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JANUARY/
FEBRUARY 2020

BARNABAS FUND - AID AGENCY FOR THE PERSECUTED CHURCH - BRINGING HOPE TO SUFFERING CHRISTIANS

BANGLADESH

*More homes for evicted
Santal Christians*

AT THE FRONT LINE

*Equipping the emerging leaders
of the persecuted Church*

MEET EVERY NEED

*Join the Barnabas 12 needs
2020 challenge!*

God fulfils unreachable hopes


barnabasfund
hope and aid for the persecuted church

We work by:

- Directing our aid only to Christians, although its benefits may not be exclusive to them ("As we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, **especially to those who belong to the family of believers.**" Galatians 6:10, emphasis added)
- Channelling money **from** Christians **through** Christians to Christians (we do not send people, we only send money)
- Channelling money through existing structures in the countries where funds are sent (e.g. local churches or Christian organisations)
- Using the money to fund projects which have been developed by local Christians in their own communities, countries or regions
- Considering any request, however small
- Acting as equal partners with the persecuted Church, whose leaders often help shape our overall direction

- Acting on behalf of the persecuted Church, to be their voice - making their needs known to Christians around the world and the injustice of their persecution known to governments and international bodies

We seek to:

- meet both practical and spiritual needs
- encourage, strengthen and enable the existing local Church and Christian communities - so they can maintain their presence and witness rather than setting up our own structures or sending out missionaries
- tackle persecution at its root by making known the aspects of other religions and ideologies that result in injustice and oppression of Christians and others
- inform and enable Christians in the West to respond to the growing challenge of other religions and ideologies to Church, society and mission in their own countries

- facilitate global intercession for the persecuted Church by providing comprehensive prayer material
- safeguard and protect our volunteers, staff, partners and beneficiaries
- keep our overheads low

We believe:

- we are called to address both religious and secular ideologies that deny full religious liberty to Christian minorities - while continuing to show God's love to all people
- in the clear Biblical teaching that Christians should treat all people of all faiths with love and compassion, even those who seek to persecute them
- in the power of prayer to change people's lives and situations, either through grace to endure or through deliverance from suffering

"Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me."
(Matthew 25:40)

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Bank Name: United Overseas Bank

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Swift Code: UOVBMYKL

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Front Cover: Children at a Barnabas supported school in Bangladesh

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 **barnabasfund**
hope and aid for the persecuted church

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The Open Palm

In

Hebrew, the number 20 is represented by the letter *khaf* the eleventh letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The letter *khaf* itself carries the meaning of a palm, an open hand, suggested by the shape of the letter. And the meaning of the open palm is redemption. For with palm up, the hand is ready to receive, and with palm down it covers over sins.

As we enter the year 2020, we enter a world of turbulence, conflict and uncertainty. Our age could be described as an age of chaos, where the forces of order are disintegrating. Caught in this vortex are Christians, living in the most horrendous of situations. Climate change (for whatever reason) has had massive effects on Christians, whether it be the impending droughts of East Africa and Zimbabwe or the destructive floods of Bangladesh. Whole countries like Syria and Iran are being destabilised. Islamic State terrorists, forced out of the Middle East, are now moving down through Africa, joining with other militant groups to ravage whole countries such as Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and Chad, with Christians a primary target. The result is hundreds dead and hundreds of thousands of homeless displaced and refugees – defenceless and penniless.

Last year, 2019, was marked by significant progress in the international community recognising that Christians are indeed suffering persecution. In July, Bishop Philip Mountstephen's report, commissioned by the then British Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt, found that Christians constitute "by far the most widely persecuted religion". Conferences organised by the US, Hungary and others have announced similar findings.

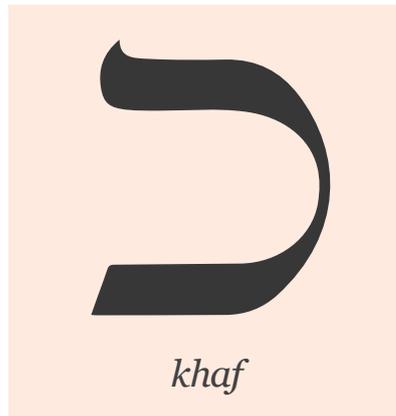
One of the main reasons why anti-Christian persecution is growing is an increasing ideological nationalism that sees Christian minorities as representatives of foreign nations, by-products of a colonialist era, rather than loyal citizens of their own countries. Our brothers and sisters are caught in the midst of a war between the West and ideological forces. They have become the "canaries down the mine". Much of this persecution occurs in parts of the world characterised by natural disasters and the destabilisation of nations. This makes the sufferings of the Christians even more acute.

What will the year 2020 bring? From the human perspective, it seems we can only expect more conflict, more disasters, more uncertainty, more pain, more persecution. The question naturally arises: where is God in all of this? What is He doing to His people? Why is He allowing such suffering?

Isobel Kuhn (1901-1957), a Canadian missionary to the Lisu people of Burma, China and Thailand, was dying of cancer, leaving behind her husband and children, when she said that she had learned to live her life with an open palm before God – so that He could give to her and could also take from her.

We must remember that God is in control, that He who holds us in the palm of His hand will keep us by His power (1 Peter 1:5). He has inscribed our names on the palms of His hands to ensure that we are ever held in remembrance (Isaiah 49:16). Therefore at the start of His 2020, let us remember that we are enfolded by God's mighty hands.

Let us approach the new year and the new decade with confidence and assurance, remembering the Divine promises, providence and protection. He may take from us security and comfort, even health and family, but He gives us redemption, joy and peace.



4 Compassion in Action
Hungry Christians displaced by violence in Ethiopia grateful for "manna" sent by Barnabas



6 Equipping for service at the front line
A global academy to train emerging leaders of the persecuted Church and halt "brain drain" from Global South

Pull-out **Meet every need:**
Our 12 needs 2020 challenge and inspiration poster



11 Winter warmth for Armenian Christians this Christmas
Barnabas is supporting desperate Armenian Christians with essential winter fuel aid

12 In Brief
Muslim minibus driver saves the lives of his Christian passengers in Kenya

14 God fulfils unreachable hopes
New homes and hope for violently evicted homeless Santal Christians in Bangladesh

18 Persecution Exposed
Kenya: "pride of Africa" or place of persecution?

19 In Touch
Brick-kiln families set free thanks to a grandmother's long-distance cycle ride

how barnabas is helping

Life-changing literacy for supernaturally delivered Christians in Nigeria

Barnabas supports a grassroots literacy programme that produces printed and audio resources, trains volunteer teachers and holds literacy workshops to teach the Chebar* Christians basic literacy and mathematical skills.

The Chebar Christians are Muslim converts who have suffered serious persecution at the hands of Boko Haram. In 2019, a group of 72 encountered Jesus, and were supernaturally delivered from death through a modern-day miracle when snakes and angels attacked the Islamist extremist would-be killers. (See *Barnabas Aid* magazine May/June 2019 - pages 3 and 12.)

The illiterate community is hungry for the Word of God and the New Testament has been translated into their language – but they need to learn to read. As one says, “... when I read the Bible ... I understand better and it has changed my life for the better”.

*Name changed for security reasons



Christian Chebar* schoolchildren learning basic literacy skills in Nigeria

£4,000 (\$5,134; €4,661)

Project reference: 39-772
Victims of violence in Nigeria

“Manna” for displaced Christians in southern Ethiopia

“The food was the manna that God provided through Barnabas Fund,” were the words of one grateful Christian pastor as bags of wheat were handed out to vulnerable Christian families displaced by the terrible violence in Ethiopia.

