

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

EAST AFRICA AND ASIA
*"Perfect storm" of locust plague
and coronavirus pandemic*

UK PARLIAMENTARY REVIEW
*Barnabas Fund praised for best
practice by British government*

COVID-19 GLOBAL CRISIS
*How the pandemic crisis is
affecting the persecuted Church*

SAVING GOD'S PEOPLE IN CRISIS

The Barnabas Fund Distinctive

What helps make Barnabas Fund distinctive from other Christian organisations that deal with persecution?

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 and sisters of mine, you did for me." (Matthew 25:40)

How to find us

You may contact Barnabas Fund at the following addresses

International Headquarters

The Old Rectory, River Street, Pewsey, Wiltshire SN9 5DB, UK

Telephone 01672 564938

Fax 01672 565030

From outside UK:

Telephone +44 1672 564938

Fax +44 1672 565030

Email info@barnabasfund.org

Registered charity number 1092935

Company registered in England number 04029536

For a list of all trustees, please contact Barnabas Fund UK at the Coventry address.

Australia

PO Box 3527, Loganholme, QLD 4129

Telephone (07) 3806 1076

or 1300 365 799

Email bfaustralia@barnabasfund.org

Germany

German supporters may send gifts for Barnabas Fund via Hilfe für Brüder who will provide you with a tax-deductible receipt. Please mention that the donation is for "SPC 20 Barnabas Fund". If you would like your donation to go to a specific project of Barnabas Fund, please inform the Barnabas Fund office in Pewsey, UK.

Account holder: Hilfe für Brüder International e.V.

Account number: 415 600

Bank: Evang Kreditgenossenschaft Stuttgart

IBAN: DE89520604100000415600

BIC: GENODEF1EK1

New Zealand

PO Box 276018, Manukau City, Auckland 2241

Telephone (09) 280 4385

or 0800 008 805

Email office@barnabasfund.org.nz

Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland

Office 113, Russell Business Centre, 40-42 Lisburn Road, Belfast BT9 6AA
Please send post to our UK office address.

Telephone 07875 539003

Email ireland@barnabasfund.org

Singapore

Cheques in Singapore dollars payable to "Olive Aid Trust" may be sent to: Olives Aid Sdn Bhd, P.O. Box 03124, Subang Jaya, 47507 Selangor, MALAYSIA

Singaporean supporters may send gifts for Barnabas Fund online via Olive Aid Trust:

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(Malaysia) Berhad

Swift Code: UOVBMYKL

Location: KUALA LUMPUR

Account Number: 140-901-654-0

South Africa

Office 301, 3rd Floor, Eikestad Mall, 43 Andringa Street, Stellenbosch 7599

Telephone +27 21 808 1668

Email bfsa@barnabasfund.org

UK

9 Priory Row, Coventry CV1 5EX

Telephone 024 7623 1923

Fax 024 7683 4718

From outside the UK:

Telephone +44 24 7623 1923

Fax +44 24 7683 4718

Email info@barnabasfund.org

USA

80 Abbeyville Road, Lancaster PA 17603

Telephone (703) 288-1681

or toll-free 1-866-936-2525

Email usa@barnabasaid.org

To donate by credit/debit card, please visit the website www.barnabasfund.org or phone 0800 587 4006 (from outside the UK phone +44 24 7623 1923).

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1934 Old Gallows Road Suite 350

Vienna, VA 22182, USA

Email info@barnabasfund.org

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barnabasfund
hope and aid for the persecuted church

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Death has been swallowed up in victory

(1 Corinthians 15:54)

Covid-19, spread so quickly round our little planet by the ease of modern travel, will bring thousands or millions to their grave sooner than would have happened without the new virus. We live in frightening times. Alarm and despondency now grip whole nations. Extreme and painful measures, never before known, are laid on us by our governments, in a desperate effort to combat the invisible enemy.

But let us remember Easter morning and the empty tomb. For Christians, death is merely the gateway to glory, to a place where there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things will have passed away (Revelation 21:4).

Death lost its sting when Jesus died to take away our sins. As the apostle Paul tells us, it has been swallowed up in victory (1 Corinthians 15:54).

The Lord's trustworthiness

Rob Congdon, an American missionary doctor in Kenya, has described the strong spirituality that is sustaining many East African Christians in the midst of the coronavirus: "There is a remarkable, steadfast faith in God's goodness, even in the midst of the shaking. People who've learned to trust God in the uncertainty of tropical disease, civil war, and hunger, develop an unshakeable awareness of the Lord's trustworthiness."

For many Kenyan Christians have lived with poverty as the norm, and all too often drought and famine. Then there is the violence of Al-Shabaab terrorists, seeking out Christians to kill them. This year has already seen swarms of locusts devouring crops, and a second generation, far more numerous than the first, is due to hatch from their eggs in late April or early May. Between one generation of locusts and the next, coronavirus arrived in Kenya. Kenyan Christians have learned to trust God for survival every day. They already had a spiritual strength and resilience, a practical trust in their heavenly Father, which prepared them for the surprise new uncertainty and danger of Covid-19.

It is the same for poor or persecuted Christians in many other countries as well: the coronavirus adds yet one more challenge to their suffering. (Read more about this on pages 4-8.)

Those of us who are used to security and plenty must learn that same concrete faith. We now live in an age when everyone suffers, Christian and non-Christian, rich and poor, prince and pauper, for the virus does not discriminate. We are faced with definite restriction of lifestyle, likely sickness and possible death. What can we do but turn to our God and trust Him?

Divine Providence – the missing doctrine

Long ago the "tube" trains of the London Underground's District Line used to carry the letters *DV* inside each carriage, meaning "God willing" (*Deo volente* in Latin). It was an acknowledgement of the sovereignty of God. We may make our travel plans or other plans, but it is God who is in control.

Divine Providence is the missing doctrine of the Western Church today. What is Divine Providence? It is the belief that we are in God's hands. He determines all of our life. This does not mean we are merely mechanical automata. On the contrary, we have a very active role to play, as we decide to place our trust in Him, knowing that all things work together for good for those who love God (Romans 8:28).

As Christians, we live with the empty tomb, and the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead. Therein lies our hope.

All my hope on God is founded;
He doth still my trust renew,
Me through change and chance He guideth,
Only good and only true.
God unknown,
He alone Calls my heart to be His own.¹

¹ *Meine Hoffnung stehet feste* by Joachim Neander, translated by Robert Bridges

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Christian grandmother from north-east India with her granddaughter



CHRISTIANS AND THE COVID-19 CRISIS

Turn to pages 10-11 to read about practical help from Barnabas Fund for Christians affected by the Covid-19 crisis



Coronavirus. Pandemic. Lockdown. Social distancing.

Suddenly these words and phrases began to echo round the world as the Covid-19 virus spread from country to country, from continent to continent – spread as no disease has ever spread before. Soon it became a global danger, infecting even princes and prime ministers. **But what is the impact on our Christian brothers and sisters, many of them poor, many of them persecuted?**

Take Mukhtaran Bibi, for example, a partially-sighted widow in Pakistan. She and her three daughters work as domestic helpers in other people's homes. But when Pakistan went into lockdown they could no longer work and had no income. Their wages had been too low to set aside savings, and they had only meagre food stocks in the home. Mukhtaran's only son used to try to support the family by begging on the streets. But social distancing means this is now illegal.

Hundreds of thousands of Pakistani Christians face the same plight as Mukhtaran. Not just domestic helpers, but those in factories and brick-kilns that have been closed to stop the virus spreading, auto-rickshaw drivers who have no customers as people stay home, daily labourers who hire themselves out each day for construction work which has now been put on hold – all of these have lost their livelihoods in an instant. The same is true for many other countries where Christians are poor and despised.

Then there are the pastors whose only income was the giving of their congregation at Sunday services or pastoral visits. Now there is no Sunday worship, no visiting. In any case, their church members have nothing to give. The pastors are left destitute. This applies not just in Pakistan, but in many other countries, including Uganda where, like Pakistan, coronavirus has coincided with a plague of locusts.

Discrimination, violence and the virus

For Ethiopian Christians, the Covid-19 virus was the third major disaster to afflict them. Like Pakistan and Uganda, their crops had recently been ravaged by locusts. In addition, they were facing ongoing anti-Christian violence.

In other cases, Covid-19 did not just coincide with persecution but actually caused it. In Sri Lanka, some Hindu Tamils are blaming Christians for the virus. A pastor came from Switzerland and held a Christian worship service in Jaffna, after which it was discovered that he was infected with Covid-19 (caught while he

was in Sri Lanka). Sri Lankan Buddhist fundamentalists are posting on social media reminders that the virus raged through a Christian church in South Korea and that it is rampant in Italy, viewed as a pre-eminently Christian country. “Why has God forsaken the Christian community?” they ask.

