suggests a number of practical responses that non-Muslims can adopt, strategies for winning what could be a long war.

This book will be of interest to anyone who wants to grapple seriously with the root causes of contemporary Islamist violence. It has recently generated much discussion and controversy, particularly relating to the Islamic doctrine of war and the practice of *taqiyya* or dissimulation. Take the opportunity to read it and decide for yourself!

“Patrick Sookhdeo’s book tells us much about our opponents’ strategy. We would do well to understand it, to recognise its attraction and its force, and to meet it with a strategy of our own. We will have no excuse for saying that we were not warned.” – Professor Richard Holmes, Professor of Military and Security Studies, Cranfield University

“Patrick Sookhdeo’s book Global Jihad: The Future in the Face of Militant Islam is one of the greatest that I have ever read in this field. I found the author’s approach very logical, objective and correct. The past experience of Patrick Sookhdeo as a Muslim in the Islamic culture has given him extra ability to understand the root causes of the problem. As a former jihadist I testify that the deep analysis of the problem of radical Islam that Dr Sookhdeo has provided is valid and accurate. I would recommend this book to anyone who wants to know the root causes of the problem of Islamist terrorism and different ways to deal with it.” – Dr Tawfik Hamid, Muslim reformer

Isaac Publishing, hardback, 669 pp, offer price £10.00 + £3.50 postage (normal price £15.99)



***The Challenge of Islam to the Church and Its Mission* Patrick Sookhdeo**

This book, featured in the January/February 2009 edition of *Barnabas Aid*, has now been re-published in a new paperback edition. It is written to encourage Christians to consider and respond to the growing impact of Islam on Western societies and the challenges that it poses to the Church and its mission. The author explains the nature of Islam and how it differs from Christianity, looks at some questions raised by its presence in the West, and discusses the various aspects of Christian-Muslim relations.

Isaac Publishing, paperback, 200 pp, offer price £7.99 + £2.00 postage (normal price £9.99)

To order either of these books, please visit www.barnabasfund.org/shop. Alternatively please contact your nearest Barnabas office (addresses on back cover). Cheques for the UK should be made payable to “Barnabas Books”.

The Crusades

The Crusades were a series of military campaigns aimed at securing the Holy Land so that Christian pilgrims could visit and also at taking back lands conquered during the expansion of Islam. Nine Crusades were undertaken between 1095 and 1272 with varying degrees of success. In recent years they have become very controversial, being heavily criticised both in the West and in the Muslim world. They have also become a source of embarrassment for the Church, with many Christians calling for apologies to be made to Muslims.

However, one of the main grounds on which the Crusades are criticised, especially by Muslims, is historically inaccurate: they were not an unprovoked attack on the Muslim world. They were both a reaction to the harassment of and threats to Christian pilgrims in the Holy Land and a response to centuries of aggressive Islamic conquest and the continuing threat to the Christian Byzantine Empire and to Europe posed by Muslims. If Christian history is tarnished by the Crusades, then so is Muslim history by the centuries of aggressive jihad that provoked them.

This article is an attempt to give a balanced overview of the Crusades in their context, neither excusing the violence nor dismissing the historical reasons for the counter-attack from medieval Christendom. It must be honestly admitted that the Crusaders often behaved with extreme brutality towards those they conquered, which caused suffering not only for Muslims but also for Jews and Eastern Christians. Such behaviour, by those claiming to represent the Prince of Peace, was utterly indefensible.

Why did the Crusades begin?

The Crusades can be seen as a delayed reaction to the Muslim jihad of the 7th and 8th centuries, which had conquered many Christian regions including Palestine, Syria, Egypt, North Africa and Spain. The loss of the Holy Land in particular was deeply mourned by Christians. This wresting of these territories from Christian control over a long period created a powerful motive for reclaiming formerly Christian lands, especially the most important place for Christians, Jerusalem. Christian Europe also felt that it was being threatened by a Muslim encirclement from the south-west (Spain), from the south (Fatimid North Africa) and from the east (the Seljuk attack on Byzantium). Its sense of insecurity was compounded by the ill treatment of Christians and the destruction of churches in the conquered lands.

The rise of Islam had been swift and overpowering; it was spread primarily by military conquest of non-Muslim lands. After the death of Muhammad in 632 the Muslim Empire expanded at great speed. Three of the major cities of the Byzantine Christian Empire fell rapidly to the invaders: Damascus in 635, Jerusalem in 638 and Alexandria in 641. In 697 the Arabs took Carthage, which was the chief city of Roman North Africa. In 711 they crossed the Mediterranean to Gibraltar and proceeded to advance into Spain and then France. By 732, only a century after the death of Muhammad, half of the world's Christians were under Muslim domination. The Muslim empire stretched from Spain and Morocco in the west to India and the borders of China in the east.

It is thus clear that in its early days Islamic dominion was spread by the sword. Many who would not accept Islam were killed or enslaved, and huge tracts of land were confiscated for the

Islamic state and the Arab settlers. The conquered subjects entered a long period of Muslim domination in which they were relegated to the status of second-class citizens. After the initial conquest by the sword there followed a process of soft and hard coercion, gradually leading to the majority of the population adopting the religion of their conquerors. Christians and Jews were regarded as *dhimmi*: they were made to pay a humiliating poll tax (the *jizya*) and were subject to widespread discrimination. Over the centuries they lost their majority status as many converted to Islam. In regions such as North Africa, Christianity went into sharp decline. Throughout the Middle Ages attacks by Arab raiders occurred regularly in Europe and even Britain experienced Moorish slave raids up until the 15th century.

By the late eleventh century the once great Byzantine Empire was on its knees in the face of the Muslim onslaught. The sixth Fatimid caliph al-Hakim (996-1021), whose realm had included Egypt and Palestine, had confiscated church property and destroyed some 30,000 churches. He had also destroyed the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem (1009-10). Pilgrims to the Holy Land were constantly being harassed. Then in 1071 the Seljuk Turks defeated the Byzantines at the battle of Manzikert. This battle was a disaster for the Byzantines and initiated the near-complete decline of Byzantine military power. It also resulted in a huge loss of Byzantine territory in Anatolia (in what are now parts of Turkey and the Middle East) to the Seljuks.