The conflict that began in September 2018 saw 45 people killed in violent attacks in a Muslim-majority region, where many Christians lived and farmed. Homes were set on fire, and farmland and livelihoods destroyed. More than 800 Christians fled, leaving everything behind. Barnabas helped the most vulnerable with food aid, including widows with infants, orphaned children and elderly people left without any surviving relatives.

Barnabas provided each family with 50kg of wheat – enough to feed a struggling family facing starvation for about two months. Barnabas has previously supported reconciliation and forgiveness training to help traumatised Christians recover spiritually and emotionally.



Distributing sacks of wheat to hungry displaced Christians

£10,638 (\$13,690; €12,343)

Project reference: 13-659

Learning to steward land God’s way in Zimbabwe

Barnabas supported the equipping of 14 grassroots trainers and supplied 180 fertiliser packs for the “God inspired foundations for farming” agricultural project in Zimbabwe. Graduates go on to train communities, allowing hundreds of farmers to steward the land God’s way and become self-sufficient.

The methods are suitable for small one-family plots or larger farms. No ploughing or irrigation is needed. The soil is fertilised and watered using a mulching technique, preventing erosion, and the open-pollination method enables seed sharing, benefiting the whole community.

Each pack contains fertiliser, seed and lime to cover a plot large enough to feed a family of six for one year. Zimbabwe suffers from extreme poverty and hyperinflation and is in the throes of a severe drought. The current food crisis is the worst ever, with more than five million people on the cusp of starvation. This long term solution provides a way to produce food under all climate conditions.



A bountiful harvest of corn growing for farmers in Zimbabwe using the foundations farming method

**£26,923; (\$34,500; €31,162)
for a one-year period**

Project reference: 91-751

Compassion in action

Strengthened and encouraged. This is what we often hear from Christians who have received support from Barnabas Fund. Thank you for making this possible. Here are just a few examples of the many ways we have recently helped persecuted and pressurised Christians.

Help for vulnerable Christian cyclone victims in India

Barnabas sent emergency aid to 4,000 devastated Christian families after Cyclone Fani battered the Odisha coast, India, causing widespread destruction. Families lost homes, possessions and income.

Cyclone Fani displaced over a million and claimed at least 20 lives. Timely government evacuation saved many, but these poor, marginalised and illiterate Christians were left overwhelmed. As daily workers at the bottom of the pile, they were destitute and unable to repair their damaged homes. Many lived in Shahid Slum in Bhubaneswar where they had fled during severe anti-Christian violence in 2008/09.

Barnabas repaired and rebuilt their homes. Seeman's family were dependent on their three-wheeler auto rickshaw for an income, but it was wrecked by a fallen tree. Barnabas repaired it, restoring Seeman's self-sufficiency. Reinstating electricity and water supplies enabled fishermen to ice their fish to sell at market again. As one pastor put it, "The Lord God Jesus showed His love and concern through Barnabas Fund."



A happy Seeman and his wife with their auto rickshaw repaired, thanks to Barnabas

£90,318 (\$116,410; €105,410)

Project reference: 00-634
Disaster Relief Fund

New homes in earthquake-devastated Indonesia

Barnabas is continuing to meet the needs of destitute Christians in Sulawesi, Indonesia, with the construction of 100 new permanent homes in the wake of the devastating earthquake that hit the island on 28 September 2018. The houses, measuring 7.5m x 5m, comprise a living area, a kitchen, a bathroom and two bedrooms.

Christian earthquake victims have been living in temporary shelters or tents since losing everything in the magnitude 7.7 earthquake, tsunami and liquefaction that caused so much destruction and loss of life. Recipients of the newly built homes had tears of joy in their eyes when handed the keys. Barnabas has already provided 330 semi-permanent/temporary homes for earthquake victims. A further 106 semi-permanent ones will be constructed shortly.

"May the Lord Jesus always bless the ministry of Barnabas Fund in serving and helping God's children who are in suffering," said Lusiana, a widow with two children who lost everything in the catastrophe.



Grateful Indonesian Christians outside their new home

**£158,327 (\$203,901; €184,014)
for 100 permanent homes**

Project reference: 00-634
Disaster Relief Fund

Central Asian schoolchildren's prayers for school essentials answered

"Lord, you answered my prayer. It is my first backpack in my life!" were Dino's words when she received her brand new backpack filled with exercise books, covers, pens, pencils, a ruler, glue and a pencil case – everything she will need for school. Her parents, watching, wept and thanked the Lord.

Barnabas sent school stationery, uniforms, shoes and sports kits to needy Christian Kyrgyz schoolchildren, aged from six to 17 to start the new academic year.

The support of these school items to low-income Christian families in Kyrgyzstan is one of nine grants to four Central Asian countries that Barnabas has funded through local churches. Families in this region, especially in rural areas, are very poor with many of them relying on seasonal work. Often feeding cattle has to take priority over supplying their children with school equipment or uniforms. Many are converts from Islam, rejected by family and community.

The Central Asian project has answered the prayers of 1,431 children like Dino.



An excited Dino with her new school bag

£35,040 (\$45,151; €40,720)

Project reference: PR1501



Equipping for service at the front line

A global academy for emerging shepherds of the persecuted Church

“Wise people want to learn more, so they listen closely to gain knowledge”

Proverbs 18:15 (ERV)

The tremendous growth of Christianity in the Global South is good news indeed. The number of believers in sub-Saharan Africa has soared, climbing from 9% of the region’s population at the beginning of the twentieth century to at least 63% today. Meanwhile the Asia Pacific region has seen the Church more than double from 3% to 7% of the population in the same time period.

But, as we give thanks to the Lord for His growing global Church, we also ask His guidance for the challenges it faces. Hundreds of new pastors are needed every day to minister to new converts and keep pace with the expansion of the Church. All this comes at a time when the Church is facing rising violence from extremist militants of other faiths, and there is massive displacement of Christians from areas afflicted by violence or famine. Wise and capable leadership is desperately needed.

New converts have little access to education

In many regions, Christians are a minority group that encounters discrimination and persecution on a daily basis from majority religion communities, much like in the early Church. Huge numbers of first-generation believers in Asia and Africa have never had the experience of growing up in a Christian home and the opportunity this gives of learning Christian basics. Most live in poor, marginalised communities with little, or no, access to education. Without good teaching and leadership, new believers can become unsure and confused when they are challenged about their belief or facing persecution.

Most grassroots pastors guiding the persecuted Church are dedicated and determined shepherds, but many have limited access to education and some are illiterate. More than two million pastors in the Global South lack formal Biblical training and 90% of church leaders worldwide have no formal training.

Regional study centres halt “brain drain” to the West

With few local opportunities for theological training available, able students are choosing to study at universities in the West. By supporting local theological study, Barnabas Fund has been helping to halt an ongoing “brain drain” that saps regional churches of the brightest potential leaders. Rather than return home to ministry, many students opt to stay on at their place of education to become “lifelong students”. Studies show 60% of graduates from theological courses want to continue with further study rather than returning home to use their new skills and knowledge in leading local churches.

Barnabas has supported pastor training for quarter of a century

Barnabas Fund has long recognised the huge need of local church leaders for ministry training and Bible teaching. In the 26 years since Barnabas was founded, we have supported many formal theological educational projects at regional Bible colleges and seminaries that make a critical contribution to the long-term spiritual health of the global Church.

We have also supported a wide variety of short training and discipleship courses that sustain and support grassroots pastors working in remote and marginalised communities, often in contexts of persecution. Many courses are tailor-made for the background, context and calling of those taking them, for example, converts from Islam pastoring other converts from Islam in Central Asia. Topics cover not only the Bible and Christian living, but also responding to pressure and persecution.