A separate challenge faces Sri Lankan Christian converts from Buddhism and Hinduism. A Sri Lankan pastor, giving an update to Barnabas Fund on 27 March, explained that the government had announced it would distribute food through the majority places of worship. But converts would not be helped by either a temple or a mainstream church, so they would not be able to get the food.

Discrimination has been seen in India against Indians from the north-east of the country, which borders China where the coronavirus outbreak began. Indians from that region have facial features rather like Chinese people, and are being “teased, abused and humiliated by the people, who



Because of lockdown and social distancing in Pakistan, widowed Mukhtaran can no longer work, nor can her son and daughters

are calling them as ‘Coronavirus’. Some shops are refusing to sell them groceries. Landlords are asking them to vacate the houses,” wrote an Indian Christian leader to Barnabas Fund on 29 March. There are a large number of Christians in some states of north-east India. There are also examples of verbal abuse, harassment and even stoning of foreigners, which spells danger for Indian Christians who are always struggling to convince the Hindu majority that they are

loyal Indian citizens, not agents of the West.

Namibia is 90% Christian, but police brutality and human rights abuses in the name of public safety were already a familiar part of life in Namibia before the virus. Citizens braced themselves for an escalation of such behaviour as the country moved to a martial-law style of full lockdown on 27 March. Namibia, called after the Namib, a rainless coastal strip with gigantic sand dunes, is characterised by harsh desert and semi-desert conditions; 80% of its food is imported from South Africa. The public health system has deteriorated over the last five years and only 20% of the population have proper medical insurance. Humanly speaking, it is one of the most vulnerable countries in the world to Covid-19.

Dangerous ignorance

Several church leaders have shared with Barnabas the dangers arising from the ignorance of the poorest and least educated in their societies. In Ethiopia, the Church urged Christians to follow the World Health Organisation’s guidance and to pray night and day. However, confided an Ethiopian church minister to Barnabas Fund, “with the cultural and religious backward attitude of our people, I am afraid to say that the virus will be very disastrous.”

In the Central African Republic, where the virus was first brought by a pastor returning from a trip to Europe, church leaders were doubtful that traditional behaviours could be changed by government announcements, for example, the habit of gathering in large numbers for funerals. “We are in very hot times,” wrote one on 28 March, “the lack of electricity and running water in the city, are not to settle the situation. The hygienic conditions are deplorable ... The borders are closed. Commodity prices are rising because everything comes from Cameroon. Thank you for praying for the survival of the people.”

In northern Malawi, a rumour was circulating in late March that the coronavirus was a blood-sucking animal. Many Christians therefore took to spending the night in church buildings, so that some could sleep while others kept watch for the bloodsuckers. Just at the time when people should have been distancing themselves and staying home, they were gathering together in the belief that they would be safer that way.

Sad to say, some church leaders have insisted on continuing to hold Sunday worship

meetings, for example in the USA, South Korea and Uganda. Some Muslims in Pakistan also have been resistant to instructions on physical/social distancing, believing that this would go against their Islamic duties and practices. This attitude is a cause of great concern, especially to Christians involved in providing medical care in Pakistan. “We are fearing a rapid great transmission if this mindset continues,” wrote a senior Pakistani Christian involved with Christian hospitals on 25 March. There are at least 65 Christian hospitals in Pakistan, most of which have no outside source of funding to assist them.

Building up believers who cannot go to church

In many countries, Christians are quickly learning the skills necessary to provide their Sunday worship online in some form, even if it is just filming it with a phone for others to view on their phones, as in some Ugandan churches. But in Namibia, where only 10% of the population have access to the internet, even this is not possible, and instead there is a surge of interest in radio.