This loss of territory in the Middle East and of military power finally convinced the West that the Byzantines could no longer defend Eastern Christianity and could not be relied upon to protect pilgrims. Moreover, Christianity's other holy sites were

Pull-out supplement

believed to be in danger and in need of protection. The destruction of the holy places of Christendom thus became the last impetus that moved Western Christianity to try and reclaim a small part of the Christian lands that had fallen to the jihad over previous centuries. In 1074, Pope Gregory VII called for the *milites Christi* ("soldiers of Christ") to go to the aid of the hard pressed Byzantines. Although this call was largely ignored, it did focus attention on the plight of Eastern Christians.

Meanwhile the Reconquista in Spain was well underway. By the time of the First Crusade increasing numbers of foreign knights were already travelling to Spain to assist in the struggle against the Muslims. So the desire to help rid Christian lands of Islamic invaders was already becoming widespread. Motivation was often mixed among Crusaders. A love of adventure and battle and a desire for loot were common, but chivalry, religious fervour and an ambition to liberate Christian brothers and sisters were also widespread.

The Crusades

The first Crusade began in 1095 and ended in 1099. The Byzantine Emperor Alexius I appealed to Pope Urban II for help in protecting Eastern Christians and reclaiming territory conquered by the Muslims. In response to this plea several different groups of Crusaders assembled, including organised armies of knights and a spontaneous "People's Crusade" made up of ordinary people who followed a preacher called Peter the Hermit. The "People's Crusade" was unarmed and had no military experience; they were massacred when they entered the territory of the Seljuk Turks.

The other Crusaders, professional warriors, began their campaign with the siege of Antioch, which was taken from the Seljuk Turks in 1098, and other cities were taken in Anatolia. In 1099 the Crusaders took Jerusalem. At this point occurred the

Modern Muslim approaches towards the Crusades

Some contemporary Muslims have seized on the Crusades as a convenient tool against the West, seeking to extract statements of guilt from modern Westerners uneasy about the evils of imperialism, colonialism, cultural insensitivity and two world wars. Muslims present the Crusades as a prototype of modern Western imperialism, an unprovoked and barbaric war of conquest and extermination waged against peaceful and tolerant Muslim states. Many Western intellectuals and Christians have accepted these allegations at face value.

But the claims are historically inaccurate. The Muslim world was affected much more seriously by the rise of Genghis Khan and the Mongols than it was by the Crusades. The Mongols arrived in the Middle East around 1220, and they reached and destroyed Baghdad in 1258. Their invasion was a much greater concern to the Muslims than were the Crusades: they caused much more loss of life and destruction, and Islam in the Middle East was almost wiped out by them after 1258. It could be argued that the Muslim world was saved only because the Mongols themselves eventually converted to Islam. Until the modern era Muslim historians did not play a great deal of attention to the Crusades. According to the historian Jonathan Riley-Smith it was not until 1899 that the first Islamic history of the Crusades was written.¹

The history of the Crusades as told by modern Muslims is hardly a balanced study of historical facts. Their accounts are a reaction to the weakness of the Muslim world in modern times and its domination by nominally Christian colonial powers in the 20th century. They do not mention the events that preceded the Crusades, such as the jihad that conquered and subjugated Christians and Jews throughout the Middle East and Central Asia for centuries,

the conquest of Spain, the raids into Europe and the harassment of pilgrims in the Holy Land.

A typical standard description of the Crusades as an unprovoked and unjustifiable attack is seen here in a Muslim book for children called "Muslim heroes of the Crusades":

Enough [sic], before the First Crusade, Muslims, Jews and Christians had lived in Jerusalem in peace and harmony for many years. In fact, the Christians never needed rescuing from the so-called "barbaric Muslims" as the Pope had suggested. Each religion respected the rights of the others and the city had various quarters where each religious community congregated and lived.²

However, the truth was different. Both Christians living under Muslim rule and pilgrims who visited the Holy Land faced severe persecution before the Crusades.

Meanwhile, some Muslims refer to the Crusades (which began almost a thousand years ago) to try to deflect criticism of contemporary Muslim practices, such as Islamist terrorism or the treatment of non-Muslims in modern Muslim states. While Christians have repeatedly expressed regret and offered apologies for the actions of the Crusaders, Muslims have shown no inclination to offer apologies for the attacks that have been inflicted upon non-Muslims throughout the history of Islam. Rather, they have seized on the Christian apologies as a pretext to harass Christian minorities in the modern Muslim world. The definition in some recent Muslim thought of any Christian as a "Crusader" has been employed to foster antagonism against the West (notably by Bin Laden) and exploited to justify attacks on Christians living in Muslim states.

¹ Jonathan Riley-Smith, *Jihad Crusaders: What an Osama bin Laden means by "crusade"*, *National Review*, 5 January 2004, <http://www.nationalreview.com/comment/riley-smith200401050839.asp>.

² Shahnaz Husain, *Muslim Heroes of the Crusades: Salahuddin and Nuruddin*. London: Ta-Ha Publishers Ltd, 1988, p26.

most notorious event of any of the Crusades, the sack of Jerusalem. Many inhabitants (Jews, Muslims and Eastern Christians) were massacred, and much pillaging and looting occurred. Yet it was not unusual in this brutal society for towns to be looted if they resisted, and at the time the sack aroused comparatively little comment. To modern eyes, however, the murder of civilians by Christian knights appears atrocious.

The Crusaders consolidated their control of the areas they had captured and established four states: the kingdom of Jerusalem, the County of Edessa, the Principality of Antioch and the County of Tripoli. These states were to last for decades in a period of relative peace until the Muslims began to unite against the Crusaders. The opposition from Muslims to the Crusaders was weak at this point because the Muslims were divided by infighting.

The Crusader states and their Muslim neighbours generally got on very well over the following years. Trade, alliances and co-operation were the norm. Often groups of Crusaders and Muslims would mount joint military operations against common enemies. It was only much later that there was any unified Muslim effort to throw the Crusaders out of the area.

