

HARD PRESSED ON EVERY SIDE

**Challenges Faced by
Barnabas Fund and
Patrick Sookhdeo**

**The Barnabas Trustees
15 January 2016
(and updated subsequently)**

*Hard Pressed on Every Side:
Challenges Faced by Barnabas Fund and Patrick Sookhdeo*

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Introduction

Why this booklet had to be written

Many Barnabas Fund supporters have asked for a detailed statement from the trustees regarding the tumultuous recent events that have impacted the charity. For legal reasons we cannot respond fully on all issues, but we will seek at least to show recent events in the overall context of a history of sustained attacks on Barnabas Fund and on its founder, Dr Patrick Sookhdeo.

For many years Dr Sookhdeo and the Fund tried to respond to each attack individually and in a low-key discreet way, reluctant to bring the Church into disrepute, hoping and praying that each attack would be the last. The trustees' public statements were kept to a minimum and Dr Sookhdeo himself remained silent. Yet, it seemed that matters were continually being stirred up against us, confounding many experienced people who had expected issues to die down.

Dealing with the attacks diverted time, energy and resources from the ministry. Some of the attacks were deliberately planned by several parties, as we will document below. In speaking of "attacks" we are not referring to normal levels of criticism or differences of opinion, which of course are valid and acceptable. We are referring to destructive opposition, seemingly aimed at breaking individuals and crippling organisations.

We were very grateful to God that, despite everything, the work continued to grow.

But events last year (2015) have forced us to go further in defending the charity of which we are trustees.

Rev. Mark Woods, contributing editor of a UK-based online publication called *Christian Today*, wrote a series of misleading and often inaccurate articles between August and December 2015. He has also been very active on social media forums and is continuing what seems to us to be a campaign of sorts. The trustees are mystified as to his true motives, but it seems that his aims were to (1) discredit Patrick Sookhdeo and force him out of Barnabas Fund (2) persuade Barnabas Fund supporters to divert their financial giving to other charities, with a view to damaging the work of the Fund. We tried to respond to some of Rev. Woods' early articles but *Christian Today* was very unhelpful.

Patrick Sookhdeo resigned as a trustee and as International Director of Barnabas Fund in November 2015. Rev. Woods naively claimed the credit for this, at least according to his comments on social media. Yes, his hostile, biased and error-prone articles played a part, but there were many other factors that led to Dr Sookhdeo's decision to leave Barnabas Fund. In the weeks prior to his resignation Dr Sookhdeo had been faced with a life-threatening incident when his car was apparently deliberately sabotaged. This assertion is based on the opinion of a professional who inspected the vehicle shortly afterwards. Unusual circumstances saved Dr Sookhdeo and his passengers from a serious accident. A week later Dr Sookhdeo was arrested in the extremely traumatic way described below (see page 31). Given that he did not know where or when the next type of attack would come, he felt it best to protect and safeguard his wife, colleagues and the Fund itself not only from a future smear campaign but also potentially from another violent attack of some kind.

Yet, even though Mark Woods believed that he had single-handedly caused Patrick Sookhdeo to resign, **he did not stop his attacks.**

It may be that Rev. Woods has himself been misled by others. From what he writes, both in his articles and in emails direct to Barnabas Fund, he seems to have been used as a “cat’s paw” by a person or persons involved with the group of former Barnabas trustees which in 2012-13 had attempted to oust Dr Sookhdeo from Barnabas Fund. The trustees have been made aware that it is likely that one or more of this disaffected group of former trustees may have given partial and misleading information to Rev. Woods. Whilst he claims to have an understanding of what really happened as between the trustees and has been forthright in his criticism, he has, at best, only a very partial and partisan account of events. The trustees have good reason to question his motives.

But whatever the source of the inaccurate reporting, we recognise that supporters of Barnabas Fund would like more information. We hope that this booklet serves to redress the balance after we have kept quiet for so long, although this was with the best interests of the charity at heart.

As trustees, we have a duty to defend the charity. Its wellbeing is our legal responsibility under British law as well as our moral responsibility as Christians entrusted to steward what we believe to be a work of God.