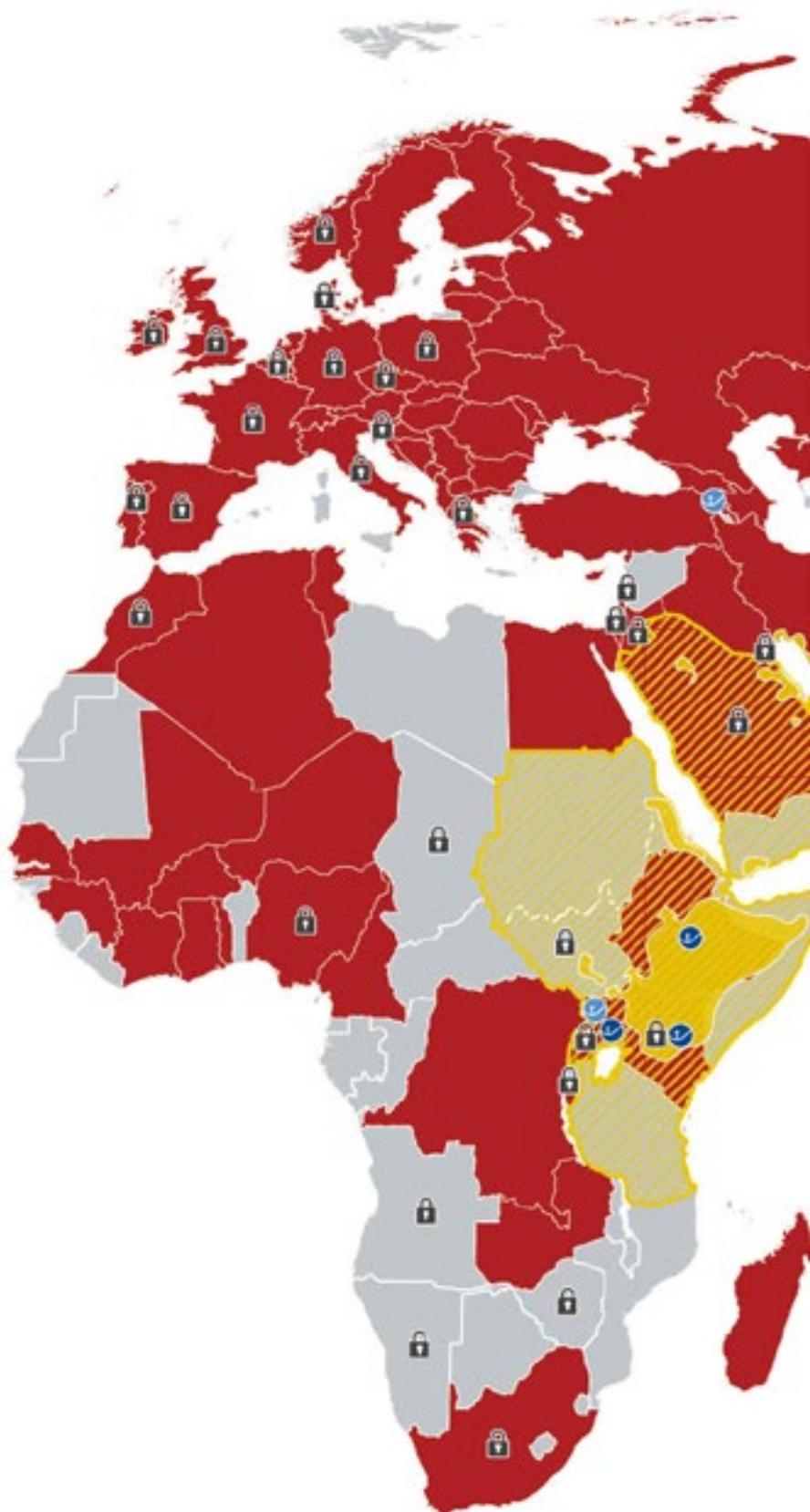
A presidential call to prayer

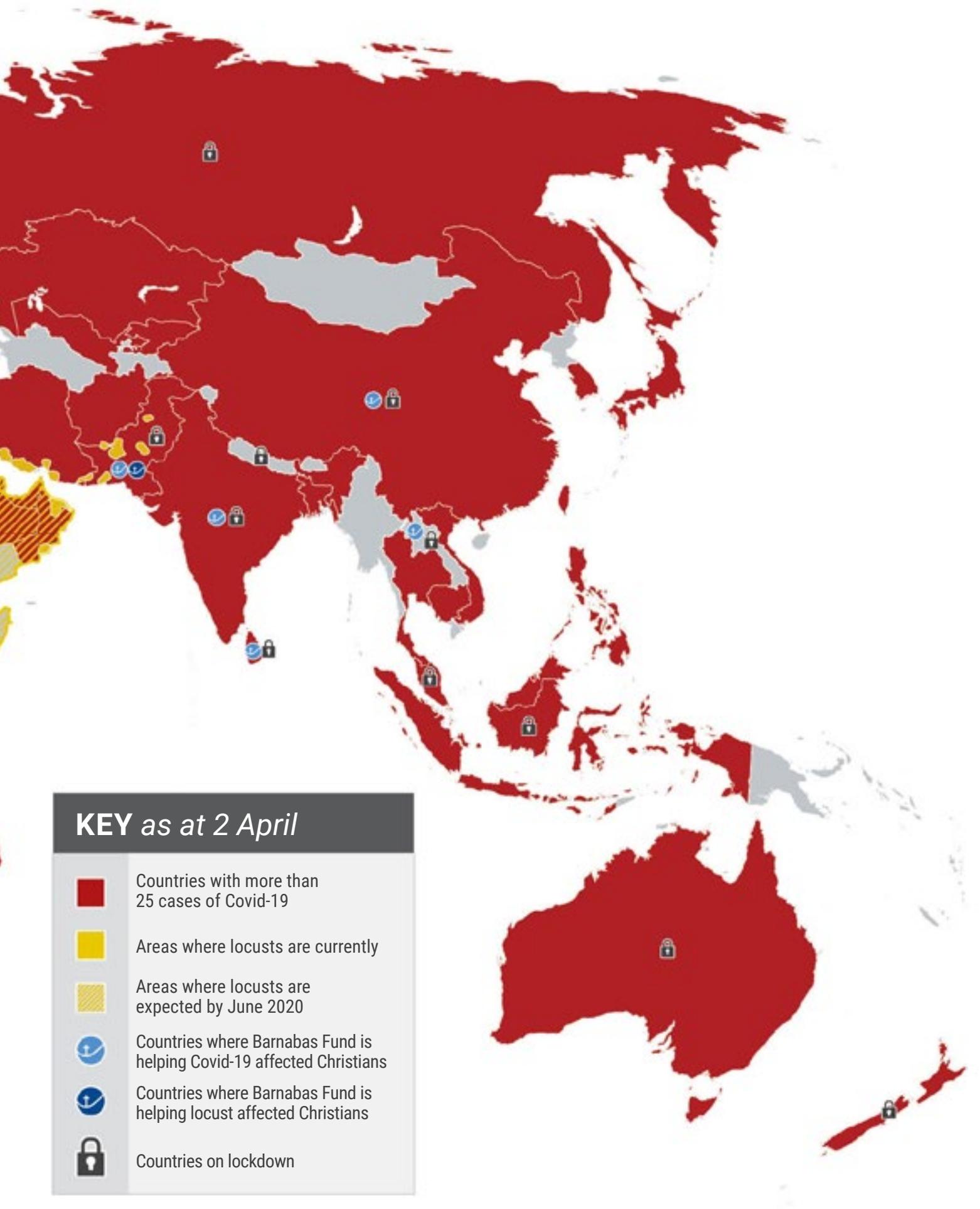
The president of Christian-majority Ghana called his country to fast, repent, confess their sins and pray, while they implemented safety measures. “I appeal to all Ghanaians, Christians and Muslims, to observe a national day of fasting and prayer. Let us pray to God to protect our nation and save us from this pandemic,” said President Nana Akufo-Addo on 21 March.

Christians offering aid

The well-resourced churches in Ghana have donated items to the Ministry of Health, including personal protective equipment (PPE) for health workers. They also lent ten vans equipped with public address systems to the National Commission for Civic Education and pledged to provide drivers, fuel and vehicle maintenance as long as the coronavirus crisis lasted.

The strict lockdown in India soon created hunger, food shortages and untreated medical problems in the villages, reported the Church of North India. All public transport was shut down. Thousands of migrant workers whose jobs disappeared overnight started journeying on foot from Delhi back to their home towns, without adequate food, water or shelter. Some had distances of hundreds of kilometres to cover. Children and elderly were also on the move, as separated family members tried to find each other. Punjab is known as “India’s bread-basket” and is famous for its wheat, which is the staple carbohydrate of the northern part of this vast country. The wheat crop was ready to harvest in late March, but people were not allowed to go to the fields. There have been reports of riot-like situations in the villages. At the time of writing, the Church in Punjab was exploring with the





government how to distribute or facilitate access to food and medical supplies.

But even the poorest Christians are striving to help others. “This will be a pea in an elephant’s mouth,” said a church leader from Nepal as he described the near-futility of his church’s efforts to raise funds to help in the face of overwhelming needs. Hundreds of thousands of people in the Kathmandu valley would be the first victims of the lockdown if it lasted more than a week, he predicted. Nepal, already poor and underdeveloped, received a rush of people who had been working in Covid-19 infected India, as they hastily crossed back into Nepal, just before India closed the border. An estimated 50,000 labourers arrived and scattered themselves across the country as each went to their own family home. Some even fought with police in their efforts to get back to Nepal.

Many churches in drought-ridden Namibia are distributing food parcels and making their water taps available to use by the community, because people in the shanty towns do not have access to water. “We hope that our Lockdown Theologies will bring some comfort,” said a Namibian church leader to Barnabas Fund, explaining how they were seeking to show, in word and deed, God’s love and presence in the midst of the lockdown suffering.



A Christian group distributing masks and other essential protective hygiene items to Christian healthcare workers in Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Extreme poverty welling up in rich generosity

“Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability.” This was the apostle Paul’s description of the believers in Macedonia (2 Corinthians 8:2-3).

As the whole world reels in the grip of coronavirus, as the pandemic takes its economic toll on all, as poor and persecuted Christian believers struggle to help others, **will you help Barnabas Fund to help them?** ✨

TEARS FOR A CUP OF TEA

In Indonesia, there is a general call for people to help those whose livelihoods have been badly affected by everyone staying home. One such group of workers are the Gojek motorcycle taxi drivers. Called by an app, Gojek motorcyclists transport people and run errands.

Senny, a Christian who owns a small restaurant, had closed up for the day, put the ingredients away, turned off the stoves and cleaned the kitchen when a Gojek driver came



Christians are distributing food to drivers, and many others, who are struggling as work dwindles to nothing in coronavirus struck Indonesia

in, asking if she was still taking orders. At first, Senny felt inclined to refuse but changed her mind, seeing “his face full of hope”. She explained it would take a long time, but he was happy to wait, telling Senny that he had waited on the streets for work since morning and only now had got his first job.

Wondering how the driver’s family would live if he only got one job a day, Senny prepared the food the driver had ordered for his customer, and made him some hot, sweet tea. When she put the tea on the table, the driver was shocked, saying he had not ordered a drink. “It is free for you,” said Senny, which caused tears to come to the driver’s eyes. As she handed over the five portions he had to deliver to his customer, she also added a small plastic bag alongside it, saying, “The small bag is dinner for you.” Again the driver’s eyes brimmed with tears and he thanked her hoarsely.

After the driver had left, Senny asked the restaurant staff to give thanks “because even though the condition of our restaurant is not good, we still have enough food for us every day. Thank you, God.”



Barnabas Coronavirus Emergency Network (BCEN)

current list of partners (for security reasons, some partners not listed)

Barnabas Fund has formed an emergency committee to monitor the evolving situation, as the coronavirus spreads globally, and how it impacts our project partners around the world, and to assess how to best support them. We have an extensive network of project partners already in place, who will send us updates on a regular basis.

Barnabas Fund, working with GAFCON (Global Anglican Future Conference), is preparing an Africa-wide committee to assist in deploying relief and assistance, gathering information, making needs known, sourcing finance and supplies and ensuring reliable distribution to those in most need. Barnabas is a member of the Network for African Congregational Theology, comprising 55 seminaries, colleges and universities, which are in a position to distribute help on the ground.

Countries represented in our Network:

Algeria, Angola, Armenia, Australia, Bangladesh, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lebanon, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Portugal, Russia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, South Africa, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syria, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, USA, Uzbekistan, Zambia and Zimbabwe