Throughout the 12th century the Crusader states gradually came under increased pressure and were the subject of raids. Edessa was by far the most precarious, and in 1144 it was taken by Imad ad-Din Zengi the ruler of Mosul.

The second Crusade (1147-49) was called in response to the loss of Edessa. This Crusade was unsuccessful, but some of the forces that took part helped to defeat the Muslim invaders of Lisbon on their way to the Holy Land. After they had arrived in the Holy Land, the Crusaders failed in a disastrous attack on Damascus. In the aftermath of this failure the leaders blamed each other. One of them, Bernard of Clairvaux, was humiliated by the defeat, and in a letter to the Pope he claimed that the cause of the Crusaders' misfortune and failures was their sins.

The defeat at Damascus started a trend that gradually forced the Crusaders out of the Middle East. In 1187 the great Kurdish general, Saladin, captured Jerusalem after the battle of Hattin. Saladin had united the Muslims behind him and used a revival of the jihad doctrine as a motivating and unifying tool. This led to a hardening of Muslim attitudes to Christians, including the Eastern Christians within Muslim lands.

In response to the loss of Jerusalem the Third Crusade was launched. It is sometimes known as the Kings' Crusade because it was led by some of the most important leaders in Europe at the time: Philip II of France, Richard I of England (Richard the Lionheart), and Frederick I, Holy Roman Emperor. The Third Crusade was successful in taking several key cities, but was unable to re-capture Jerusalem.

There were several more Crusades, which had some success: Jerusalem was re-taken for several short periods, and other cities and territories were conquered. However, ultimately they were unsuccessful in achieving their goals, and sometimes they were counter-productive. During the Fourth Crusade Constantinople was attacked by the Crusaders, which exacerbated the schism between Eastern and Western Christianity.

The new Mameluke dynasty in Egypt (1250-1516) delivered the final blow to the Crusaders' ambitions by conquering and destroying the last Crusader strongholds on the coast. Many



The Near East at the time of the Crusades

Christians in the defeated cities were massacred and enslaved. By the early 14th century the Crusader states in the Middle East had all been conquered by the Muslims.

Evaluation

The barbarity that the Crusaders sometimes displayed towards civilians cannot be evaded. To their shame, they were often cruel towards those they conquered, and throughout the history of the Crusades the taking of cities often resulted in atrocities against civilians. Although they were standard practice at the time, these actions against Muslims, and also against Jews and Eastern Christians (as when Crusaders attacked Constantinople during the Fourth Crusade) are a blot on the history of the Crusades. But it should also be remembered that the Muslims were every bit as brutal as the Crusaders. They often massacred prisoners who were not considered useful as slaves, and the women and children from the captured Crusader cities were sold into slavery and prostitution – all quite legitimate in Islam.

It is also misleading to assume that the Crusaders were always brutal. The establishing of the Crusader kingdoms produced relative tranquillity, especially in the years of peace after the First Crusade. A Spanish Muslim, Ibn Jubayr, wrote after the First Crusade:

The lands were efficiently cultivated. The inhabitants were all Muslims. They live in comfort with the Franj (Franks – this was what the Muslims called the Crusaders) – may God preserve them from temptation! Their dwellings belong to them and all their property is unmolested. All their regions, patrolled by the

Pull-out supplement

*Crusaders in Syria are subject to the same system: The land that remains, the villages and farms, have remained in the hands of the Muslims. Now, doubt invests the hearts of a great number of these men when they compare their lot to that of their brothers living in Muslim territories. Indeed, the latter suffer from the injustices of their co-religionists, whereas the Franj act with equity.*³

But although many of those who fought in the early Crusades displayed a considerable spirit of idealism, later Crusades were less idealistic and were hamstrung by the infighting of those who took part. Armies often came from different kingdoms in Europe, and there were frequent and widespread disagreements between English, French, German and Byzantine leaders. Meanwhile the power of the orders of knights that had been formed specifically to take part in the Crusades became a source of concern for some Christian rulers. In the end the infighting in Europe led to the decline of the Crusades and the loss of the Holy Land.

However, this is not to say that the Crusades served no purpose. The Muslim expansion that had threatened to move into Eastern Europe was delayed, as the Muslims were put on the defensive both by the Crusaders and in the 13th century also by the Mongols. It can therefore be argued that the great victory which the Crusades bought for Europe was time: Europe was allowed to develop for several centuries and to grow in strength. When the Ottoman conquests of Eastern Europe began in the 14th century, the European armies were strong enough eventually to repulse the invaders. It could be argued that without the Crusades these conquests would have taken place much earlier and that Christian Europe might not have been ready to defend itself.

The concept of Just War is a complex issue in itself, and we cannot reasonably use modern concepts of justice and morality to measure the actions of medieval soldiers some 1,000 years ago, without taking into account the ideas of the time in both Europe and the Middle East. The attitude of many Western commentators and Muslims to the Crusades also does not reflect historical reality. The Crusades are presented as completely unprovoked, and the centuries of Islamic aggression against, subjugation of and threats towards the Christian world, which preceded the Crusades, are largely ignored. Some scholars have managed to form a more balanced view, but the balance needs to be further redressed. And those Muslims who seek apologies from others may also be invited to

³ Amin Maalouf, *The Crusades Through Arab Eyes*. New York: Schocken, 1989, p266.

look into the history of the spread of Islam. All nations and peoples have done things they should regret.

For further information on the Crusades, see the excellent book edited by Jonathan Riley-Smith, *A History of the Crusades*. Oxford: Oxford Paperbacks, 1999.