Just as Patrick Sookhdeo resigned to try and protect Barnabas Fund, so we are publishing this booklet to try and protect Barnabas Fund.

Barnabas Fund now

Patrick and Rosemary Sookhdeo founded the Christian aid agency Barnabas Fund in the UK in the early 1990s. Dr Sookhdeo led it until 2015, during which time a worldwide family of Barnabas charities was developed, all seeking to assist the persecuted Church.

Barnabas Fund has now lost the leadership of its farsighted, visionary and uniquely gifted International Director, who was also its most effective fundraiser, at short notice and without time to complete the succession planning that was already in process. We had not wanted him to leave, and therefore asked him to continue to assist with his expertise during the period of transition, which he graciously agreed to do. We are thankful for this and also for the stalwart efforts of his colleagues to fill the gap at short notice, notably Hendrik Storm, our new international CEO, ably assisted by Allan Lee, Jr, as COO.

Barnabas Fund and Patrick Sookhdeo

As the founder of Barnabas Fund, Dr Sookhdeo’s reputation is inextricably linked to the charity. For example, Rev. Woods has in reality used Barnabas Fund’s reputation as a stepping-stone to Patrick Sookhdeo and vice versa. Sadly some of the attacks on Patrick personally have seemed to the trustees to be attempts to discredit the work of the Fund. The trustees therefore need to take these very seriously.

Barnabas Fund exists to support, serve and defend the persecuted Church. We trust it is recognised that Christians face serious persecution not only in the developing world, but also in the developed world, albeit the type of problems faced by those trustees and

supporters who live in the relative comfort of the West are often very different from problems elsewhere. Indeed our supporters in the West often feel they are a forgotten minority. Discrimination can take many forms and it is often denied by the persecutors or excused in various ways.

There is a well known saying: “Don’t shoot the messenger.” For decades Dr Sookhdeo has spoken out clearly and forthrightly to warn Church and society about issues which were often not yet on the public radar. Time has, sadly, often proved him right, but he has faced strong hostility and attempts to marginalise and silence him from those who do not like his message.

Furthermore, and we are exceedingly sorry to say this, Dr Sookhdeo, along with many others, has experienced racism from the Anglican establishment, which eventually caused him to resign from the Church of England. In the 1970s, when the ministry from which Barnabas Fund developed was first started, people in the UK were more overtly racist than now. Thankfully things have improved since then, although there are many reports of continuing discrimination, even within the Church, but normally now behind closed doors. We are aware of some non-white candidates for very senior Anglican posts who have not got the appointments they perhaps deserved. Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali was dubbed a “Paki papist” by an Anglican clergyman when he was being considered as a potential successor to Dr George Carey as Archbishop of Canterbury.¹ We are pleased, however, that, at the Church of England’s Synod in November 2015, it was agreed to fast-track more ethnic minority clergy into senior roles in 2016, many Anglican bishops and clergy having accused their own Church of institutionalised racism.²

Truth, justice and righteousness

Barnabas Fund and Patrick Sookhdeo stand for truth, justice and righteousness, and we have sought to tell the truth no matter what the cost, in order to help those who are suffering discrimination, oppression, harassment, injustice, false accusation, violence or other forms of persecution. Our work helps Christians, especially women, who are suffering in any context of persecution, whether that context is Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist, nationalist, communist or humanist. But the majority of Christian persecution is occurring at the hands of Muslim extremists, which is why Barnabas Fund and Patrick Sookhdeo are particularly vocal about Islam.

Our position on Islam is based on four principles:

1. There must be compassion and love for all Muslims as fellow human beings.
2. There must be a special love for our Christian brothers and sisters, including those who are being persecuted, over and above the love we have for all people including Muslims.
3. There must be scholarly accuracy. Those who have read Patrick Sookhdeo’s books on Islam will see that he has always sought to do this, just as he has always sought to distinguish between Muslims as people to be loved, Islam which must allow itself to be critiqued like other religions, and political Islam which must be rejected. He has also sought carefully to distinguish the peaceable strands of Islam from the violent ones, and has often worked with moderate Muslims.³ We trust that Barnabas Fund’s publications have also followed these principles.
4. We should be faithful to Christ no matter what the cost (Matthew 16:24).