- Africa Bible College (ABC), Malawi
- Africa International University, Kenya
- Anglican Church of Kenya
- Anglican Church of Nigeria
- Anglican Church of South Sudan
- Anglican Church of Tanzania
- Anglican Church of Uganda
- Anglican International Development (AID), UK
- Asia Graduate School of Theology, Nepal
- Association for Christian Religious Practitioners, Southern Africa
- Association for Christian Theological Education in Africa, Kenya
- Bible College of the Evangelical Christian Baptist Union, Tajikistan
- Bible Media and Nehemiah Bible Institute, Africa
- Biblica (South Africa)
- Bishop Hannington Institute of Theology and Development, Kenya
- Brethren Church, Pakistan
- Carlile College, Kenya
- Chancellor College, Malawi
- Chorra Ministry, Ethiopia
- Church of Ceylon, Sri Lanka
- Church of North India
- Church of Pakistan
- Coptic Orthodox Church, Diocese of Khartoum, Sudan
- Daystar University, Kenya
- Dinka Congregations in Juba, South Sudan
- Domboshava Theological College, Zimbabwe
- Doon Bible College, India
- Dutch Reformed Church, South Africa
- Ecumenical Foundation of Southern Africa
- ECWA Theological Seminary Church, Nigeria
- Ethiopian Full Gospel Theological Seminary
- Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology
- Evangelical Alliance of Kenya
- Evangelical Fellowship in the Anglican Communion (EFAC)
- Free State University, South Africa
- GAFCON (Global Anglican Future Conference)
- HEFSIBA Mozambique
- Huguenote College, South Africa
- Instituto Bíblico de Kaluquembe – Missão Urgente, Angola
- Instituto Superior de Teologia Evangelica no Lubango, Angola
- Instituto Teológico da Igreja Evangélica Reformada de Angola
- International Leadership University, Kenya
- Jos ECWA Theological Seminary, Nigeria
- Josophat Mwale Theological Institution, Malawi
- Justo Mwale University (JMU), Zambia
- Methodist Church, Ghana
- Methodist Church, Nigeria
- Moffat Bible College, Kenya
- Morija Theological Seminary, Lesotho
- Murray Theological College, Zimbabwe
- Nairobi Baptist Church, Kenya
- Namibia Evangelical Theological Seminary
- Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary
- Nile Theological College, South Sudan
- North West University, South Africa
- Orthodox Theological Seminary, Kenya
- Oxford Centre for Religion and Public Life, UK
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- Presbyterian Church, Southern Africa
- Pretoria University, South Africa
- PTHU Global Christianity, Netherlands
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- Reformed and Presbyterian Seminary, Nepal
- Reformed Church University, Zimbabwe
- Reformed Institute for Theological Training, Kenya
- Reformed Mission League
- Reformed Theological Seminary, Nigeria
- Rusitu Bible College, Zimbabwe
- Scott Christian University, Kenya
- Seminario Emanuel do Dôndi, Angola
- Serampore College, India
- St Frumentius Abba Selama Kessate Berhan Theological College, Ethiopia
- St John's College of Theology and Development, South Sudan
- St. Paul's University, Kenya
- Stellenbosch University, South Africa
- Syriac Orthodox Church
- The Church in the Province of the West Indies
- The Church of Pentecost, Ghana
- The Reformed Family Forum, Southern Africa
- Theological College of Northern Nigeria
- Uganda Christian University
- UMCA Theological College, Nigeria
- Université Shalom de Bunia, Democratic Republic of Congo
- University of Livingstonia, Malawi
- World Communion of Reformed Churches
- Zarephath Bible Seminary, Pakistan
- Zomba Theological College, Malawi

BARNABAS FUND'S COVID-19 EMERGENCY FUND FOR POOR AND PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS



quarter of the world's population is living under some form of lockdown and the number of global cases of Covid-19 has exceeded 650,000 (at the time of writing).

Rich countries are pouring their resources into battling the invisible foe and to help their citizens survive the lockdown. But what about countries whose health systems barely function at the best of times? Countries that cannot hope to

provide salaries for those who suddenly have no work? Or places where people live crowded together in refugee camps without adequate sanitation? What about Christians where they are despised and discriminated against?

With God's help and your donations, Barnabas Fund has stepped in to help our brothers and sisters in need due to coronavirus. Here are some examples.

FOOD



In poor countries like **Armenia**, impoverished elderly Christians, now obliged to self-isolate, are begging their churches for bread and other basic foodstuffs. Young people from the churches were ready and willing to deliver food parcels to the elderly, but the churches lacked funding to buy the foodstuffs.

Barnabas provided emergency food for vulnerable, elderly Christians in Armenia. Among those receiving the monthly help were Artashes and his wife Manik. Faithful servants of the Lord, the couple had allowed their home to be used as a secret meeting place for Christians during the years of persecution of Christians in the Soviet era. Since 1995, Artashes has been serving as a church deacon. Now, despite bodily weakness and



Artashes and his wife Manik were given food, soap, sanitiser gel and toilet paper

failing memory, the couple continue to trust God's promises that He will not forget His servants.

Laos is a country of severe anti-Christian persecution, where poor rural Christians are often penalised for their Christian faith by being banished from the fields where they grow their food. Barnabas Fund is providing rice, noodles, canned fish and salt for some of the poorest families, now forced to stay at home. Widows and orphans are among the beneficiaries.

Many Christians in **Sri Lanka** are daily labourers in tea plantations and other areas of agriculture. Already poor, they are extra vulnerable when there is a socio-economic crisis. Although the government has been trying to ensure that production continues, church leaders in touch with the grassroots have told Barnabas Fund that survival is a huge struggle for these believers. Barnabas is working through the Sri Lankan churches to provide the neediest families with rice, lentils, chickpeas, flour, potatoes, "soya meat", coconut oil, powdered milk, sugar and salt.

There is a similar situation in **Pakistan**, where many Christians are also on daily wages; if they are not hired, they have no income that day. During lockdown, those not involved in essential services have no possibility

of working. Because they earn so little even when they do get work, the daily labourers have no savings to fall back on and lockdown affects them very seriously. Christians in Pakistan typically do the most menial and lowest paid jobs. They are "often the poorest of the poor," says our project partner.

"They are looking to God and their brothers and sisters in Christ to stand with them in the face of the troubles coronavirus has brought into their life"

Prime Minister Imran Khan at first announced that Pakistan could not afford a lockdown because the government had no resources to support the poor who would starve if they could not work. But then lockdown became essential to stop the spread of Covid-19. The army had to be called in to enforce it, as poor people were so desperate.

Aslam and his wife Suria are both daily wage earners in Pakistan. Due to the Covid-19 lockdown, Aslam can no longer work as a labourer and Suria can no longer work in domestic houses. They have four daughters to support and no savings. "They are looking to God and their brothers and



The Covid-19 lockdown means that neither Aslam nor Suria can work. But Barnabas Fund is feeding them and their daughters

How your gifts are providing practical help for Christians affected by coronavirus

sisters in Christ to stand with them in the face of the troubles coronavirus has brought into their life,” says our project partner in Pakistan. Barnabas is helping to feed them and other needy Pakistani Christian families.

HYGIENE PRODUCTS



At the height of the coronavirus outbreak in Wuhan, **China**, courageous Christians put the care of their neighbours above their own safety to help others in need. They risked their own health to hand out protective masks, gloves and hygiene supplies to desperate people on the streets of the quarantined city.

As supplies ran short, Barnabas supporters answered an urgent call for help to support the supply of essential hygiene items to help protect these caring Christians, and those they were helping, as they ministered to the needy on the street.



Courageous Christians (pictured in yellow suit) risked their own health to hand out protective masks and gloves, along with comforting words, to panicked residents in Wuhan, the epicentre of the virus pandemic

We also responded to pleas from **Uganda** to provide soap, ethanol wipes and face masks for South Sudanese Christians in refugee camps where shared washing facilities make the problem of keeping hands clean a big challenge.

PASTOR SUPPORT



Pakistani pastor Saul Rehmat’s church members are mostly rickshaw drivers, labourers, factory workers and domestic helpers. When the coronavirus lockdown started they lost their work, so they can no longer support their pastor. Their offerings were Pastor Saul’s main source of income, which leaves him and his family in a desperate situation. But Barnabas Fund is now providing monthly food parcels for him and other pastors in **Pakistan** facing a similar situation.

In countries like Kenya, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Uganda and Pakistan, the income of a pastor, especially in rural areas, is from the donations of his congregation on Sundays or when making pastoral visits. But when there is a lockdown, Christians cannot gather for worship, and pastors cannot visit homes. In any case, church members have nothing to give. The pastors and their families are in desperate need, but Barnabas Fund is supporting them.

We have also been supporting poor preachers who live in remote mountainous parts of various provinces of **China**. Some have been infected and others have suffered in different ways because of the coronavirus outbreak.



Pastor Saul’s congregation can no longer support him, due to coronavirus lockdown, but Barnabas Fund is assisting him and his family

Covid-19 aid the costs

£7 (\$8.50; €7.75) could provide soap, ethanol wipes and face masks for a South Sudanese refugee family of seven in Uganda

£10.50 (\$13; €12) could feed a family of four in Sri Lanka for one month

£16 (\$19.50; €18) could buy 20kg rice for a poor or widow-headed rural Christian family in Laos

£24 (\$29; €27) could provide rice, flour, pulses, soap, sanitizer, and other basic needs for a Pakistani family for one month

£30 (\$36; €33) could feed a poor and elderly Christian couple in Armenia for a month as well as providing some basic hygiene products

Thank you for your generosity in making this help possible. As the coronavirus pandemic looks set to continue for months more, **please continue to give to our Covid-19 Emergency Fund** (project reference PR1530).



Disaster Relief

Coronavirus

Coping with fear

The opposite of faith is not doubt. It is fear.