Barnabas launches ground-breaking Global Institute for Leadership Development (GILD) in South Asia

In 2019, Barnabas embarked on a ground-breaking educational initiative in South Asia that is seeking to assist the Church by developing and empowering leaders as well as providing direction on how the Church can build a Christian response to persecution.

Senior leaders representing theological institutions and Bible colleges from six countries – India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Nepal – gathered

Seminar enables Kyrgyzstan pastor to understand God’s mercy

In Kyrgyzstan, where Christian converts from Islam endure frequent persecution and discrimination from the Muslim majority, Barnabas sponsored a training seminar designed to give pastors and church leaders Biblical understanding of persecution and practical skills in Bible study. The majority of the 65 who attended pastor small convert churches in villages or small towns.

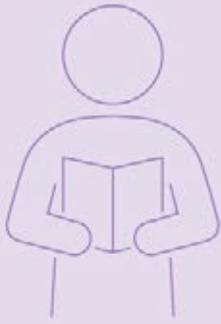
One pastor who attended the course said, “After this seminar I have changed my point of view on sufferings and I start to more think about mercy of God. I never thanked God for suffering before. I shared with people about my problems with resentment in my heart. Now I understand that suffering is important part of Christian life and I need to face it with joy and gratitude. Praise God for everything!”



A Barnabas-sponsored seminar enabled 65 pastors in Kyrgyzstan to gain a Biblical understanding of persecution



Barnabas Fund currently provides leadership training for 8,000-11,000 Christian leaders in 20-30 countries every year.



Honing ministry skills for Christians in Muslim-majority Pakistan

“Rachel” is a student in Pakistan, where Christians are a despised minority who suffer much discrimination. Before attending a Barnabas-supported training programme she was serving the Lord in her local church. “But I was doing it blindly and was confused and unsure about what I was doing,” she said. “After studying for two years, I got a clearer view of my calling and spiritual gifts, and also how to make them more sharp and effective in my ministry area.”



This Barnabas-sponsored National Pastors Conference in Pakistan gave leadership training to around 150 pastors from all over the country as well as the opportunity to share their expertise with each other

in Bangkok at a conference organised by Barnabas Fund to launch our Global Institute for Leadership Development (GILD). Our shared aim is to develop new distance learning courses, using the best digital facilities now available, that will equip the next generation of Church leaders for effective ministry in ideological contexts where the persecution of God’s people is on the increase.

New courses will increase knowledge of other faiths, including Islam

An earlier Barnabas conference had already highlighted that much of the present curriculum content, largely based on what has traditionally been taught at Western institutions, is irrelevant for South Asian Christians. For their history, culture, religious milieu and experience of pressure and persecution are so different from the West.

New courses that are now being written for GILD by teams of Asian experts will address the gaps. Each of the courses will be relevant to the context of individual GILD countries, and eventually will be translated into local languages.

Eye-opening conference breaks down political boundaries

Delegates described the conference as “eye opening”. Meeting educators from different backgrounds and countries helped them to learn and broadened their theological thinking. “It was especially exciting to interact with theological educators from Pakistan,” said an educator from India. He described how inspiring it was to interact for the first time in his career with his counterparts in Pakistan – political tensions between the two countries had prevented any such dialogue in the past. He added, “I was excited to see how many exciting things educators were doing with the limited resources that are available to them.”

In the future, we hope to expand GILD to theological colleges in Africa, and other regions where Christians are persecuted or likely to face persecution in the near future.

“I was excited to see how many exciting things educators were doing with the limited resources that are available to them.”

Advanced leadership programmes providing in-depth answers

Barnabas is already involved in providing higher-level academic training for future leaders through our partnership with the Oxford Centre for Religion and Public Life (OCRPL). Established in 2017, OCRPL offers doctorates for Christian leaders, enabling them to pursue in-depth research into persecution and propose possible solutions to it. Participants include

bishops, ministry leaders and principals of theological institutions who continue in their country teaching and doing ministry while completing their doctorates by distance education. This is supplemented with video conferencing and short periods of residential study with our accrediting partners, the University of Stellenbosch and the University of Pretoria, South Africa.

Survivor of violent extremism in Nigeria studies peacebuilding initiatives

The doctoral research programme started with ten students in 2017 and has expanded to 52 participants from a range of countries including Nigeria, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda, Indonesia and Pakistan. Their research covers topics ranging from religious freedom, religious conversion, women's studies, political Islam, *dawa* (Islamic mission) and many other issues relevant to the students' contexts.

Some of the PhD students have themselves experienced violence at the hands of Muslim extremists and are now conducting research in peacebuilding in their own communities. One Nigerian pastor lost his father and cousin to attacks by Islamist militants and has himself survived multiple lynching attempts. He is writing his thesis on the role of the Church in peacebuilding initiatives in the Middle-Belt region of Nigeria.

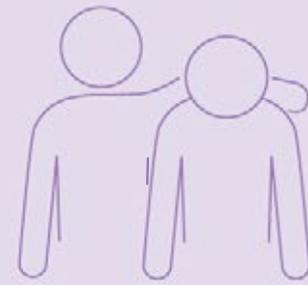
Research helps study core issues from Christian perspective

Another PhD student is an Anglican Bishop, the Rt Rev Zechariah Manyok, from South Sudan. He was involved in the 2018 peace talks that brought an end to the conflict in his country and is researching mediation between different tribal groups in South Sudan. "My research helps me to study the issues and problems more deeply from a Christian perspective and also the perspective of others, and engage in a way that can help us all strategically envision a better world of all communities living together in peace in South Sudan," he explained.

New Masters course of particular interest to African Christians

OCRPL is preparing to launch a further distance learning study course, at Masters level, in partnership with the University of Pretoria, to equip church leaders to think and respond to the situations in their countries intelligently and strategically. The first students will begin their studies in May.

This course is of particular interest to African Christians, especially those from the Sahel region where conflict with Islam rages and Christians suffer from intense persecution and violence. The vision is for the participants to use what they learn to teach fellow Christians, through colleges in their own countries. Such initiatives can equip marginalised Christian minorities with wisdom to stand firm and prepare other Christians to discern and resist the advance of ideological challenges to the Church and its ministry.



Specialist training for those who live with danger and violence as they share the Gospel

Barnabas has recently funded trauma healing training for Kenyan missionaries working among unreached Muslim people groups in Kenya. The missionaries were enabled to be better equipped themselves to deal with the escalating risks they face.

Topics covered in the training included: *If God loves us why do we suffer? Healing the wounds of the heart, Forgiveness, Helping children who have faced trauma, and Living as Christians in the midst of conflict.* The programme has built up resilience among the missionaries, who face threats and danger, energising them to continue serving God, even in difficult places. The missionaries then use the skills they learned to help the Christians in the areas they are living; as converts from Islam, these believers also face much hostility and persecution.

Shepherd's Academy will train-up untrained leaders

With God's help, the next phase for GILD will be developing Shepherd's Academy, which will deliver much-needed online training for grassroots pastors, Christian workers and church leaders already ministering on the front line in areas where there is rising violence and discrimination towards Christians.

Shepherd's Academy will offer courses in basic essentials like theology, pastoral care, preaching, life skills, administration and leadership – knowledge that will empower pastors in their ministry. Crucially, pastors and Christian leaders will be able to continue to work among their congregations while undertaking these studies.

New Barnabas Museum of the Bible app deepens students' knowledge of Scriptures

Originally developed by the Museum of the Bible in Washington DC, the app is an innovative way to deepen a Bible student's knowledge and engagement with God's Word. Covering the entire Bible from Genesis to Revelation, it uses a range of interactive media including virtual reality, animations, 3D models and maps to give Bible students a greater understanding. Barnabas has permission to distribute the app worldwide (except the USA). It will be a great resource for any Christian who has access to a smart phone.