¹Jonathan Wynne-Jones, “Church of England ‘institutionally racist’”, *The Telegraph*, 17 June 2007, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1554756/Church-of-England-institutionally-racist.html> (viewed 15 January 2016).

²Harriet Sherwood, “C of E to fast-track minority ethnic clergy into senior roles”, 25 December 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/dec/25/church-of-england-fast-track-minority-ethnic-clergy-senior-roles> (viewed 3 January 2016).

³For example, in September 2015 Barnabas Fund and Muslim Aid issued a joint statement to press the British government to recognise the needs of both Christians and Muslims in its plans to bring 20,000 Syrian refugees to the UK, and also pledging to help newly arrived Syrians to settle and integrate.

The latter three points have brought Barnabas Fund and Dr Sookhdeo into conflict with some governments, church leaders, mission leaders and others. Loving the brethren as priority has been unacceptable to many, despite the numerous Biblical commands (e.g. John 13:34-35; Galatians 6:10; 1 John 3:14) and we have been accused of bigotry.

Critiquing Islam has alienated many friends and others because they believe that Barnabas Fund and Dr Sookhdeo should have stayed silent for the sake of Christian-Muslim relations. Of course, Barnabas Fund and Dr Sookhdeo are fully in favour of good Christian-Muslim relations, but not if they can only be obtained by ignoring the plight of Christian and other non-Muslim minorities under Islam.

Even rejecting political Islam has brought conflict, for many church and mission leaders did not accept until recently that Islam had a violent face derived from Islamic ideology. But what was once a marginal viewpoint expressed by Dr Sookhdeo is now mainstream public discourse.

The final point has been equally contentious. Patrick Sookhdeo firmly believes in the uniqueness, universality and ultimacy of Christ, and that apart from Christ there is no salvation and all are lost who do not know Him. In his life, in his motivation, in his mission, in his theology the abiding principle that has guided him and the work of Barnabas Fund, which he founded, is that we should keep the faith (2 Timothy 4:7).

Who is Patrick Sookhdeo and why did he start Barnabas Fund?

Early life and conversion

Patrick Sookhdeo was born into a Muslim family in Guyana, South America (then called British Guiana) in 1947. His great-grandparents had come to Guyana as indentured labourers, from what are now Pakistan and North India. At the age of twelve Patrick moved with his parents and siblings to the UK, settling in north London, where they lived in great poverty while his parents worked hard at multiple jobs simultaneously.

In his late teens, Patrick became a Christian after months of attending a little local mission church and reading the Bible. He suffered as many converts from Islam do. He gave up his studies in architecture and went to London Bible College (1967-69), where he met and married Rosemary Jamieson, a white New Zealander.

Christian ministry

Patrick and Rosemary's desire was to serve the Lord on the mission field, but all their applications to mission societies were fruitless. Eventually Rev. Gilbert Kirby, the Principal of London Bible College, explained to them that no mission society was going to accept them, because of their racially mixed marriage, which had even been opposed by some of their fellow-students at Bible College. Patrick managed to get a job at the Scripture Union bookshop, but in 1970 he was invited to work for the Evangelical Alliance on the recommendation of Mr Ernest Oliver, one of the lecturers at London Bible College. Patrick took up a position as evangelist amongst ethnic minorities in the UK and was also responsible for race relations.

After five years, their calling to full-time evangelism had not diminished, and Patrick and Rosemary established their own organisation, In Contact Ministries, to do church-planting in multicultural inner city areas of the UK. Six churches were quickly planted in the early years, after which Patrick and Rosemary focused their work primarily on the congregation at St Andrew's, Plaistow, in east London, which Patrick pastored until 1998. In Contact Ministries expanded from evangelism to include many other areas of ministry, particularly practical care, a bookshop and drop-in centre, specialist library, and international links especially with church leaders from Muslim-majority countries. In 1996 the organisation's name was changed to Servants Fellowship International (SFI).