One night, as the disciples were rowing across the Sea of Galilee, a sudden storm blew up, most likely caused by an underwater earthquake, which unleashed the powerful wind, which generated the churning waves. The disciples were frightened. They were vulnerable – powerless in the face of impending death. Jesus, sleeping on a cushion at the back, did not stir, even when the waves breaking over the small boat began filling it with water. He seemed not to care (Mark 4:35-41).

Many things can contribute to our fears: a sudden and overwhelming event, uncertainty about the future, a sense of powerlessness and inability to control what will happen. Death as a stark reality now threatens us and our loved ones, in particular the elderly. An unknown deadly virus, a force outside our control which has suddenly come upon us, is creating fear. How should we respond?

The Bible has much to say about fear, mainly urging us to trust in God and not to be afraid. It also speaks of another kind of “fear”, the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom (Psalm 111:10). This fear is the reverent awe that should rightly fill us as we contemplate the majesty of the Lord Almighty. After Jesus had calmed the wind and waves, the frightened disciples became terrified with the fear of the Lord, as there dawned on them a new understanding of Jesus’ divine power over nature.

Jesus asked the disciples in the boat why they were so afraid of the storm, why they had no faith? As followers of Christ, we are not meant to live in the grip of destructive fear. For perfect love casts out fear (1 John 4:18).

1. Discipline our minds not to give way to emotions of fear. Fill our minds instead with the Word of God and His promises and apply them to our own situation. “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.” (2 Timothy 1:7, NKJV).
2. Deliberately put our trust in God. Tell Him in prayer. Speak it aloud. Sing it. “Those who know your name trust in you, for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you.” (Psalm 9:10)
3. Acknowledge that God is in control of our lives and nothing happens by accident. “Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father’s care.” (Matthew 10:29)
4. Remember that God cares for us. “casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.” (1 Peter 5:7, NKJV).
5. Embrace the Divine will, whatever comes. “Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” (1 Thessalonians 5:18).
6. Know the End – an eternal glory, which far outweighs “our light and momentary troubles” (2 Corinthians 4:17).
7. Care for others – “As we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially those who belong to the family of believers.” (Galatians 6:10).

What is this faith that Jesus speaks of – the faith that would have kept the disciples from fear? It is a fundamental trust in the Divine and in His purposes, knowing that we are in His hands and that God is in perfect control of every aspect of life, from earthquakes to minuscule organisms. This trust is founded on Jesus. “See,

I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation; the one who relies on it will never be stricken with panic.” (Isaiah 28:16)

As He prepared them for the greatest period of uncertainty they would ever face, Jesus said to His disciples, “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me.” (John 14:1)

This is a command. But how do we obey it? How do we obey the command “Do not fear” that occurs so often in the Bible? How do we learn to rest in His perfect love so that our hearts are untroubled? Seven suggestions are in the box.

In an age where the secular seems to control all, where humanism dominates and the fear of God is not acknowledged, we can, by God’s grace, train ourselves to trust Him, to rely on His love and His power, and banish our fears.

In the darkness of the night and at the centre of the roaring winds and crashing waves, Jesus, the Son of God, was present. For God is always in the darkness. He is never absent and He does not cease to care and to intervene as He wills.

Whilst Jesus was asleep at the stern of the boat, His Father neither slumbered nor slept (Psalm 121:4). His watchful, caring eye was over them.

The writings of Christians in times past, when there were few cures for illnesses and sudden or early death was commonplace, can help us now in the time of the coronavirus. We can look out for examples and note them down, creating a resource of faith-building encouragements.

“Fear him, ye saints, and ye will then have nothing else to fear”¹

DR PATRICK SOOKHDEO

is Founder and International Director of Barnabas Fund

Coping with death

It appears that no health service in the world is going to be able to cope adequately with Covid-19.

In the UK, most deaths have been among those already frail from old age or chronic illness. A few were young and in apparently good health. They died in hospital alone, apart from medical staff, because no visitors are allowed. After death the body is sealed, no one can view the body. At one point no funerals were allowed, just a cremation or burial.

Bravado

In the face of any illness some will say “I’m going to beat this”. Some think they will not get coronavirus at all, not show symptoms or fight off the infection easily. We cannot know how it will affect us. Occasionally, even young people have died in this outbreak. Everyone is at risk and has to live with uncertainty. Just praying or going to church will not protect us. But remember that those with a Christian faith can be sure that we are in the hands of something more powerful than medicine. The Lord Jesus said, “In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33). In *Talking About Dying*, chapter 11 explores prayer for healing (available free at: talkingaboutdying.org).

Addressing fear

Patients are helped by the honesty of truthful information. Many medical staff find it very difficult to tell patients and their families when death is approaching. Chapters 2, 4 and 10 of *Talking About Dying* talk about the fear which stops us talking about death. Whilst physical pain and other symptoms are addressed by the medical staff, mental pain in the face

of dying is more difficult. It can involve anxieties about loss of control of our lives, separation from loved ones – both for them and for us – frustration at loss of hopes for the future, things left undone, family estrangements and, for many, the unknown of what happens after death. Don’t put off questions of faith, do it **now**.

Act now

Although the evidence strongly suggests that for the under 40s only those with serious underlying health conditions risk life-threatening disease, nobody’s risk of developing this disease in a serious form is zero. So **now** is the time to talk about dying. How would you want to be treated and what do you want to happen after your death? Have you written a will? Have you considered an “advanced decision”? Have you told your family you love them – sometimes it’s important to say the words, not just assume that they know.

Contact and saying goodbye

Most in hospital have access to phones and “screens”. A previously healthy journalist aged 38 wrote, “My difficulty in breathing made it impossible to hold a conversation for more than a minute or two. Were it not for the messages of love and support from friends and colleagues, I would have felt very alone. I felt too unwell to reply but they gave me great strength in the darkness.” Sometimes it is necessary to use these facilities to “say goodbye”.

Quality of death

More elderly people are looking for ways to indicate to their families that they do not wish to go to hospital and overwhelm the health service. They know their chances of surviving a

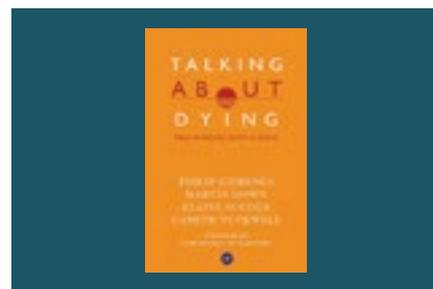
move to intensive care are low – 50% of those in intensive care are not surviving. They would prefer to stay at home, preferably with someone they love. They are asking for home palliative care provision with necessary symptom and infection control for carers. We do not know how this could work but something needs to be done.

Dr Ronald J Sider has written, “As disciples of the Resurrected One, we labour now, even in the worst of times, knowing that finally our efforts will not be in vain. Those who understand the empty tomb can afford to face danger now. Why? Because we know that in a day, or two, or a million, the Galilean champion of the sick, weak and marginalized will return. In the twinkling of an eye, he will trump Satan’s last card. The kingdoms of this world will become the kingdom of our risen Lord.

“The final word is not coronavirus, death, injustice, oppression, or a dead planet. The Almighty One who raised the Lord Jesus will have the last word. That is what can keep us going ... We work now knowing that Good Friday is not the last word. As disciples of the Resurrected One, we labour now, even in the worst of times, knowing that finally our efforts will not be in vain.”

DR ELAINE SUGDEN

is a retired cancer consultant and author, with others, of: *Talking about Dying*



Talking About Dying, by Elaine Sugden, and others, can be downloaded free at: talkingaboutdying.org

PROJECT
JOSEPH

SAVE GOD'S PEOPLE FROM LOCUST SWARMS

Experts warn that a 400-times increase in locust numbers could occur in a second wave of breeding underway in Pakistan and the Horn of Africa, if current control efforts fail

Dual shock of locust plague and coronavirus spike putting millions at risk of famine in East Africa and Pakistan

The world is reeling from the Covid-19 pandemic, affecting countries rich and poor. At the same time an old and familiar foe – a locust plague – is devastating areas of Africa and Asia. While media attention and Western resources focus on tackling their own coronavirus crisis, how will these regions' struggling healthcare systems deal with it? And what resources will be left to help the victims of the locusts, whose crops have been destroyed, leaving them with the prospect of starvation?

The plague of locusts is breeding at a staggering rate in East Africa and South Asia where crops and livelihoods were devastated by the ravenous insects in the early months of 2020. Many thousands of already marginalised and persecuted Christians are among those facing famine after vast swarms of locusts devoured crops.



A Pakistani Christian farmer in locust afflicted Sindh province

“We as family are thankful to Barnabas Fund for their efforts to remember us in this time of unexpected disaster. God bless Barnabas Fund more and more!”