Timeline

- 632 – Death of Muhammad
- 635 – Muslim conquest of Damascus
- 638 – Muslim conquest of Jerusalem
- 641 – Muslim conquest of Alexandria
- 711 – Muslim conquest of Spain
- 1071 – Seljuk Turks defeat the Byzantines at battle of Manzikert
- 1074 – Pope Gregory VII calls for aid to the Byzantines
- 1096 – 1099 First Crusade, Jerusalem taken by the Crusaders, establishment of Crusader states
- 1144 – Crusader state of Edessa captured by Muslim forces
- 1147 – 1149 – Second Crusade
- 1187 – Saladin captures Jerusalem after the battle of Hattin
- 1187 – 1192 – Third Crusade
- 1202 – 1204 – Fourth Crusade, attack on Constantinople
- 1212 – Children's Crusade lead by Stephen of Cloyes
- 1217 – 1221 – Fifth Crusade
- 1228 – 1229 – Sixth Crusade
- 1248 – 1254 – Seventh Crusade
- 1268 – Fall of the Principality of Antioch
- 1270 – Eighth Crusade
- 1271 – 1272 – Ninth Crusade
- 1306 – Last foothold of Crusaders' territory in Syria is conquered, leading to the end of the Crusader states

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These children attend a school in India supported by Barnabas. Schools such as this enable Christian children to receive an education in a Christian environment. Some of them also help with nutrition and medical care

Children who suffer for Christ

Jesus and children

In the Gospels Jesus strongly affirms children, in a culture where they tended to be undervalued. When His disciples rebuked those who were bringing children to Him, He said to them, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these” (Matthew 19:14, TNIV). He saw children as in some respects a model for discipleship: it is only those who become like little children who enter the kingdom, and it is those who take a humble place like that of a child who are greatest in the kingdom. Whoever welcomes a child in Jesus’ name welcomes Him. (Matthew 18:3-5)

In Colossians fathers are instructed not to embitter their children, or they will become discouraged (Colossians 3:21), and in

Ephesians they are told not to exasperate their children, but to “bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord”. (Ephesians 6:4, TNIV)

It is plain from these passages and others that children have an honoured place within the Christian family, and that they are to be the objects of our care. Churches in all parts of the world try to welcome, nurture and teach them, so that they may grow up to become lifelong disciples of Christ.

The persecution of children

But when Christians are persecuted, it is often their children who suffer the most. Young and vulnerable, they are forced to grow up much quicker than they should,

to deal with much more pain and suffering than many of us will experience in our lifetime, and early in their lives to count the cost of following Jesus in the way of the cross.

Children stand in particular danger of physical persecution, as they are easy targets and are often unable to protect themselves or to flee. In last year’s violence in Orissa, India, children were threatened with death to persuade their parents to convert to Hinduism, and a number of Christian orphanages were torched. In Central Africa the Lord’s Resistance Army has kidnapped and brutalised many Christian children to turn them into fighters.

Another area in which Christian children can be attacked is their education. Some Muslim-majority countries prescribe Islamic religious education for all. There is

no corresponding Christian education for the children of Christian parents. Islamic education involves learning the Qu'ran by heart, and the textbooks make Islam appear in a very positive light and downplay its negative aspects. (See the pull-out supplement, *Muslim School Textbooks*, in the November/December 2007 edition of *Barnabas Aid*.) Such education can also be very hostile to Christians: in Algeria a Christian child came home in tears because her class had been taught that it was acceptable to kill Christians. When applied to the children of believers, such education has as its implicit or overt aim their conversion to Islam. For example, young Christian children in the Crimea have been shipped in their thousands to Turkey for schooling, which includes Islamic training, not returning until their late teens.

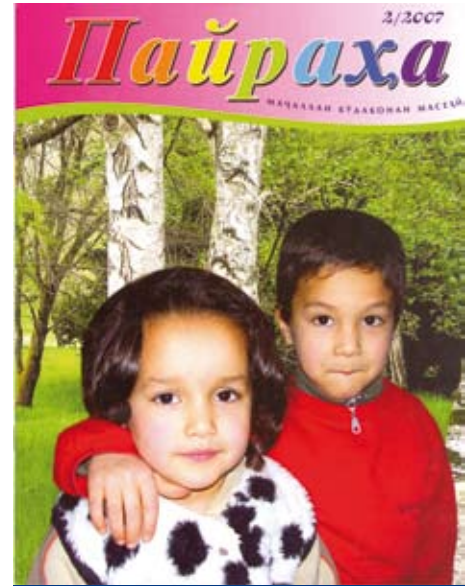
Many textbooks give a highly distorted view of Christianity to children. The Ministry of Education in Turkey has recently introduced a new textbook into its schools that encourages discrimination against the Christian community. The book alleges that Christian missionaries use natural disasters, such as earthquakes, to serve their own interests, warns children of such people's (supposedly) subversive aims and offers advice on how to recognise their activities. It is hard for Christian children to stand for their faith when it is portrayed to their classmates in such a contemptible light.

The schooling of Christian children can also be disrupted by other forms of persecution and suffering. Where

Christians live in grinding poverty, they can sometimes barely afford to feed their families, and their scarce resources will not extend to sending their children to school. In famine-hit regions of Ethiopia, or among the manual labourers of Pakistan, only the provision of food aid allows parents to pay school fees or buy equipment for lessons. Moreover, outbreaks of anti-Christian violence almost inevitably lead to the suspending of education. The children of Orissa are likely to lose an entire school year following the unrest, and a whole generation was deprived of its schooling during the Sudanese civil war (1983-2005).

Further difficulties are caused by wars and insurrections in which Christians may be caught up with the population at large, or for some incidental reason. The insecurity and violence in Iraq has made education very difficult for all as conditions have been at times too dangerous for children to get to school, and Christian children have suffered worse than most owing to their communities being targeted by extremists. In the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan, Islamic militants have bombed over 200 schools, mainly for girls and including some Christian institutions, because they disapprove of female education.

Another concern for Christian children in Muslim-majority countries is their religious status and custody. If a Muslim couple convert to Christianity, they may be unable to register as Christians, so



This children's magazine provides encouragement and teaching for children in Central Asia, where Christians live under great pressure

that their children (present and future) are still legally regarded as Muslim. If only one partner converts, the children continue to be registered as Muslims, and in some countries divorce is compulsory in these circumstances. If a mixed Christian-Muslim marriage is dissolved, custody of the children is given to the Muslim irrespective of the children's own faith, and they will be raised as Muslims.