Digital resources give students worldwide the tools to study

Barnabas is building a wide range of tools to help students in their learning through our global resource centre. Our new secure network will be pivotal to delivering training needs across the globe. GILD contributors are already using the network for meetings and to share findings and ideas.

The network will also be a platform for students to gain digital access to a comprehensive online library resource, which individual colleges could simply not afford on their own budgets. The library will enable students to choose from tens of thousands of religious and theological e-books and e-journals. There will be resources available for all levels of study, from secondary school-age students up to PhD level.



Leadership training



Bible training strengthens Nepali pastor's ministry

"Joshua", a co-pastor at a church in Hindu-majority Nepal, said his "interest in getting spiritually stronger" increased after he took part in Barnabas-sponsored Bible training. He said, "I have come to realise that, spiritually, I am like an underfed baby. Now, I am happy. I have come to understand in detail about the birth, upbringing and ministry of Jesus Christ." Joshua told us he is now finding it easier to answer questions raised by his church members.



Barnabas-sponsored Bible study classes in Nepal enabled Pastor Joshua to give better answers to the questions of his congregation



Meet every need

*12 needs
2020 challenge*

Barnabas Fund supporters have been meeting the needs, great and small, of our pressured and persecuted family, for nearly 27 years. We thank you for all your gifts and prayers that have made such a difference to Christians' lives across the world.

As we look with determination at the race that lies before us this new year, please join with us in our *Meet every need* challenge for 2020.

You will find a *Meet every need* card on the front of the donations form included with this magazine. Simply cut or tear out your 2020 *Meet every need* card and fold where indicated.

Look out for the icons for **12 needs*** that you can give to in this and future 2020 issues of *Barnabas Aid* magazine. *Meet every need* icons will also appear for you to spot in our email appeals and other publications, as you continue to give throughout the year.

- Keep your card within easy reach and tick off each need whenever you give to help your persecuted brothers and sisters through Barnabas.
- Note the relevant need icon when you make a donation to a particular project and tick the checkbox on your card!
- You can also give to our General Fund knowing your gift will be directed to wherever the need is greatest at that time. You may pick any of the twelve needs on your card to complete with a tick for every General Fund gift you make.

Your gift of any amount counts and will make a huge difference to Christians under pressure and in desperate need across the world.

Your prayers are also vital. Please continue to pray for the needs of persecuted and marginalised Christians you read about in *Barnabas Aid* and in our other publications.

Please turn to the next page to be inspired for the **12 needs 2020 challenge** by reading about some of the amazing stories we hear from the thankful Christians that your gifts have helped. This colourful pull-out poster can be displayed in your home to keep your persecuted family's needs in view all year.

*You will find a visual guide to the **12 needs 2020 challenge** icons below and in the poster overleaf.





Bibles and Christian literature

Birame and Ézéchiéla needed the light of God's Word

"Thank you to Barnabas supporters who allowed us to come out of the darkness of ignorance and to access the light of the Holy Scriptures." These were the words of Birame, a Senegalese Christian when he received his Bible. His wife, Ézéchiéla, said her Bible was "the greatest gift I have ever received". Senegalese Christians live mainly in rural areas where they face the threat of violence from Islamist extremists. Most Christians are very poor and unable to afford to buy a Bible or even a portion of Scripture. Barnabas has supplied 4,320 Bibles and New Testaments in local languages, English and French to enable these Christians to have access to the Word of God.



Small business start-up projects for Christians

Christian refugees in Uganda needed help to become self-sufficient

"May God bless Barnabas Fund. Our children will have meat and milk," said Pastor Scopus who ministers to South Sudanese Christian refugees in Camp Rhino, Uganda. Christians displaced by war and violence face food shortages and need support to become self-sufficient. Barnabas stepped in to help with a livelihood project that distributed goats. These goats, and their offspring, provided sustainable livelihoods for 2,400 Christians from 35 congregations in the camp. At last, these Christians who have lost so much can begin to rebuild their lives.



Victims of violence

Gabriel's family needed support when they fled extremist violence in Burkina Faso

Gabriel was at his market stall when extremists attacked his village. He fled along with hundreds of others as the gunmen opened fire on them in the market place. He searched desperately for his wife, toddler and baby who had been at home when the village was attacked. They were eventually reunited in Kaya city and he was overwhelmed to find out that Barnabas supporters had been providing for them. Moved to tears he said, "You gave us clothes, shelter and food. Christians we don't know are sending us help."



Aid for victims of natural disaster

The Ruagadi family needed a new home after a devastating earthquake and tsunami struck Sulawesi, Indonesia

The Ruagadi family lost their home in Omu village, Sulawesi, which collapsed in the earthquake. Barnabas Fund provided a new semi-permanent house for them and other Christians made homeless by the devastating earthquake and tsunami in 2018. They were overjoyed when they moved into their new safe and secure home. "We are very grateful to God the Almighty who has channelled this blessing through Barnabas Fund," they told us.



School places for Christian children

Aram, a Christian schoolboy in the Holy Land, needed a safe Christian school

A Christian school in Bethlehem, supported by Barnabas, is a refuge, a place of safety and love, of hope and healing, for Christian children who face harassment and discrimination in their daily lives. It also provides a quality education. Aram said, "All our friends and classmates are Christian, we pray in Aramaic, which is the language of Jesus, and we are very fortunate to learn this." He thanked Barnabas supporters "for keeping us Christians safe in the Holy Land".



Wells and water filter systems

A new well needed by persecuted Christians in Guinea blessed the whole community with clean water

"We [Muslims] never knew that the thing [Christianity] we were fighting could be a blessing to our village today," said a village leader in Guinea. Christians in a village in Guinea, West Africa, decided to share the water from the new bore well Barnabas Fund provided in their church grounds with all their neighbours, even though local Muslims had refused the Christian community access to water, forcing them to drink from dirty streams.



Churches and other Christian buildings

Pastor Roy's congregation in Bangladesh needed a building to worship in

Pastor Roy, his wife, Swopna, and their growing congregation in Bangladesh are flourishing in their church building provided by Barnabas. Christians are a tiny impoverished minority of 1% in Bangladesh and converts from Islam face great hostility, especially in rural areas. Pastor Roy was imprisoned for baptising Muslim-background believers. "While I shared the Gospel I faced lots of problems because six families accepted Jesus from majority background. I was in prison but my faith was strong and therefore God rescued me from danger. Now we have 153 baptised members and God is increasing my ministry."

Medical support

Pastors in Uzbekistan desperately needed medical treatment to continue in their ministry

Many church leaders in Uzbekistan are converts from Islam. They face challenges of both persecution from the Muslim-majority population and poverty because Muslims are favoured in employment. Many Uzbek Christians live in rural areas and are unable to afford access to medical care. Barnabas provided medical care for 20 pastors and their families, many of whom had serious health conditions, to enable them to get well and continue with their vital ministry to Muslim-background believers.

Care for persecuted converts

Discipling and caring for converts in Uganda

The Lord has brought many Ugandan Muslims to love and follow His Son, Jesus Christ. But they face much opposition from family and community, even danger to their lives. Also they need to grow in their new faith, which is so different from the religion they have been bought up in. Barnabas has been supporting three ministries in Uganda, which disciple new believers from a Muslim background, and care for their practical needs – many lost their homes and jobs when they decided to follow Christ.

Theological and leadership training

Pastor Bimal* needed training to become a strong Christian leader in his community in Nepal

"Believers are excited and learning from the courses. They are now helping the church through house fellowships, finances and different kinds of works," said Pastor Bimal, a church leader in Nepal, where persecution of Christians is on the rise. The Nepali Church is growing very fast, but there is a serious shortage of opportunities for theological and ministry training. By attending a Barnabas-supported leadership training programme, the pastor has been able to grow in his knowledge of God's Word and become better equipped to lead his congregation.