In his work in the inner city, Patrick Sookhdeo chose to identify with the local people and refused a salary, believing that he should live at a low economic level like those around him and trust God to meet his needs. He has continued to "live by faith" ever since, except for a period of some months when the SFI board persuaded him to take a salary. But this made him feel so uncomfortable that he quickly reverted to his position of serving full-time unpaid.

How Barnabas Fund began and grew

In 1989 Dr Sookhdeo was the international coordinator for Islam of the World Evangelical Alliance and the Lausanne movement. In these capacities, he organised a conference in Cyprus, bringing together church leaders from Muslim-majority countries. At this period, Islam was

given little attention either by the Western media or by the Western Church, and there was almost no awareness of the persecution of Christians in Islamic contexts.

In response to requests from the conference delegates, Patrick started the International Institute for the Study of Islam and Christianity (IISIC) which published a bimonthly bulletin of news and prayer requests from the Church in the Muslim world. He also approached a number of British missionary societies and Christian aid agencies, urging them to give financial help to Christians suffering under Islam. The response was so meagre that by 1993 he felt he had no option but to appeal for donations direct to Christian individuals, which he did by means of the *IISIC Bulletin*. It was at this time that the name “Barnabas Fund” was first used.⁴ The funds raised were sent to projects run by local Christians in their own (Muslim-majority) countries, which helped alleviate the plight of Christians suffering discrimination, harassment or persecution because of their faith.

From these small beginnings, with the blessing of God, Barnabas Fund has grown in 22 years to be an international aid agency, with offices for fund-raising and/or project monitoring in eight countries spread across five continents. Its total annual income is now around £18 million. In a typical year it supports some 450 projects in over 60 countries to help Christians living under pressure from any kind of religion or ideology.

In 1998 the work of Barnabas Fund in the UK relocated from Plaistow, London to Pewsey, Wiltshire. There were two reasons for this. Firstly, it had outgrown the office space available at St Andrew’s Church and had to move somewhere. Secondly, there had been a break-in to the offices a year or so earlier, which appeared to target the information on the computer server rather than any valuables. The police had been impressed by the professionalism of the intruders, who managed to get past the reasonably good security which was in place. Aware of the research material on extremism that was on the premises as part of IISIC’s work and of Dr Sookhdeo’s own advisory role in the secular sphere (see below), the police advised moving to a completely different area, as east London had by now become a hotbed of Islamic radicalism. Hence the move of Barnabas Fund to the rural white-majority village of Pewsey in Wiltshire. This was too far geographically for Patrick and Rosemary to continue in their pastoral roles at St Andrew’s Church so they handed over the leadership.

Other roles and service

Patrick Sookhdeo’s expertise on Islam was also useful to the police (including Special Branch, which deals with intelligence relating to terrorism and national security) and the military. Similarly the armed forces made use of his skills, not only in the UK but also in the US and for NATO. He lectured and taught at a number of military, security and law enforcement establishments internationally. He served as adjunct professor at the George C. Marshall European Centre for Security Studies, visiting professor at the Defence Academy of the UK and at Cranfield University, UK, and guest lecturer at the NATO School, Oberammergau. He also served as a cultural advisor for the British military in Iraq and for NATO in Afghanistan.

Patrick Sookhdeo earned his doctorate from the School of Oriental and African Studies at London University (Department of the Near and Middle East). He also has honorary doctorates from Nashotah House Episcopal Seminary, Wisconsin, USA, for his work on human rights and religious liberty, and from Western Seminary, Portland, Oregon, USA, for his work in the area of pluralism.

He is Dean Theologian of the Church of Nigeria, Canon Theologian of Kaduna Diocese (Church of Nigeria) and Non-Residentiary Canon of Peshawar (Church of Pakistan).

⁴Barnabas means “Son of Encouragement” (Acts 4:36).

Although he left the Church of England because of the racism he found there, he continued to be a part of the Nigerian and Pakistani churches.

