

Barnabas educates over 7,700 persecuted Christian youngsters

Project(s): 00-514, 00-794

Country/Region: South and East Asia, Sri Lanka, Africa, Middle East and North Africa

An incident in which a Sri Lankan Christian school boy was severely beaten by a Buddhist monk when he professed his faith in the classroom highlights the ongoing need for Christian youngsters living in contexts of persecution to be educated in Christian schools.



Barnabas supports Christian schooling for over 7,700 Christian youngsters

Amila Tharanga Thilakaratne (14) was left bleeding from the ear after the assault at his school in Kandy district. Only Buddhism is taught in the school and Amila is the only non-Buddhist in his class. He and his older brother Gashan, who attends the same school, are discriminated against because of their Christian faith.

On 11 June, a Buddhist monk came to Amila's class to teach the children about Buddhism. The monk forced him to sit at the front and recite the names of the Buddha's parents. When Amila replied that he was a Christian, the monk said that he should nevertheless learn Buddhist teachings before severely assaulting the school boy. He received no medical treatment and was warned by the monk and another teacher not to tell anyone about the assault.

Amila was too afraid to tell his parents about the incident so went straight to bed after school. But when he began to vomit later that evening, his father asked what had happened and Amila revealed all.

Mr Thilakaratne took his son to hospital the next morning and, despite being threatened with further violence by the monk if he reported the incident to the authorities, filed a complaint with the police. An investigation is yet to be initiated and Mr Thilakaratne fears that no action will be taken against the monk. He is also concerned that Amila may be expelled from the school for reporting the matter.

Barnabas educates Christian children in Christian schools

Many Christian children like Amila, who live in places where Christians are a despised minority, face hostility, injustice and even violence on account of their faith at state schools. The majority religion may be strongly promoted and the Christian youngsters are often put under pressure to convert. They are sometimes deliberately failed in exams, destroying their employment prospects and keeping them trapped in poverty. Christian parents are often too poor to send their children to privately-run Christian schools. Sometimes they are too poor to send them to any school at all.

Barnabas Fund is helping by supporting Christian schools and education projects in eight countries including parts of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Over 7,700 persecuted Christian children are therefore able to receive a good education in a nurturing Christian environment where they are encouraged in their faith.

On average it costs just £18 (US\$29) per month to support a child in school. Sponsors who give regularly will receive a card with a photo and personal information about one Christian child and a twice-yearly newsletter about the project.

Dr Patrick Sookhdeo, International Director of Barnabas Fund, said:

Sadly what happened to Amila is all too typical of the persecution Christian youngsters experience at school. These vulnerable little brothers and sisters need particular protection and support as they grow up to become their country's next generation of believers and church leaders. It is a great privilege for Barnabas Fund to be able to give them the best possible start in their young Christian lives.

Give Today

If you would like to help a Christian child learn in a supportive Christian environment, please send your donation to the **Christian Schooling for Christian Children Fund** project (00-794). [Donate Online](#) using our secure server.

If you would like to sponsor a Christian child, please set up a regular payment to our **School-Place Sponsorship Fund** project (00-514). [Regular Donation](#)

If you prefer to telephone, dial: **0800 587 4006** from within the UK or **+44 1672 565031** from outside the UK. For a one-off donation please quote project reference **Christian Schooling for Christian Children Fund** project (00-794); to sponsor a child, quote project reference **School-Place Sponsorship Fund** project (00-514).

If you prefer to send a cheque by post: [Click this link](#) for the address of our regional office. Please quote project reference **Christian Schooling for Christian Children Fund** project (00-794).

For a quick donation of £3.00 by SMS ([see terms and conditions here](#)) text **Barnabas/794** to **70007** (Please note: This facility is presently only available to UK supporters).