**name changed for security reasons*

Support for pastors and evangelists

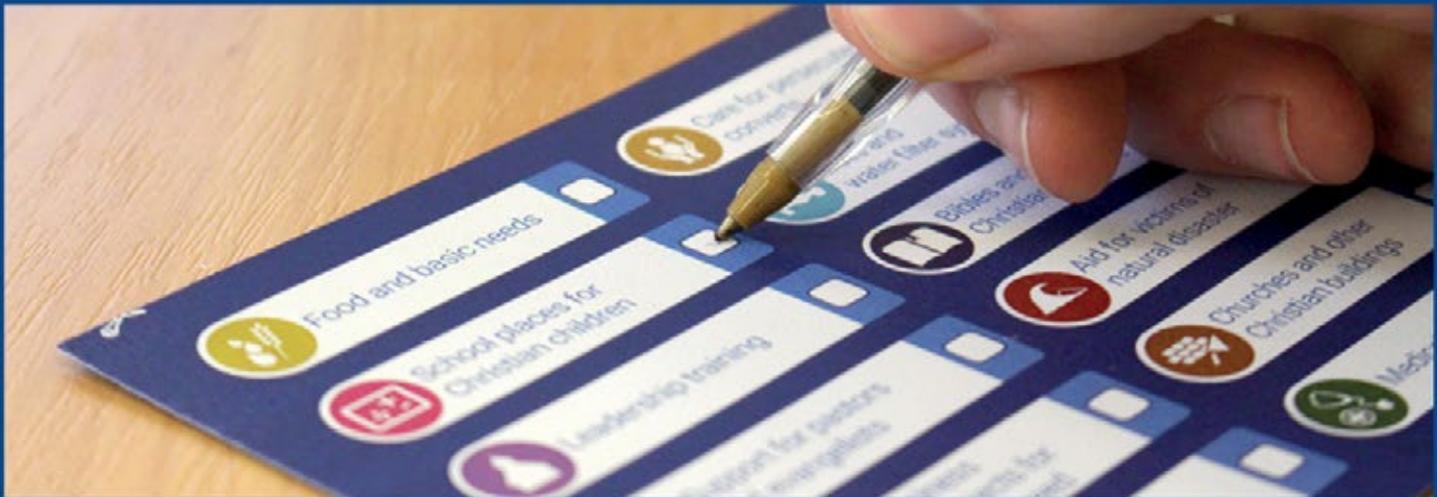
Charles and Grace needed support to devote themselves to planting churches in rural Kenya

Barnabas' support with living costs enabled Charles and Grace, from Kenya, to devote themselves to full-time ministry, bringing the light of the Gospel to a Muslim tribal people. Barnabas is helping to support many Kenyan church planters, mostly working in dangerous and hostile areas of their home country.

Food and basic needs

Sumaira and her family needed regular food aid to help keep them in good health and send their child to school

"We thank God every day for your help," said grateful Sumaira. She and her husband could not afford to pay school fees and also feed their family. When Barnabas provided her with a regular monthly food pack, Sumaira could finally afford to send her oldest child to school. Christians in Pakistan are routinely discriminated against, sometimes violently attacked and many live in desperate poverty and cannot afford even to provide sufficient food for the family. Children often have to go out to work to supplement the family income. Children are often malnourished and some suffer stunted growth as a result.



Ways to give

There are a variety of ways to give to Barnabas Fund, these include:



Direct Debit

Direct Debits are the preferred payment system of a vast

majority of British organisations receiving regular payments and this includes Barnabas Fund. Direct Debits are operated by BACS and are the cheapest and safest way to make payments.

You can set up a Direct Debit that will send your donations direct from your bank account to Barnabas Fund. You can specify any amount and at what frequency it will be paid out. Please set up a Direct Debit with your bank to donate. If you are unable to do this please phone our Coventry Office: 02476 231923, or alternatively, download a form from our website: barnabasfund.org/direct-debit



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note: This facility is presently only available to UK supporters). Text costs £5.00 plus network charge. Barnabas Fund receives 100% of your donation.

Regular giving by SMS. For a quick and easy way to give a Bible each month, text **STREAMS** to **70660** to give a £5.00 monthly donation by SMS. This is a

subscription service, it will cost £5.00 per month until you reply with a "STOP" text.

Please obtain bill payer's permission. Customer care 024 7623 1923. Charity No 1092935. (See terms and conditions here: barnabasfund.org/en/terms-and-conditions. Please note: This facility is presently only available to UK supporters)



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Donate by post

Please complete the giving form included in this magazine with

your chosen gift(s) and post to your nearest Barnabas Fund office (see inside front cover for address details).



Online banking

For one-off payments, our bank details are - Account number:

50133299 sort code: **20-26-53.**

For your payment reference please use **EITHER** your unique supporter number if known, **OR** your UK postcode and house number (or **ANON** to remain anonymous)

followed by the project number you wish to support. For example: **123456/000** or **SE11SE/2/000.**

If you prefer **NOT** to receive an acknowledgement letter for your payment, please add **/DNA** at the end of your reference or email: finance@barnabasfund.org.



Cash/cheque deposits

At your bank or any branch of Barclays bank, please ask the cashier to include your payment reference.

Acknowledgement letters:

If we do not have your full address on record, please send this by email with a summary of your giving to receive an acknowledgement.



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(Donations go to our General Fund.)

AmazonSmile is

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The first time a customer logs in, they can select a charity, to donate to. Please visit: smile.amazon.co.uk and enter "Barnabas Fund" to get started.

Winter warmth from Barnabas for our cold and destitute Christian brothers and sisters in Armenia this Christmas

“Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the LORD, and He will repay him for his deed.”

(Proverbs 19:17 ESV)

To be poor and hungry is bad enough, but to be poor, hungry and freezing in temperatures that can plummet to as low as -33C is something few of us would ever want to endure. Winters in Armenia are long, stretching out from November until late May. Coping with both poverty and this intense cold is the stark everyday reality of Christians in the high-altitude Shirak region of Armenia as they struggle to survive during this brutal season.



“My God is alive and that means I live too,” said Arpik knowing that support comes through the loving actions of her fellow believers

God is my only relative

Arpik is a 92-year-old Christian who has no relatives to support her. She lost her home in the 1988 earthquake and has lived alone in a temporary shelter known as a “domik” ever since. These homes are little more than scrap metal shacks with no insulation or protection from the bitter cold of an Armenian winter. “I have no children and God is my only relative and I entrust all my hopes to His hands as He never leaves me alone. Through the Church sisters and brothers I always receive God’s support. My God is alive and that means I live too,” said Arpik.

Without the loving aid of Barnabas supporters, it would be impossible for Arpik to bear the ruthless winter cold.

Armenia’s suffering history

Armenia became the first Christian nation in 301 AD, but Armenian Christians have borne terrible persecution in their history. The most notorious was the Armenian Genocide that peaked in 1915 when the “Young Turks” and organised “butcher battalions” slaughtered 1.5 million Armenian Christians.

In September 1991, with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Armenia achieved independence. It became known as the Republic of Armenia and was accepted as a sovereign state and full member of the international community. However, economically the Shirak region has not recovered from the devastating 1988 earthquake that destroyed homes and left many Christians impoverished and living in “domiks”. Numerous Christians, due to dire poverty and unemployment, remain trapped in these “domiks” even today because they cannot afford new houses. Often, they have no access to gas or electricity supplies and rely on wood fires to keep warm.