He was awarded the 2001 Coventry Cathedral International Prize for Peace and Reconciliation and the Spring 1990 Templeton UK Project Award to an individual, for work in the community. In 2010 he was awarded the St Ignatius Theophorus Decoration as Commander (the highest honour of the Syrian Orthodox Church).

As well as speaking, preaching, teaching and lecturing widely to Christian, military and other audiences, Patrick is the author, co-author, editor or co-editor of 28 books. He has long been known for his forthright and uncompromising stance on Islamic issues. In recent years, many have acknowledged that his disturbingly negative predictions – often pooh-poohed and dismissed when he made them – have unfortunately come to pass.⁵ His accurate predictions have led some to describe him as “prophetic”, but he argues strongly that his research and writings are based on extensive research and analysis.

Some principles and priorities

Patrick Sookhdeo has consistently supported the cause of national church and mission leaders, urging that they should be empowered to make their own decisions without the interference of some paternalistic, ill-informed or even agenda-driven Western parties. Barnabas Fund has followed the same principle, making its grants largely to support ministries run by national church leaders, and generally bypassing Western expatriate missionary endeavours.

Of course Dr Sookhdeo and Barnabas Fund recognise that there is great variation amongst Western agencies, and we are glad to work with any, whether local or international, who share our values and our vision for justice and capacity-building. But some organisations who do not have a similar vision have reacted strongly against Barnabas Fund and Dr Sookhdeo.

⁵For example, he predicted the rise of Islamic terrorism and was researching Osama bin Laden years before 9/11. He also predicted the Arab Spring and the rise of Islamic State before they were on the international radar.

Hostility to Patrick Sookhdeo's position on Islam

Anglican interfaith networks

The Network for Inter Faith Concerns across the Anglican Communion (NIFCON) was founded in 1993. It has been highly critical of Dr Patrick Sookhdeo and the work of Barnabas Fund, believing that they are detrimental to Christian-Muslim relations. Dr Sookhdeo has had no links with NIFCON.

Canon Dr Christopher Lamb of Coventry Diocese, Dr Philip Lewis of Bradford Diocese, and Rev. Stephen Griffith are amongst others who have launched strident criticism of this kind.

Lambeth Palace

Sheikh Dr Muhammad Al-Hussaini has described⁶ how various senior members of the Anglican establishment would come to his office and talk disparagingly and patronisingly of Patrick Sookhdeo. He mentioned in particular Canon Guy Wilkinson, the former Secretary to the Archbishop of Canterbury for Inter-Religious Affairs, and Simon Keyes, the Director of St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace, based in the City of London. Dr Al-Hussaini, a Muslim, perceived their attitude to be due to Dr Sookhdeo's apparently "un-Anglican" manner of straight-talking about Muslim oppression of vulnerable minorities". From them he learned that the word at Lambeth Palace was that "Patrick Sookhdeo is the most dangerous man in Christendom."

Mr Keyes told Dr Al-Hussaini that he intended, with the help of Lambeth Palace, to marginalise and eventually eliminate Dr Sookhdeo from a Christian-Muslim initiative that Dr Sookhdeo himself had started, in partnership with the Prince of Wales, for the purpose of advocating on behalf of persecuted Christians in Muslim-majority nations. This they succeeded in doing.

Jerry Kramer and other Western missionaries

For some years, a story has been circulated amongst the Western missionary community that Patrick Sookhdeo is a paid CIA agent. This is not only completely false but also potentially endangers Dr Sookhdeo whenever he travels in Islamic contexts. At the last conference of the Global Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans, held in Nairobi in September 2013, a senior Anglican bishop informed Patrick that he had been told this by an American Anglican missionary in Tanzania, Jerry Kramer.

Since the publication of this document, Father Kramer has issued a public apology to Dr Sookhdeo for his false accusation, saying that his statement had been made in error.