Thus in September last year an Egyptian Christian mother lost her court case to retain custody of her two sons after her husband converted to Islam and divorced her. The decision was taken despite the fact that the two 14-year-old twins are firm believers in Christ.

Children can also be used as a way of targeting and pressurising parents. In the Maldives, children have been encouraged in school to mention anyone they know whose beliefs are different from the Islam they have been taught. A young boy referred to his Christian mother, and as a result 15 women were detained at a political prison. In North Korea some parents exclude their children from Christian worship meetings in case they accidentally inform on their parents.

When Martha Samuel, an Egyptian Christian from a Muslim background, was detained with her family at Cairo airport as they attempted to leave the country in



Young women at the Cana Girls Rescue Home in Kenya take part in a dance. This home is a refuge for Christian girls at risk of being forced into polygamous marriage with older men or other abuses in the context of traditional African religions

December 2008, she was stripped and kicked in front of her two young sons (aged 4 and 2). The children were reportedly also deprived of food to increase the pressure on their mother to return to Islam.

Another tactic used by persecutors is to deprive children as far as possible of the opportunity to receive Christian teaching and enjoy fellowship. In the summer of 2008 a number of Christian camps for children in Russia were closed down on various pretexts by local authorities, even though many of them had been running successfully for years. A new law on religion proposed in Kazakhstan would prohibit the organising of religious activity for children without the approval of both their parents or legal guardians, on penalty of enormous fines. (On 11 February, however, the Constitutional Council declared the law to be unconstitutional, and so it should now be revised or abandoned altogether.)

If children cannot be persuaded or pressured to convert to Islam, stronger measures may be taken. In Egypt and Pakistan Christian girls may be kidnapped, raped, forcibly converted to Islam and forced to marry Muslims. The police will often do little to help them.

Nor is it only in non-Western countries that Christian children can find themselves under pressure. In just the last few weeks three separate incidents have highlighted the difficulties that they can face in the UK. The child of a primary school receptionist was rebuked for talking about Jesus in the classroom (and her mother threatened with dismissal after she sought



These children attend a Christian school in Bethlehem. Barnabas covers the shortfall in running costs, so that the school does not have to turn away any child from a Christian family, even though their parents can pay only minimal fees

prayer from friends). An experienced and respected foster mother was struck off the register when a teenage Muslim girl she was fostering chose to be baptised as a Christian. And three Egyptian Christian children in the UK were placed with Muslim foster parents.

Supporting Christian children through Barnabas

Barnabas has a dedicated Children's Fund (project reference 00-665), which supports any of our projects that assist children and young people specifically. Our School-Place Sponsorship Fund (project reference 00-514) helps to pay the fees to enable impoverished Christian parents to send their children to Christian schools. Our Christian Schooling for Christian Children Fund (project reference 00-794) provides a range of support for educational projects.

Barnabas currently assists 18 Christian schools or education projects in six countries: Pakistan, India, Egypt, Sudan, Chad and the Holy Land. This support enables about 3,700 children of Christian parents to get an education in a Christian environment. We also help to fund construction of school buildings, school equipment, school books and materials, and teacher training. At some of the schools the children are given a nutritious

cooked meal and some medical care; these basics are things that their parents probably could not afford to provide for them at home.

One of the schools that Barnabas supports is in Bethlehem (project reference 65-420). In the place of Christ's birth, many Christian families are too poor to afford the fees for a Christian school, but a government school, Islamic in character and hostile to Christianity, would be a very tough environment for a Christian child. This project covers the shortfall in running costs for this Christian school, so that it does not have to turn away any child

from a Christian family, even though most of them cannot afford to pay more than minimal fees.

Other projects provide help with other needs. The Cana Girls Rescue Home in Kenya (project reference 25-663) is a refuge for Christian girls at risk in the context of traditional African religions. Many seek to escape from being forced into polygamous marriages with older men. Barnabas also supports a refuge in Pakistan for Christian girls (and women) who are in danger of being kidnapped by Muslim men, forcibly converted to Islam and forced into marriage with a Muslim (project reference 41-465).

A very popular magazine (project reference 80-664) provides encouragement and teaching for Christian children in Central Asia, where Christians live under great pressure; and another magazine (project reference 11-207) is available to children in Egypt. Barnabas helps to cover production costs, so that



These children in Angola are on their way to receive new school uniforms funded by Barnabas. Help with clothes and equipment for children's education enables many impoverished families to send their children to school

copies can be given away free or for a tiny sum. In Pakistan a monthly food parcel is provided to very needy Christian families (project reference 41-331), which enables the families to send their children to school. With an education the children will be able to get better jobs than their parents had and so break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy.

Children are the youngest victims of anti-Christian persecution, and are among the most vulnerable. Please express your care for those who suffer at others' hands by remembering them in your prayers.

Pakistan

Can there be freedom for Christians, or for other religious minorities, within a Muslim-majority country? The founder of Pakistan believed that there could, and the nation's flag includes a narrow white stripe representing Christians, Hindus and other non-Muslims. Although the country was created on the basis of the common Muslim identity of its majority, all its people were supposed to enjoy equal rights of citizenship.



Yet the history of Pakistan since its independence in 1947 has been one of Islamisation: slow and erratic, but increasingly irresistible. This process has received new impetus in recent decades from the rise of militant Islam in neighbouring Afghanistan and Iran. The alliance of Islamism with violent movements for autonomy in some areas has now made parts of the country almost ungovernable. The Christian minority has felt itself more and more beleaguered: its liberties are severely limited, and it suffers acutely in various ways at the hands of the Muslim majority.

The process of Islamisation

The effective creator and first leader of Pakistan, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, speaking to its people in his inaugural address in August 1947, said, "You are free; you are free to go to your temples; you are free to go to your mosques or to any other places of worship in this state of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed – that has nothing to do with the State." But the subsequent history of Jinnah's nation has been largely a process of declension from his ideal.