In summer 2019, Armenia experienced a number of ferocious forest fires due to hot and dry conditions that destroyed much of the country’s sparse forests. The scarcity of wood fuel is a serious problem for those who rely on this vital winter commodity. During these bitter winter months, families need approximately four cubic metres of firewood for warmth and they do not have the money to buy it.

Those families who do live in homes with access to gas and electricity find it very difficult to afford the bills, and unless they can pay, they too will struggle to stay alive during the freezing winter.

Barnabas sends warmth to survive

Barnabas is supporting the provision of essential firewood and financial support for gas and electricity bills at the cost of around £70 (\$89; €82) per household to keep these penniless families warm and help them endure this icy season. The gift of winter warmth is a tangible expression of Christian love to our destitute fellow brothers and sisters.



Project reference: 79-719

Police intervene to help Pakistani Christian attacked by Muslim mob

PAKISTAN

In a rare move, police stepped in to stop Muslims attacking Amir Masih, a Christian sanitation worker, in Yousafabad, Pakistan after he was falsely accused of “blasphemy”.

“Blasphemy” charges against Amir were dropped when police discovered that the pages of the Quran which Amir had in his possession had been found in a rubbish bag he had collected as part of his duties.

Amir had taken the pages to a Muslim-owned shop to confirm whether they were from the Quran, but was dragged by the shop owner to a mosque where the imam made a loudspeaker announcement that “a blasphemous Christian had been stopped”, calling for Amir to be punished and for Christian homes to be burned. It was then that the police stepped in.

The imam made a loudspeaker announcement that “a blasphemous Christian had been stopped”, calling for Amir to be punished and for Christian homes to be burned. It was then that the police stepped in.

“Blasphemy” against Muhammad carries a mandatory death penalty under section 295-C of the Pakistan Penal Code and often the mere accusation of “blasphemy” is enough to incite a vigilante killing by a mob. Under section 295-B, “wilful defilement, damage or desecration of the Quran” carries a life sentence. Police can sometimes fail to act against mob violence in “blasphemy” cases, but in this incident, police action saved Amir.

Public outcry over Turkish anti-Christian, anti-Semitic billboards in Konya

TURKEY



The chilling poster campaign by Turkish authorities warned against Muslims befriending Christians or Jews

After widespread public complaint, authorities in Turkey removed billboards displaying a quote from the Quran declaring that Muslims should not befriend either Christians or Jews.

The quote was accompanied by a drawing of a Christian cross and Jewish star of David with blood dripping from them.

The posters were displayed at bus stops in the city of Konya and were reported to have been issued by Konya’s Islamist Justice and Development Party (AKP). They quoted the Quran 5:51 that states, “Do not take the Jews and the Christians as allies.”

People complained that the posters could incite religious hatred towards Jews and Christians, who are tiny minorities in this Muslim-majority country.

Terrorised Christians fleeing “soft ethnic cleansing” in north-east Syria

SYRIA



Tens of thousands fled from north-east Syria, including many Christians, when Turkey’s military offensive began on 9 October

Pro-Turkish forces are carrying out a “soft ethnic cleansing” of Christians in north-east Syria by terrorising them into fleeing, despite assurances from Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan that his forces would not persecute religious minorities.

Bassam Ishak, the head of the Syriac National Council, said Syrian armed groups allied with Turkey are preventing Christians from accessing their land during the cotton harvest.

“They [the Christians] were told, ‘We have orders not to physically touch the Christians, but know that you have no land here anymore,’” said Ishak, who is also a member of the Syrian Democratic Council.

He said the armed groups are “repeating what they did in Afrin”, referring to the Turkish invasion of Afrin in north-west Syria in 2018, an invasion backed by Syrian rebels and Islamist extremists. “In Afrin, they took the harvest of the Kurds who lived there and now they are doing it to the Christians,” said Ishak.

“The Christians in Ras al-Ain own at least one-third of the agricultural land there. These forces are basically carrying out a ‘soft’ ethnic cleansing. The Christians are being frightened by these people, and then they lose their source of income. The Christians then ask why should they stay and live under the Islamists.”

Turkish-backed forces crossed into north-east Syria on 9 October causing more than 70,000 people to flee from Ras al-Ain and the nearby town of Tal Abaid.

World's largest Islamic organisation drops legal category of "infidel" in historic decision

INDONESIA

Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), the Indonesian Muslim political party and world's largest moderate Muslim movement, has made a significant break with Islamic conservatism in an unprecedented decision to abolish the legal category of "infidel" (*kafir*) for non-Muslims.

The groundbreaking move, apparently aimed at sweeping away Islamic doctrines often used by extremists to justify terrorism, was announced at the NU national conference in West Java earlier in 2019.

Around 20,000 Muslim scholars

gathered to endorse a new Islamic legal framework (*fiqh*). The new rulings include a raft of changes embracing the modern definition of nation state, instead of a caliphate, and recognising all as "fellow citizens", irrespective of their religion or ethnicity, with equal rights and obligation to obey modern national laws.

Kafir has become a very derogatory and insulting term for non-Muslims. In classical Islamic law they are to be killed. Indonesia is the world's largest Muslim nation and the NU claims to have more than 90 million members.

Church registration increases in Uzbekistan could signal greater freedoms for Christians

UZBEKISTAN



President Shavkat Mirziyoyev has relaxed some controls to improve religious freedom in Uzbekistan, including allowing the first legal sale of 3,000 Bibles, which were partly funded by Barnabas

Church registrations are increasing in Uzbekistan with three churches validated in September, and up to five more registrations expected to be finalised in October. The first church registration in the autonomous republic of Karakalpakstan, where penalties for Christian worship were previously harsher than in the rest of Uzbekistan, is expected within weeks.

The rise in registrations could signal greater religious freedoms for Christians under President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, elected to office in the

Muslim-majority country in December 2016. He is expected to introduce a new religious law soon, under which the membership requirement for church registration will be lowered from 100 members to 50.

A Barnabas contact said the long hoped for registration increase was "hard to believe". He added that, in some cities, the authorities had even approached pastors to offer to help them navigate the process of proving church buildings meet strict registration requirements.

Muslim minibus driver saves lives of Christian passengers in Kenya

KENYA

A Muslim minibus driver saved the lives of his eight Christian passengers in Kenya on 30 October when he refused to obey the orders of Islamist militant hijackers.

Around ten armed Al Shabaab militants attempted to flag down the minibus as it left a construction site in Mandera city – but the driver accelerated away. When he did not stop, the militants sprayed bullets at the minibus deflating a tyre.

A local authority spokesman said the driver's "brave" actions "saved the lives of his passengers".

Around ten armed Al Shabaab militants attempted to flag down the minibus as it left a construction site in Mandera city – but the driver accelerated away. When he did not stop, the militants sprayed bullets at the minibus deflating a tyre.

Al Shabaab is fighting to establish a fully Islamic state in Somalia and neighbouring regions including Kenya. Its militants struck in Mandera in October 2016, killing twelve Christians at a guesthouse. Other Al Shabaab atrocities in Kenya include the murder in September 2018 of two Christian passengers on an ambushed bus, and the killing of three Christians at a school in February 2018.

(See also feature on page 18.)



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God fulfils unreachable hopes of homeless Santal Christians in Bangladesh

Barnabas supporters provide more new houses for persecuted families

Tribal Santal Christian families in the Gaibandha District of Bangladesh were dirt poor and living on their ancestral land in pitiful wooden shacks crammed together in shanty towns. But for them, these shacks were “home”. That was until the tragic night of 6 November 2016 when Bangladeshi police in riot gear, accompanied by local Muslims, arrived.

At approximately 7 p.m., the police marched through the shanty town, shooting as they went. The shocked Christians were evicted from their homes. Then, helped by local Muslims, the police set fire to their wooden shacks. Police continued to fire as the Christians fled into the darkness leaving their meagre possessions behind. The savage attack resulted in three dead, many injured, one man almost blinded and over 5,500 homeless.