Pakistani Christian farmer Tagji

Barnabas intervenes

“There is no helping hand for us except God,” Pakistani Christian farmer, Tagji Haloo, told Barnabas. Her family of nine is eating just one simple meal a day. “The unexpected plague of swarms ate up our whole crops and vegetables and left us helpless and depressed with no sources of daily food for our families,” Tagji explained with unspoken grief. “We already got a loan for food needs to be fulfilled, but it is not enough or a sustainable solution for us. Instead it increased our depression and pressure.”

Although they have lost almost everything to the locusts, Tagji and her husband remain hopeful and are preparing to sow new summer crops. Grateful Tagji told us, “God sent us Barnabas Fund for help when no one here to care for us in this time of sorrow. We as family are thankful to Barnabas Fund for their efforts to remember us in this time of unexpected disaster. God bless Barnabas Fund more and more!”



Fast breeding swarms of desert locusts are surging in south-west Pakistan

Double-disaster of locusts and coronavirus outbreak in south-west Pakistan

Ideal locust breeding conditions – followed by the terrible spike in coronavirus infections – have deepened the emergency in south-west Pakistan. Thousands of Christian families are facing famine. The locust plague caused catastrophic loss to crops just as they were about to be harvested at the beginning of the year. In Sindh province, one of the poorest rural regions in the country, at least 30,000 acres of crops were ravaged.

Coronavirus infections are rapidly escalating in Pakistan, with 1,938 cases and 26 deaths recorded at the time of writing. Sindh province is badly hit, with cases rocketing as travellers returned across the border from coronavirus-stricken Iran.

“Share cropper” Pakistani Christian farmers lose precious income

“This was like a flood of locusts, travelling and eating everything on its way,” said Ramoo. The 61-year-old farmer depends on seasonal vegetable and biannual cash crops, including tomatoes and sugar cane, for



Ramoo's household is struggling to survive after the locusts destroyed his crops, just before harvest

income to support his family of five, but locusts have destroyed his harvest and wiped out his income.

Covid-19 crisis heightening threat to food security in locust-affected East Africa

The World Health Organisation (WHO) urged Africa to “wake up” and “prepare for the worst” in the coming months, as a surge of coronavirus cases began across the continent in March.

Governments were already battling to contain the second wave of locust swarms, and protect critical summer crops, when limited resources suddenly had to stretch to contending with the Covid-19 crisis too. Agricultural regions are now at risk of renewed infestation as coronavirus hampers the fight against locusts, with delays to delivery of pesticides and equipment – heightening the threat to food security at the worst possible time.

“Extremely alarming” locust swarm surge in East Africa

“These locusts destroy many things. They destroy vegetables leaving people in famine. They are eating grass and leaves which cause the livestock to die, leaving the people without animals, which then cause the people to die,” said Taratam, an 85-year-old Kenyan Christian farmer.

New swarms are swelling quickly and infesting swathes of East Africa with a devastating impact on countries including Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Somalia and South Sudan. The UN has warned of a looming food crisis in the wake of “extremely alarming” locust breeding across the region. The infestation is the worst seen for decades in Somalia, Eritrea and Djibouti, where Christians are already marginalised and persecuted.

The locust swarms are moving faster and further in dry weather conditions, particularly in Kenya and Uganda. In February and March, the eggs were laid in damp conditions ideal for breeding and a massive increase in the locust population is expected as summer approaches.



Trying desperately to defend her crops as locusts descend in East Africa [image credit: ©FAO/Sven Torfinn]

Critical summer crops at risk

The summer months are expected to bring severe food shortages if staple crops, including maize, are lost. The food security of millions is under threat, especially in Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia and Somalia.

In Uganda, the government has warned the country to prepare for impending double disaster as unusually heavy seasonal rains are expected. A Ugandan Christian leader explained to Barnabas that the severe rains will increase the risks of a locust plague. “Locusts are going to have soft ground under which breeding is going to triple. As locusts increase, the danger towards destruction of both food and pasture will also triple. If there are no measures to mitigate the awaited calamity, people’s lives will get destroyed by hunger,” he warned.

Farmers “lost seeds and hope”

In Marsabit county, Kenya, unusually heavy rains brought flooding last year that wreaked extensive damage. Meanwhile, in semi-arid East Pokot, the rains did not come at all – pastures withered and livestock died. Our partner in the region told us, “Many [farmers] have lost seeds and hope.” Then the locusts invaded, devouring crops and pasture.

Marginalised and persecuted Christians need our help in face of “perfect storm”

Many thousands of already marginalised and persecuted Christians are among those facing a “perfect storm”, as severe food shortages bite due to the vast swarms of locusts and as the coronavirus pandemic sweeps across Africa. The second wave of locusts, which can often be worse than the first, may spiral out of control as government programmes struggle to operate effectively due to pandemic restrictions.

Large-scale food relief is desperately needed to save the lives of many Pakistani and East African Christian families. Widows, orphans, pregnant women, children and elderly are especially vulnerable.

WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF A LOCUST PLAGUE?

The desert locust is considered the most dangerous migratory pest on earth. A swarm of only one square kilometre will eat as much as 35,000 people can eat in one day. In times of plague, desert locusts can spread across around 29 million square kilometres or more than 20% of the total land surface of the planet.

Where are the locusts breeding?

Desert locusts are usually restricted to the semi-arid and desert regions of the African Sahel, the Near/Middle East and parts of south-west Asia. This area, of about 16 million square kilometres, comprises around 30 countries, including some of the world’s poorest nations.

A second wave of this year’s devastating locust outbreak is under way in summer breeding grounds in East Africa, parts of the Middle East and south-west Asia. Breeding conditions for the locusts have remained highly favourable since February along both Red Sea coasts and in East Africa. Heavy rains fell in southern Iran spurring egg laying. Western Africa, where dry conditions have dominated, remains largely unaffected by the locust swarms.

Hopper bands (groups of immature insects) and immature swarms multiplied in February and March in Kenya, Somalia, south-west Ethiopia, Sudan, Eritrea, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the UAE. In Iran, many millions of eggs laid by swarms in the south-west hatched to form into hopper bands and, as they mature, adult swarms are crossing the border into Pakistan.

Within south-west Pakistan’s agricultural belt, after extensive egg laying, new generations of hopper bands and small swarms emerged across Baluchistan province in March and April. New swarms are also forming in the north-west of the country.

Please see pages 6-7 for a map of locust affected regions.

If you would like to make a gift, please direct your donation to **00-1313 Project Joseph Feeding Locust-affected Christians**



Disaster Relief



Even a small swarm of desert locusts of just a square kilometre can consume as much food in one day as 35,000 people



Pakistani Christian farmer Tulsi (pictured with his family) desperately tried to drive the locusts away from his crops, but the insects devoured everything in their path

How does a locust plague develop?

Desert locusts (*Schistocerca gregaria*) are large grasshopper-like insects. Normally solitary and sedentary, the species morphs into its gregarious form if population density increases. Heavy rainfall in arid regions of the Sahel and North Africa brings rapid growth of lush vegetation for locusts to feed on and increases the risk of swarms developing.

Within six hours of eggs hatching, if the juvenile locusts are crowded together, a modification of the DNA of their central nervous system occurs, which initiates gregarious behaviour. Solitary insects are green but change to a yellow colour in the gregarious form.

The young locust nymphs march in synchrony as they form dense hopper bands. The hoppers shed their exoskeleton repeatedly as they pass through several growth stages, before maturing into highly-mobile winged adults. Mature swarms, of hundreds of millions of locusts, can migrate distances of around 150km a day, and even 200km when aided by prevailing winds.

The second wave of a locust plague can be many times worse

In the first wave of the current plague, locust swarms were reported to have migrated from the desert of Oman into Yemen and across the Red Sea in late 2019. The swarms spread across

East Africa, resulting in the worst outbreak seen in 70 years. Millions of locusts also entered into Pakistan's agricultural belt, via Iran.

The gregarious phase is transferred from mothers to offspring, which means that the second wave of a plague as is now facing East Africa and south-west Asia can be many times larger than the first. Soft damp soil is especially favourable for egg laying and the rainy season in East Africa provided ideal breeding conditions in many regions.

What control measures are being taken?

Aerial insecticide spraying, mainly with organophosphate chemicals, is the only effective means available to contain such large-scale swarms. The key focus of control operations is to halt the breeding cycle by destroying the hoppers before they mature into adults.

The traditional and manual control methods used in many regions, such as pesticide spraying by hand and ground clearing, are almost useless in the face of an infestation so huge that few farmers have seen in their lifetimes.

Pakistani Christian farmer, Tulsi, explained to Barnabas how he struggled in vain to protect his crops. "We used drums (dhool), and other noisy sounds to get rid from those insects, but before leaving there was only straw in field but no leaves. Even in the areas where the rice crop was about to be harvested, were severely damaged," he said.