Within six months of Jinnah's death in 1948, the National Assembly had begun to transform Pakistan from a democratic state based on Islamic principles of social justice into an Islamic state. In 1956 the country was declared to be an Islamic republic. The secession in 1971 of East Pakistan (Bangladesh) increased the numerical dominance of the Muslim majority and strengthened Pakistan's links with the Middle East.

The constitution of 1973 made Pakistan a theocratic state. It appeared to safeguard the rights of minorities, but made these

subject to "law, public order and morality", concepts that would be defined largely by Islam. As a result, Christians and other minorities were left highly vulnerable to Islamist pressure.

During the period of military rule under General Zia (1977-1988), the progress of Islamisation was accelerated. Zia introduced Islamic courts and severe penalties for certain crimes as required by Islamic sharia law (called *shariat* in Urdu). In 1979 separate electorates were established for non-Muslim minorities, which diminished their political participation. These ensured that minorities would have some elected representatives in the National Assembly, but in practice their influence was further diminished. The notorious blasphemy law (see below) also dates from this period.

Then in 1991, after the return to civilian rule, a Shariat bill was passed that made the Qur'an and sunna (the actions and words of Muhammad and his early followers) the supreme law of the country. All existing legislation was to be amended accordingly, and the result was an increased political imbalance between Muslims and minorities. Christians and others feared that the growing influence



The Badshahi Masjid mosque in Lahore

of sharia would further restrict their freedoms and promote religious intolerance.

The re-imposition of military leadership by General Musharraf (1999-2008) slowed the process but did not arrest it altogether. The separate electorates were scrapped, and attempts were made to reform the blasphemy law and other discriminatory legislation. But the increasing political influence of Islamist groups prevented the enactment of many significant changes.

In 2008 Musharraf was forced to resign and civilian government was restored. It is too early to comment confidently on the effect of this change on the Islamisation of Pakistan. But it has recently become clear that radical Islam is still making large inroads into the nation, not now by legislation, but by violent insurgency to enforce the imposition of sharia.

Violence and subversion

Pakistan's alliance with the West in the aftermath of 9/11 set it in opposition to the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and to al-Qaeda. The country was propelled into the front line of the fight against terrorism and became a key ally of Western nations. But having aroused the hatred of radical Islamists in the wider region, Pakistan's government has proved increasingly unable to restrain their operations within its borders.

A wide range of militant groups are currently engaged in insurrections in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP), the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and the province of Balochistan. Many of these groups are linked to or sponsored by the Taliban or al-Qaeda. Some believe that Osama bin Laden, leader of al-Qaeda, is in hiding in Pakistan.

In the past 18 months the NWFP has become a major battleground for radical Islam, and a large part of it is now hardly governable. In the Swat district a parallel system of governance has been instituted under the Taliban, and in February 2009 the provincial government announced the institution of a sharia-based judicial system in the region in an attempt to quell the insurgency. In 2008 militants announced the enforcement of sharia in other areas.

In FATA too the Taliban have established near-complete control in one district, and their ranks are being swelled by foreign fighters supplied by al-Qaeda. The rule of the state has virtually vanished, and the Pakistani army there is hemorrhaging personnel through desertion and voluntary discharge. The Taliban in FATA have even succeeded in threatening NATO supply lines to Afghanistan.

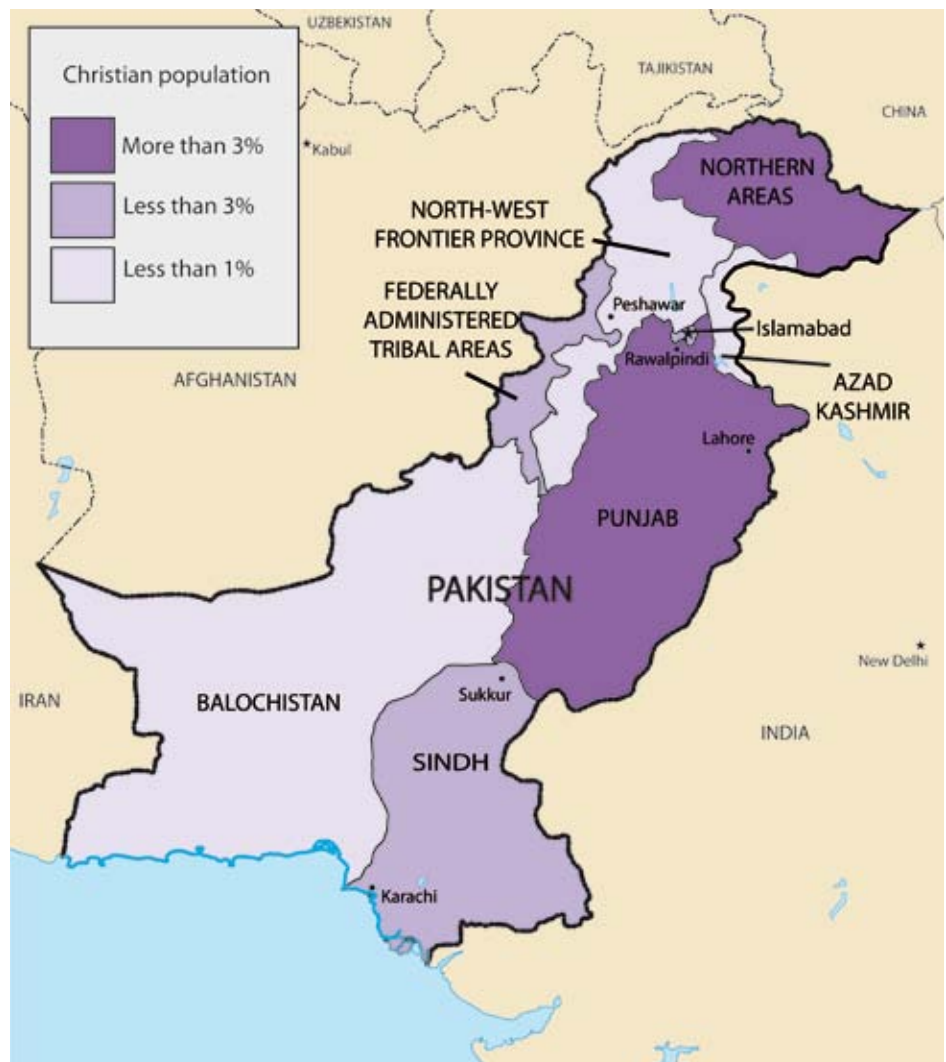
The Balochistan insurgency is primarily nationalist in character, but the Pakistan government appears to be tacitly supporting violent al-Qaeda and Taliban elements in the province in order to weaken the nationalists. They are thus assisting the Islamist militants in their attempts to orchestrate unrest in the region. All of this takes place alongside the continuing tensions with India over the disputed northern territory of Kashmir, which often threatens to explode into war.