The Santal Christians are an ancient ethnic minority indigenous to north-west Bangladesh and the first Santal church was built in 1867. For years, this impoverished community of faithful believers suffered exploitation and injustice from the Muslim-majority Bengalis. The militant mob who arrived on 6 November 2016 disputed the Christians’ right to live on their tribal land and sought to claim it for themselves in order to cultivate more sugar cane for the government-owned sugar factory nearby. In a few brief minutes, life had become even harder for these despised and impoverished Christians.

Realising the “impossible” for homeless families

Being so poor, the only option for the Santal Christians after this attack was to live under the trees in crowded makeshift tents. To be able one day to live in a home constructed of bricks and mortar in a safe area was for them an unreachable hope. But the God we serve is One who makes the impossible possible. Through the Barnabas Fund house-building project, some of these Christians are now the delighted occupiers, not of wooden shacks which could easily be set alight, but of their own secure brick and mortar homes, built on the safety of church-owned land.

1 Phase 1 rehomed 50 families

In Genesis (22:14) God is referred to as “Jehovah jireh”. This means that He will provide for us as His children and often His provision is one that blesses us beyond our wildest imagination. For the Santal Christians who have suffered so much, building these new homes has done just that.

The first task was to find suitable land to begin Phase 1 of the building. Always faithful, God quickly provided half an acre of church-owned land so the building process could begin. The Santal Christians would soon have decent homes in a safe area to live in.

Jesus - The Light of the world

The funding of Barnabas supporters from across the world saw the completion of Phase 1 on 4 July 2018. Fifty bright blue painted brick and mortar two-storey homes stood proudly on the land. Verandas lined the front of the homes providing extra living space and welcome shade from the burning eye of the hot Bangladeshi sun. Unlike in their previous wooden shacks, where they needed to resort to the fire risk of oil lamps and candles, the families have electricity supplied to their houses. They can thank Jesus

“Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us”
(Ephesians 3:20)



Dijen outside his new home



Two storey homes built in Phase 1

“I saw a small light that is from Jesus Christ that I will get a place to live”

for bringing light into their lives both spiritually and literally.

Dijen was shot on the night of 6 November 2016 and still bears the scars. On his release from hospital three months after the attack, he learned that he and his family were to be among the first to move into the new homes. “I saw a small light that is from Jesus Christ that I will get a place to live,” he said, as he began to

dare to believe the seemingly incredible promise that he would be allocated a home. “Not only that,” he continued, “now we have a good toilet, school for the children and a church nearby so we can worship.”

The families also have access to twelve communal toilets and clean, fresh water from six tube wells with hand pumps. There are shower areas for them to

wash and a communal cooking area where the families can enjoy fellowship and prepare meals together.

The Assistant General Secretary of the Bangladesh Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church (BNELC) on whose land the houses are built, said, “I praise God for the low-cost houses for persecuted Lutheran Church at Gaibandha where thousands of Christians were displaced during 2016. Now Barnabas Fund helped to construct low cost houses for our church members it will be a great help for us.”



A smiling Sunil (left) and his family feeling blessed in front of their freshly painted new home

Bangladesh

The People's Republic of Bangladesh was formed in 1971, having fought a war for independence from Pakistan. It is a secular state with a parliamentary democracy. Almost half the population are involved in agriculture and poverty is widespread. This poverty is compounded by the fact that Bangladesh is prone to both floods and cyclones. The low-lying nation is one of the countries most under threat of rising sea levels due to climate change. Most factories and large industries are government owned.

The state religion is Islam, with 90% of the country being Muslim Bengalis. Hindus make up 9% while Christians, together with Buddhists and animists, make up about 1% of the population. Bangladesh's constitution gives religious minorities the right to practise and share their faith, however Christians are subject to discrimination, particularly those who have converted from Islam and some have been victims of occasional violent attacks. Political attempts to Islamise the country have been thwarted, although the struggle continues between those who wish to keep the secular constitution and those who wish to Islamise it.

2 Another 50 homes were built in Phase 2

Phase 2 has provided a further 50 one-room homes and was completed in July 2019. The homes have electricity and are in close proximity to the church. The walls are painted fresh cream with bright blue surrounds and the houses have shiny silver tin roofs and verandas that provide extra living space. Trees line the communal areas in front of the homes where the children can play together in shaded safety and where the community can meet, relax and hold a variety of events together. The 50 homes have twelve well-placed communal toilets and six tube

wells with hand pumps for clean water for drinking and washing.

The homes have easy access to church services and Sunday school for the children as the church is only a three-minute walk away.

The homes have a washing area where the families can bathe as well as a communal cooking area where they can prepare food and fellowship.

Heavy rain and floods prevented the Phase 2 families from moving in immediately in July, but eventually they did and the inauguration of the completed Phase 2 houses took place on 14 September 2019. "God is so good and we did not expect such kind of blessing but

"We lost our hope but You understand the need of the hour"

These were the words of Mithu, when she and her family moved into their home. She prays that the Lord will continue to bless Barnabas.



Mithu (right) and her family are grateful that God answered their need through Barnabas and gave them back their hope

God surprises us,” said Sunil as he received the keys to his brand new home. God has answered his family’s prayers through the support of his fellow believers and he and his family are very grateful. Sunil now has a home near their

church for himself, his wife and three children.

Praising God for His provision

Elio and his wife and two children were another family to receive a new home. Now free from the fear of attacks, Elio told

Barnabas Fund, “I praise God for the provision He provided for us. I am thankful to Barnabas Fund who supported our persecuted church. Two years back we were living in such a huge fear and now we have confidence that someone is taking care of our family.”

“I praise God for the provision He provided for us. I am thankful to Barnabas Fund who supported our persecuted church”



Elio (right) and his family no longer have to live in fear

3 The project of “hope restored” continues with Phase 3

Phase 3 is set to provide more homes for these vulnerable Christian families so that they too can once more have hope and joy in their lives.

A further 100 houses with the facilities to match needs are planned for this phase as soon as land can be found.

For many of us, living with our family in a small house would be seen as a hardship, but for the impoverished and vulnerable Santal Christian families it is the fulfilment of an unreachable hope by the glory of God. The homes are tangible evidence of God’s love shown through their fellow believers and are a blessing that has truly changed their lives.



Project reference 04-1360

Bringing a smile to Santal children’s faces with the gift of education



Paulus giving a smiling thumbs up for his school

The Santal Christian community had little access to an education that would help them escape the burden of poverty. But, through Barnabas’ help with running costs, a Christian primary school for the Santal children is able to take pupils from the poorest families and charge no fees. The school provides a primary education and school equipment for 84 of these deprived children. The three Christian teachers teach them in their mother tongue, as well as the national language Bengali.

One of the pupils, Paulus, longed to attend school but despaired as it seemed an impossible dream. He said, “In my village we had no school. My family never thought that I can have education. But thank God a new school open in my village. I was very upset when I saw my friends got opportunity to get admission to school but I didn’t ... When our local pastor visit our home my mother share my desire and pastor told me to go with him to school. I became very happy.”



Project reference PR1389

Persecution exposed: Kenya

“Pride of Africa” or place of persecution?

Kenyans call their country the “Pride of Africa” and with its “big five” game, vast golden plains dotted with acacia trees and an abundant array of wildlife, it is not an idle boast. Kenya as a holiday destination offers travellers a truly authentic and unforgettable “African bush” experience with all the sensory beauty that brings. Kenya also offers an azure coastline with white sandy beaches and a string of luxury hotels. Yet, under the serenity of Kenya’s star-filled, African sky lurks a growing extremist threat to Christians.