Control relies on careful monitoring of breeding zones

Ground monitoring to identify breeding zones at an early stage is critical, so that governments can effectively target aerial spraying. Scientists are using supercomputers and climate data to predict where and when egg laying and breeding surges will occur.

The cost of effectively controlling the plague is estimated to be around \$60m (£47m). If the current breeding upsurge is not contained, costs could soar to as high as \$500m (£393m).

The last locust plague, in 2003, which affected 23 West African countries, involved three generations of locusts and took two years to bring under control.

Barnabas Fund recognised in UK's *Parliamentary Review*

Barnabas Fund recognised as best practice representative among charitable organisations

Barnabas Fund has been recognised and featured as a best practice representative in the charitable sector in the world-renowned British Parliamentary Review publication.

Co-chaired by Lord Pickles and Lord Blunkett, *The Parliamentary Review* describes itself as an “indispensable guide to best practice across a variety of different areas, showcasing various examples from steadfast organisations in the public and private sectors. Its principal aim is to raise standards within said industries by producing a template for future reform, and the spring release of the publication is acknowledged for its importance in the political calendar.

“Success for businesses of any size does not always come easily, and this year's edition of *The Parliamentary Review* is indispensable for anyone who seeks to

make a name for themselves in industry. It highlights significant developments and concerns for business and organisational leaders up and down the country.”

The co-chairman of *The Parliamentary Review*, Lord Pickles, has praised the upcoming *Review* as one of the most comprehensive yet. He commented that as Britain undergoes changes, it is “essential that politicians have a firm understanding of the challenges with which British organisations must contend” and that *The Review* once again provides a perfect platform for this.

In her foreword for *The Parliamentary Review*, the Secretary of State for International Trade, Elizabeth Truss, states that “commerce and free exchange are the engine room of prosperity and social mobility” and that she is “determined to tackle the forces who want to hold that back”.

A Message from Lord Pickles and Lord Blunkett:

“The ability to listen and learn from one another has always been vital in parliament, in business and in most aspects of daily life. But at this particular moment in time, as national and global events continue to reiterate, it is uncommonly crucial that we forge new channels of communication and reinforce existing ones. The following article from Barnabas Fund is an attempt to do just that.”

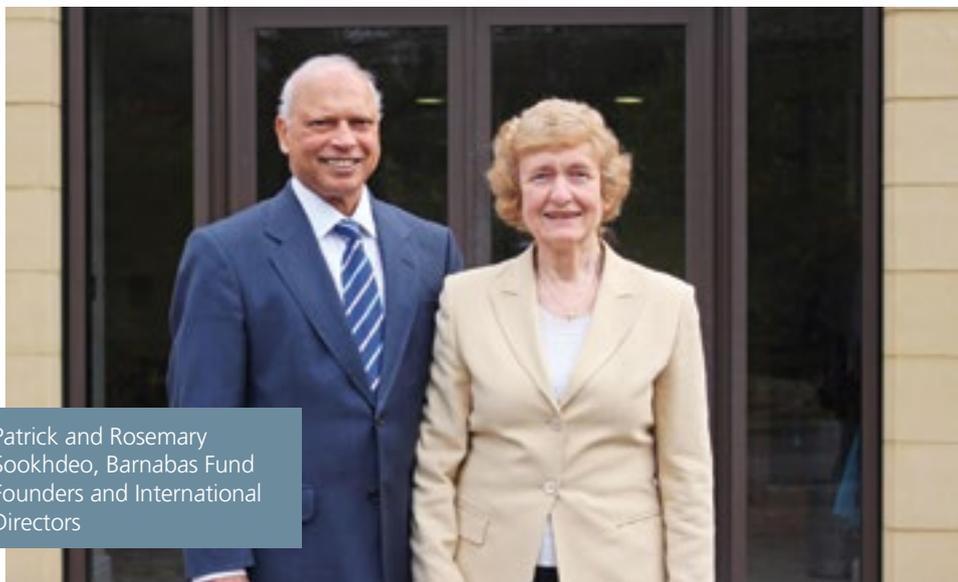


RT HON THE LORD DAVID BLUNKETT
CO-CHAIRMAN, THE PARLIAMENTARY REVIEW



RT HON THE LORD ERIC PICKLES
CO-CHAIRMAN, THE PARLIAMENTARY REVIEW

Barnabas Fund



Patrick and Rosemary Sookhdeo, Barnabas Fund Founders and International Directors



International CEO Hendrik Storm

Christian aid agency Barnabas Fund is based in Pewsey, from where it supports those Christians who face either discrimination or persecution because of their faith. International CEO Hendrik Storm tells *The Parliamentary Review* that while Barnabas Fund only directs its aid to Christians, the benefits can reach far further than it may initially seem. The agency's work, Hendrik explains, is not just limited to individuals either – often the organisation works in partnership with persecuted churches around the world to identify their needs and discuss the injustices they face. Hendrik discusses Barnabas Fund's work across the world alongside its history.

Three decades ago, the issue of contemporary Christian persecution in Islamic contexts was little known. This changed in 1989, when Dr Sookhdeo called a pivotal meeting between church leaders. It was during this meeting that previously unheard stories of Christian persecution came to light, displaying their plight and the subsequent need for action.

Building on existing contacts, Dr Sookhdeo and his wife, Rosemary, established Barnabas Fund, aimed at the delivery of practical aid to persecuted Christians and developing a global network of indigenous church leaders. Through careful research in the face of scepticism and hostility, they raised awareness and spearheaded a remarkable sea change in opinion, now shared by the British and US governments.

FACTS ABOUT BARNABAS FUND

- » International Director: Patrick Sookhdeo
- » International CEO: Hendrik Storm
- » Founded in 1993
- » International headquarters in Pewsey, Wiltshire
- » No. of staff: 70 in 10 countries
- » UK turnover, 2018: £14,396,222
- » Services: Humanitarian aid for persecuted Christians, empowerment of poor and oppressed Christians – focusing on women, schools, food and disaster relief – leadership development, research and information, advocacy
- » Aid sent to more than 100 countries
- » www.barnabasfund.org

THE PARLIAMENTARY REVIEW
 Highlighting best practice

“At the core of our values is the Biblical teaching that Christians should treat all people, of all faiths, with love and compassion, even those who seek to persecute them”

The scope of their work soon broadened to supporting Christians under pressure from all religions or ideologies. Assistance, for example, is now sent each year to hundreds of projects in dozens of countries. Our global network of trusted church leaders facilitates a rapid response in times of need.

A distinctive approach

At Barnabas Fund, we do not send our own employees to run projects. Instead, we provide funds for work to be initiated, organised and implemented by local Christians within each region. This approach has many benefits, including reduced overheads, greater cultural awareness, increased security and lower exposure to safeguarding risks.

At the core of our values is the Biblical teaching that Christians should treat all people, of all faiths, with love and compassion, even those who seek to persecute them.

We diligently monitor the use of our grants and are fully compliant with modern safeguarding standards and all regulatory authorities, including the Charity Commission.

Thriving even in difficult times

We operate with extremely low overheads of only 12 per cent globally, enabling operating costs, advocacy, information and prayer aspects of our work to be covered. When donations are given for a specific need, however, we forward 100 per cent to the relevant project. Additionally, Barnabas Fund's lean and robust economic model is helping us grow.

In the last financial year, Barnabas saw three per cent financial growth despite a challenging global economic climate and a downturn of around 4.2 per cent in UK charitable giving during 2018.

Informing and educating remain vital today

In the global North we are also active in advocacy work. The *Our Religious Freedom* campaign petition closed at the beginning of 2019 with around 90,000 UK signatures. Submitted to the Home Office, the campaign aimed to amend existing legislation to preserve full religious freedom for all. Freedoms enjoyed in the UK for centuries are often taken for granted and are starting to diminish. We believe that protecting religious liberty for all promotes cohesion and diversity across society.

We use our unique knowledge and experience, built over many years, to continue being the voice for those we represent through our publications and media.

Advancing understanding of religion in public life through global research and training

Barnabas Fund collaborates with the Oxford Centre for Religion and Public Life, a research and training institute based in Oxford. OCRPL offers groundbreaking masters and PhD

Education in northern Uganda



BEST PRACTICE REPRESENTATIVE 2020



Above: Food for disaster victims in Bangladesh

Below: Vocational skills training for women in Pakistan

programmes jointly with Stellenbosch, Pretoria, and other South African universities and also supports a range of worldwide training events. The centre is advancing the understanding of religion in public life, especially the relationship of religion to the proper governance of people. In a time when religiously motivated violence is on the rise, OCRPL graduates, who include some of the most senior leaders of the Church in the global South, will be well educated and equipped to facilitate engagement between different faith groups, religious groups and government bodies.