A report by the South Asia Terrorism Portal on the current crisis states, "Pakistan, at the moment, displays most of the risk factors which could lead to a 'rapid and sudden collapse'". In this event, Pakistan "would be susceptible to a 'violent and bloody civil and sectarian war'". The transition to democratic rule appears to have worsened the problem instead of addressing it as was hoped.

The beleaguered churches of Pakistan

How is Pakistan's Christian community faring in the midst of Islamisation?

Estimates of the number of Christians in Pakistan vary. The most recent official figure is about 1.3 million (roughly equal to the Hindu population), but many Christians believe this is a serious



The borders and regions of Pakistan. The areas adjoining Afghanistan are suffering from increasing violence and subversion

Country Profile

underestimate. A total of around 4 million, or 2.5% of the population, seems more realistic.

Tradition traces the beginnings of Christianity in Pakistan to the mission work of the apostle Thomas. Christian missions were active in the area from 1833, and the Gospel secured a strong foothold. Many Hindus were converted between 1880 and 1930, and it is estimated that 95% of Pakistani Christians are descendants of these converts. They belong to the “scheduled castes”, labourers who perform the most menial and dirty tasks.

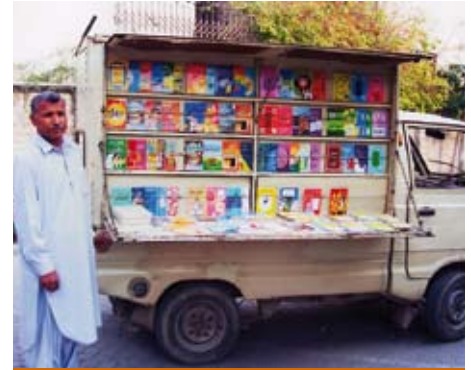
The greatest single challenge facing Pakistani Christians in recent years has been the “blasphemy law”. Under the new provisions introduced in the 1980s, desecration of the Qur’an became a crime carrying a punishment of life imprisonment, and defiling the name of Muhammad incurred the death penalty or imprisonment for life and a fine. In 1990 the Federal Shari’at Court ruled that the penalty for defiling the name of Muhammad “is death and nothing else”.

As a result of these legal changes, the number of blasphemy cases brought to court has increased dramatically. The main targets of the law have been the minority groups, including Christians, some 60 a year according to one estimate. Although no-one, Christian or otherwise, has yet been executed, some Christians have suffered grievously and at length.

During a Christian protest against the government in May 1998 a stone hit a shop sign that featured a verse from the Qu’ran. Ranjha Masih was arrested and accused of blasphemy. In 2003 he was sentenced to life imprisonment, although local Muslims demanded that he be hanged. He served more than eight years in prison, mainly in solitary confinement, and suffered torture and abuse. Finally, in November 2006, he was acquitted on appeal, the judge ruling that there was no concrete evidence against him.

In accordance with Islamic law, courts tend to believe the testimony of Muslims over that of Christians. One judge, finding a Christian guilty of blasphemy on the testimony of a single witness from a militant Muslim group, said, “Sajjad Hussain is a young man with a beard and the outlook of a true Muslim, and I have no reason to disbelieve him.”

The law is an easy tool for individuals to make trouble for Christians against whom they have a personal grudge. It also seriously intimidates them by creating an atmosphere in which threats and violence against non-Muslims are seen as acceptable and are even supported by the state. No punishment is imposed for false accusations, and once people have been accused their lives are endangered permanently, whatever the result of any judicial proceedings against them. Several Christians accused of blasphemy have been murdered.



Barnabas supports a Christian publisher, which uses this mobile book van to sell its books

Naimat Ahmer was a Christian teacher whose Muslim colleagues wanted him dismissed. They asked him what he thought of Muhammad, and he replied that as a Christian he believed that Jesus was the only way to God and to salvation. The teachers then claimed that he had insulted Muhammad. Ahmer left the school temporarily, but a relative of one of his former colleagues sought him out and murdered him with a butcher’s knife.

But the persecution of Pakistan’s Christians extends well beyond the provisions of the blasphemy law. They are generally mistrusted, suspected of siding with the supposedly Christian West against their own country. They are sometimes accused of espionage for Britain, the United States and even Israel.

Like other religious minorities, Christians experience considerable discrimination in education. The lack of opportunities limits their employment potential. The law says that Christian children are not required to study Islam, but many are, and they are not given parallel instruction in their own religion. They also face many difficulties in obtaining university places, including their limited knowledge of the Qur’an and the corruption endemic in the examination system.

Because most Christians are from the poorest stratum of society they have difficulty in finding jobs other than menial labour, such as sweeping the streets or cleaning the sewers. Even the educated may struggle to obtain employment that is appropriate to their qualifications. Christians may be found in every area of business and professional life, but



Christian women queuing to receive their monthly parcels from a feeding project supported by Barnabas

many are unable to rise beyond mid-level positions because of discrimination.

Church buildings are sometimes targeted. In February 2006 a Muslim mob attacked two churches in Sukkur, Pakistan, following (untrue) rumours that a Christian had burned a Qur'an. The attack began with young people stoning the cross outside one church. The minister telephoned the police repeatedly, but they would do nothing, and the private security guards whom he hired soon fled. Then the mob broke in and vandalised the churches, both of which were severely burned.