A deepening Islamist threat uncovered

Christianity arrived in Kenya with the Portuguese in the sixteenth century but suffered a serious setback a century later when the Sultan of Mombasa renounced his Christian faith and massacred Christians who refused to convert to Islam. However, from the nineteenth century Christianity was re-established as the dominant religion and it remains so today with Christians comprising over 80% of the population. This might seem to suggest that Christians are safe from the risk of violent Islamist persecution but sadly, this is not the case.

The dark cloud of extremism has infiltrated Kenya from Islamist dominated countries to the north, particularly Somalia where the jihadi group Al Shabaab originated. The declared aim of the terror group is to establish an Islamic sharia-law state not only in Somalia, but also throughout Africa. For them,

Christians are an enemy who must be subjugated, converted or eradicated. The militant presence is particularly strong on the east coast, where Muslim Arab traders arrived in the seventh century. This region has since remained predominantly Muslim.

It is in these north-eastern and coastal areas of Kenya, where the Muslim population is concentrated, that Christians face the greatest threat. The violent tide of Islamist extremism with its doctrine of jihad has radicalised sectors of the Muslim population. Islamic State (IS) has encouraged attacks by extremists in East Africa stating, “May Allah hasten the conquest of Kenya for the soldier of the Khilafah [Caliphate] in Somalia”.

Notorious attack on Garissa University in 2015

Extremist attacks on Christians have taken place in Kenya since 2011. One of the most notorious was the massacre of 148 Christian students at Garissa University in 2015. In a daylong bloodbath, militant Muslims assisted Al Shabaab and singled out the innocent Christian students for execution-style slaughter. The jihadists allowed the Muslim students to go free.

North-east Kenya remains a hotbed for Islamic attacks by Al Shabaab. Many Christians have lost their lives as jihadists have selectively killed Christians in the towns, villages, travelling on buses and at their places of work. Christian teachers have also been targeted because they are not teaching Quranic studies. Mandera County has a high concentration of Muslim Somalis, which makes it a

dangerous and unwelcoming region for Christians. Muslim-dominated districts have actively sought to eliminate the Church from their midst. Any Muslim converts are at serious risk of being killed by Al Shabaab, or other zealous Muslims, on grounds of apostasy.

A Kenyan church leader described to Barnabas how the situation has deteriorated to the extent that Islamic extremists now condemn anyone who is friendly with Christians as not being a true Muslim.



Christians in the Al Shabaab threatened north of the country during a church service

The growth of radical political movements

In the historically Muslim coastal areas, radical political movements, such as the Mombasa Republican Council and the Muslim Youth Centre in Mombasa who have links with Al Shabaab, have increased the persecution threat to Christians in Kenya.

At present, unless Al Shabaab are defeated and the radicalisation of Kenyan Muslims is stopped, the threat to lives in this Christian majority country looks set to continue.

In Touch

Sponsored cyclist frees Pakistani Christian brick-kiln workers from bondage of debt in memory of her daughter

Three Christian Pakistani brick-kiln families have been freed from bonded labour thanks to the magnificent efforts of Barnabas supporter Heather Rogers.

Heather, a 77-year-old grandmother from Burton Bradstock, Dorset, UK, cycled 45 miles on her static bike to raise an amazing £2,066.

Under a gazebo in her garden, Heather kept up the pace, cycling from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on 28 August 2019 to mark 20 years to the day when her daughter Rachel died, aged 28.

Heather, who used to undertake overseas mission work with her husband, the Rev Ryder Rogers, said, "We pray for the work of Barnabas each day and I wanted to support this particular project because our daughter Rachel, who died 20 years ago, was always passionate about justice, and so am I."

Her fundraising achievement will transform the lives of the three families she has freed. Pakistan's brick-kiln workers are low paid and live just at survival level. If someone falls sick, or another family crisis occurs, they have to take a loan from their employer. The interest on the loan is then deducted from their wages and the debt can go on for years, even for generations.

Meanwhile families are forced to try to subsist on reduced wages and, as long as the debt remains, they are bonded to their brick-kiln, unable to leave and get another job. It is almost like slavery.

Barnabas supporter pens poem pondering the suffering of persecuted Church

Barnabas supporter Marilyn Fountaine regularly contributes what she can to help our work on behalf of persecuted Christians around the world.

Marilyn, from Norfolk, UK, was so moved by the plight of our brothers and sisters who suffer deprivation, imprisonment and torture simply because of their faith that she put pen to paper. The result is this moving poem, which we are delighted to share with our readers.

Sunday and Beyond

Think as you leave Church on Sunday
And ponder the ones who cannot –
Prisoners, bereaved and the fearful –
And those who are tortured and shot.

And have you ever considered
Your privilege, freedom to choose
To worship and follow Christ's calling
To speak and to spread the Good News?

Act in the short time remaining
For sufferings certain to come.
Those who remain ever faithful
Will witness His Kingdom has come.

After the Great Tribulation
God's Battle is finally won
Render Him your adoration
All He's achieved through His Son!



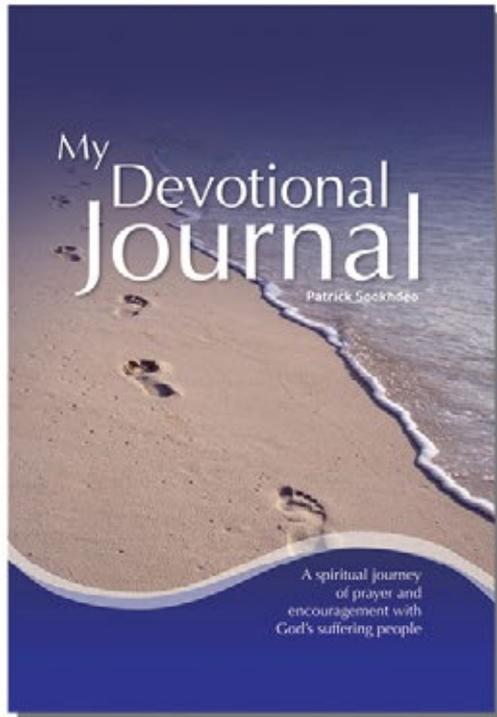
Freed from bonded labour: Shahzad Masih and his wife Robina with their 8-year-old son Markes and three daughters Sonha, 9, Soba, 6, and Chandni, 4



Freed: Sabir Bashir and his wife Shareen with their 7-year-old son Arslan and daughter Malika, 5



Freed: Nazeer Hazara and his wife Nasreen with their three daughters Kiran, 10, Fouzia, 7, and Abail, 4



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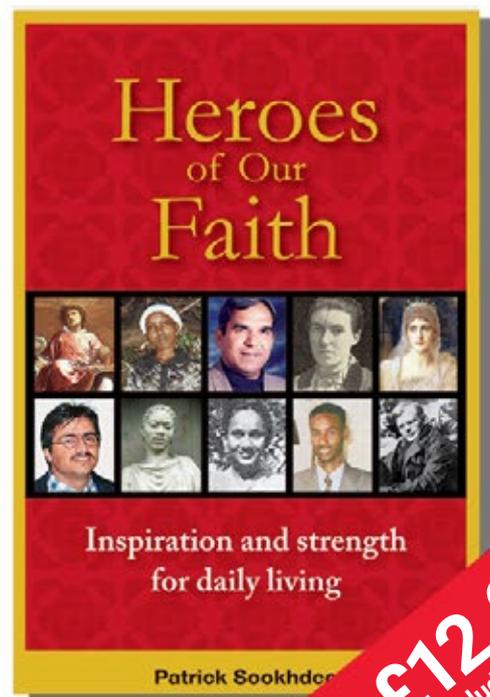
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