Overcoming global challenges

Geopolitical upheaval and uncertainty are making the work of many charities and NGOs more difficult and hazardous. Barnabas’ mode of working – through local organisations and focusing only on Christians – has the great advantage of allowing us to operate in a non-intrusive, neutral way that national governments find

less threatening. Even so, it is getting harder to transfer financial support to certain countries.

Terrorism, for example is an ongoing risk. Countries in the global North are required to carefully monitor any organisation operating abroad financially to prevent the deliberate or inadvertent funding of terrorist networks. Licences and guidelines provided by the Office of Foreign Assets Control in the USA are a well-proven platform with trusted screening tools to reduce such risks. We would welcome a similar initiative by the UK government.

In a world of global instability, Barnabas Fund’s structure and methodology of working through national church leadership provides us with a unique flexibility. This will enable the organisation to continue responding quickly to changing events and using donations effectively to meet needs as they develop.

“In a world of global instability, Barnabas Fund’s structure and methodology of working through national church leadership provides us with a unique flexibility”

Ways to give to help persecuted Christians without leaving your house

There are a variety of ways to give to Barnabas Fund from the safety of your home. These include:

On our website

It is easy and quick to give via our website's donation page. Just click the link or button: “**donate**” in any email you receive from Barnabas Fund. Or go directly to: barnabasfund.org/donate and complete the giving form. You can give to our general fund or select your preferred project from the drop down menu.

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 – to do this please phone our Coventry Office: 02476 231923, or alternatively, download a form from our website: barnabasfund.org/direct-debit

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 reference 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 SN95DB/2/000 would be for donations directed to our General Fund (000). Or, for donations

to a specific project, 123456/1530 would send the gift to our Covid-19 Emergency Fund for Poor and Persecuted Christians or SN95DB/2/1313, would send the gift to our Project Joseph to feed locust-affected Christians, for example. 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.

Telephone

If you prefer to donate using your credit card or debit card by telephone you can call direct to: 0800 587 4006 (UK) or +44 24 7623 1923 (Outside UK)

SMS

For a quick donation of £5.00 by SMS text AID to 70660 (Please 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 which 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.)

AmazonSmile (Donations go to our General Fund.)

AmazonSmile is operated by Amazon. Customers can have the same shopping selection but the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases to charitable organisations selected by the customer. 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.

In Touch

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The best is yet to come

We are delighted to share with you this inspirational poem, looking ahead to eternal glory, written by a Barnabas supporter from the UK who asked not to be named. It is thanks to his generous donations that several Pakistani Christian brick-kiln families have been freed from the yoke of bonded labour.

The best is yet to come

No eye has seen, no ear has heard
Nor heart conceived what is in store
For those who truly love our God - the best is yet to come.

Trials, afflictions, soon forgotten
In that eternal treasured moment
Welcomed in, finally home
As you hear Christ bid you - come.

The reverence, awe, the light - astounding
Countless Angels praise, surrounding
He who sits upon the Throne - the best has finally come.

Majesty indescribable
Holiness, beauty, joy immeasurable
Father's Love uncontainable
To those who by grace come.

Yet I'm willing to go back somehow
If knowing all that I know now
To share with all I didn't tell - that the best is yet to come.

Our life on Earth - a dress rehearsal
For where we spend - life eternal
If you believe on Him who died for all
The best is yet to come.

Abide in Him till journey's end
A Repentant life - sin forgiven
Ever desiring home be Heaven
Where the best is yet to come.

For now the Cross, suffering, death
Living for Christ, dying to self
Till the day you say with final breath
Lord take me home - I come

Supporter raises grand total of £1,000 for Barnabas Fund

Barnabas supporter Margaret Wood has celebrated her birthday by again raising money for the persecuted Church.

She raised a magnificent £700 (\$822; €760) towards our work helping Christians around the world who suffer because of their faith. Combined with the £300 (\$353; €326) she raised the year before, that makes an amazing grand total of £1,000 (\$1,175; €1,087).

Margaret, from Wilmslow, Cheshire, UK, said, "I am in my 70s now and in very poor health. I have had to give up all my activities and responsibilities at my church, which supports Barnabas, but raising money is one of the few things I can do."

She decided not to celebrate her birthday by going out for Sunday lunch with friends as she would usually do. Instead, she invited 28 friends to join her for afternoon desserts and hot/cold drinks at her house, requesting donations for Barnabas rather than gifts. This raised £300 (\$353; €326) to buy warm clothing for Christians suffering during the harsh winter in war-ravaged Syria.

At the same time, Margaret ran another birthday fundraiser via her Facebook account, asking friends to give donations rather than gifts. This raised £400 (\$470; €435) to provide food parcels for persecuted Christians who are struggling to feed their families.

Brilliant bakers serve up sweet treats for the persecuted Church

Our thanks go to the brilliant bakers from the Clough and Seaforde Presbyterian Churches in County Down, Northern Ireland.

Minister's wife Karen Adger and her team of talented cooks served up a feast of goodies and delights at a coffee morning on 31 January, raising £245 (\$288; €266) for the persecuted Church.

The two churches organise a fundraising coffee morning on the last Friday of every month and kindly chose Barnabas Fund as the cause to support with their first coffee morning of 2020.

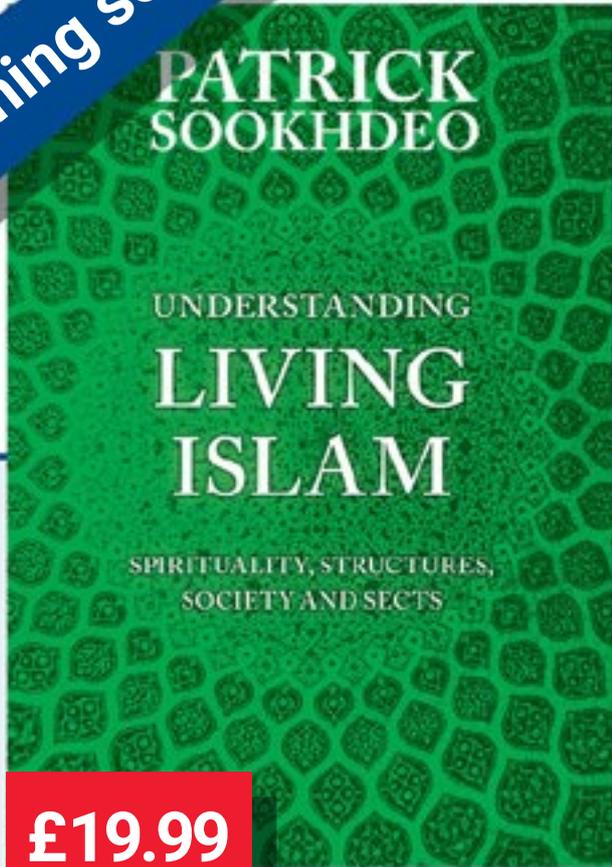


Minister's wife Karen Adger, left, and friends from the Clough and Seaforde Presbyterian Churches with the array of sweet treats they baked



We apologise for incorrectly naming talented artist Emily Frith, daughter of Barnabas Aid USA CEO, Jeremy, in *Barnabas Aid March/April 2020*.

Coming soon

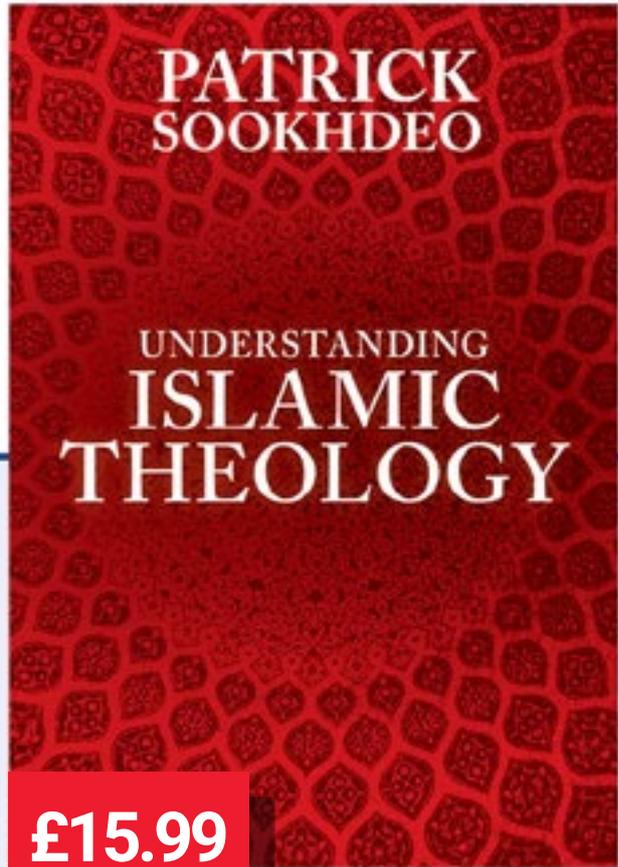


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