Permission for the construction of new church buildings can be obtained only with great difficulty. Shortage of land is also a problem. In all the large cities, the same buildings and cemeteries are in use as in the 1940s, and the authorities show no interest in allocating more space to Christians.

Some Muslim men have abducted Christian girls and women, forced them to recite the Muslim creed (thus converting them to Islam), and then married them. There are estimated to be 500 to 600 cases of forced conversion to Islam each year. Two Pakistani Christian sisters, Parvisha (18) and Sanam (14) were abducted on 12 November 2008 by a Muslim who promised them free training and jobs in his beauty salon. But they were repeatedly raped by their abductor and other Muslims, forced to convert to Islam and given new Islamic names. Eventually they managed to summon help and were rescued, but on 31 December a hostile Muslim crowd surrounded their house, calling for them, as Muslims, to be handed over to the local Muslim authorities. They have since stated before a magistrate that they wish to live and die in their own faith, Christianity.

Finally, in May 2006 it was revealed that a militant Islamist organisation based in Pakistan, Jamaat-ud Daawa (JUD), is funding its activities through the sale of Christian children into slavery. The children are abducted from their homes, incarcerated in appalling conditions, and then sold into the sex trade or domestic servitude. JUD is linked to al-Qaeda, and although the evidence against them is overwhelming their power is too great for the police to oppose. (Barnabas helped some of the rescued children.)

Pakistan's Christians face many acute challenges, even without the recent insurgencies in the north of the country. If these should indeed lead to a "rapid

and sudden collapse", or to "a civil and sectarian war", their plight is likely to deepen severely.



These Christian women and girls support themselves through a sewing project that Barnabas helps to fund

Aid from Barnabas to Pakistan

Among the many projects supported by Barnabas in Pakistan are the following:

- **Monthly food parcels for very needy Christian families.** The parents can then afford to send their children to school, enabling the children to access better jobs and break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy. A sponsorship programme is available to supporters who can commit themselves to regular help. (Project reference 41-331)
- **A Christian school to provide education for Christian children.** Since the parents are unable to cover the running costs, they pay only a nominal fee. Barnabas assists with these costs. (Project reference 41-499)
- **Support for 55 Pakistani Christian workers involved in preaching and pastoral care.** (Project reference 41-432)
- **A ministry run by Pakistani Christian lawyers, which helps Christians who are abused and exploited and seeks to put right the wrongs that are inflicted on them.** Its staff are sometimes threatened by extremists. (Project reference 41-645)
- **A clinic in a needy Christian slum area.** (Project reference 41-195)

In these financially difficult times, please remember our brothers and sisters who are far worse off than we are

Christian schooling for Christian children

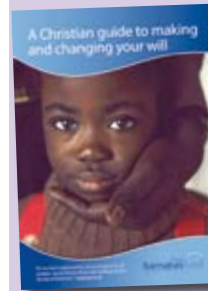
One of the greatest felt needs of Christian minorities concerns the education of their children. Without an education the next generation has no hope. But in many contexts the only affordable schools for needy families are run by non-Christian faiths. In this context a Christian child may be mocked and her faith belittled, and she could even be deliberately failed in exams.

Barnabas currently assists 18 Christian schools or education projects in six countries, which enable about 3,700 children of Christian parents to receive an education in a Christian environment. We also help to fund construction of school

buildings, school equipment, school books and materials, and teacher training. At some of the schools, the children are given a nutritious cooked meal and some medical care, basics that their parents probably could not afford to provide for them at home.

Our Easter Appeal this year focused on Christian schooling for Christian children (project reference 00-794). Thank you if you have already contributed to this. If not, we will be very grateful for any gift you can make to help us provide these children with hope for the future.

Why Christians should make a will



Enclosed with this edition of *Barnabas Aid* you will find a copy of our booklet *A Christian guide to making and changing your will*. Fully revised and updated, this guide explains why it is important for Christians to make a will, and

provides the basic information you need in order to do so. We invite you prayerfully to consider supporting your wider Christian family by including a gift to Barnabas Fund in your will, to enable us to continue supporting those who suffer for their faith in the Lord Jesus. Your legacy, whatever its size, will be deeply appreciated.

Barnabas UK meetings

We are pleased to announce further dates and venues for Dr Patrick Sookhdeo's speaker meetings on **Islam, the Church and the Future of Britain**. All Barnabas supporters and their friends are most welcome to attend.

Saturday 9 May Shrewsbury 7 pm Barnabas Community Church, Longden Coleham

Saturday 16 May Ipswich 10 am – 7.30 pm St John the Baptist Church, Cauldwell Hall Road

Please note that there is no meeting at Ballynahinch Baptist Church on 28 May, as stated in the previous issue of *Barnabas Aid*. We apologise for this error.

A note to supporters who donate using internet banking

If you donate money to Barnabas via internet banking, and you are a UK resident, could you please give your postcode as a reference? This will enable us to identify your gift, claim tax back if you have signed a Gift Aid declaration, and keep our processing and administration costs low. If the money is intended for a particular project, please give the project number too. If you are not a UK resident, or if you have any questions, please send an email to finance@barnabasfund.org

Value for money

We are grateful to the many supporters who have expressed appreciation for our new-look magazine in the past few months. We would like to reassure the few who have expressed concern about the production costs that these are in fact very low. Owing to our large circulation a **single copy of *Barnabas Aid* and *Barnabas Prayer* costs only 18.5p to print.**

Day of Prayer for Sudan

Sunday 21 June has been designated as a Day of Prayer for Sudan. The items in *Barnabas Prayer* for this day and those immediately preceding it are focused on Sudan, and we would encourage you also to refer to the Country Profile on Sudan in the March/April 2009 issue of *Barnabas Aid* (http://www.barnabasfund.org/_images_files/content/BFAid/Magazine_MAR_APR_09_Web.pdf). Please remember especially the national elections due to be held later this year, that they might be free and fair. Pray too for the churches as they respond to the continuing political developments.



A small hut belonging to a Sudanese Christian family