Apology from Father Jerry Kramer:

15.02.16 A.D.

To Whom it May Concern:

To the very best of my knowledge, Dr. Patrick Sookhdeo has not worked with, been paid by the CIA or any other similar entity. The statement made was in error and it is humbly and apologetically withdrawn. I sincerely apologise to Dr. Sookhdeo for this error. I am,

Very Truly Yours,

Jerome A Kramer III

⁶Muhammad Al-Hussaini, "The Gospel, Race and Anglican Power", 23 December 2015 <http://www.virtueonline.org/gospel-race-and-anglican-power> (viewed 5 January 2016).

The 2007 “Yale Letter”

On 13 October 2007 a Jordanian think-tank, the Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought, published an open letter entitled “A Common Word between Us and You”, from 138 Muslim scholars to all Christian church leaders, requesting a dialogue on what they described as the “common ground” of loving God and loving the neighbour. One of the most high profile Christian responses to “A Common Word” was the 18 November 2007 “Yale Letter”⁷ drafted by evangelical Christians at the Yale Center for Faith and Culture, and signed by over 300 Christian leaders, many of them evangelicals.

Some of the signatories appeared to have signed the letter without having read it in detail or without being fully conversant with the subject. Patrick Sookhdeo drew attention to several implications of signing the letter, even with the best of motives. For example, it was effectively an affirmation that Muslims and Christians share the same understanding of “love of God” and “love of neighbour” (a view not traditionally taken by evangelical Christians). For pointing this out, he was strongly criticised and reviled by many evangelicals.

Open Doors, Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) and Release (the UK arm of Voice of the Martyrs)

These three organisations, together with Barnabas Fund, are the most significant UK-based Christian organisations concerned with the persecuted Church. All three pre-date Barnabas Fund and were created in response to persecution under communism. At the time that Barnabas Fund was created, none of the other three functioned as an aid agency. So none of them shared its priority of providing practical help by means of financial grants to a wide range of projects run by national Christians and focusing on Muslim-majority contexts.

Another key Barnabas distinctive, in comparison with the other three, is our history of speaking out clearly about the fact that there are aspects of Islamic theology which directly result in discrimination and even violence against Christians.

Open Doors regard Patrick Sookhdeo as an extremist because of his views on Islam. They have briefed against Barnabas Fund, encouraging the Evangelical Alliance to exclude Barnabas Fund from persecuted Church initiatives. At a Lausanne meeting in the Netherlands in March 2005, Johan Companjen of Open Doors approached one of the Barnabas Fund trustees, Rev. Albrecht Hauser, and tried to turn him against Patrick Sookhdeo and to persuade him that Patrick should be removed as leader of the continuation track on the persecuted Church. This was probably a response to Dr Sookhdeo’s action at the previous Lausanne meeting to insist that representatives of the persecuted churches should take the dominant role in shaping Lausanne’s policies on the persecuted Church, rather than Western agencies creating the policies.

From time to time the three other organisations come together for joint initiatives on the persecuted Church, but never invite Barnabas Fund to participate. One of the negative results of this for Barnabas Fund is that we are often criticised for standing aloof from the other three organisations and not cooperating with them, when the boot is on the other foot: it is they who exclude us from what they are working on together.

⁷“Loving God and Neighbor Together: A Christian Response to ‘A Common Word Between Us and You’” <http://www.yale.edu/faith/acw/acw.htm> (viewed 27 January 2009).

CRIB, Fulcrum and Ben White

In July 2008 a meeting was held on the premises of All Nations Christian College, Ware, Hertfordshire, for a sub-group of delegates attending a CRIB (Christian Responses to Islam in Britain) conference there. At this meeting they planned how to exclude and marginalise Patrick Sookhdeo. Those present included Colin Chapman, Bryan Knell of Global Connections, and Steve Bell of Interserve. Also present was an American missionary called Keith Small, who opposed the plan and later exposed it.

The method used was to ask a young journalist, Ben White, noted for his anti-Israel stance, to write a negative review of Patrick Sookhdeo's book *Global Jihad*. Mr White then sent his review to the Islamist website Indigo Jo, before it was posted on the website of Fulcrum, an evangelical Anglican grouping, whose theological secretary was Graham Kings (now a bishop and Mission Theologian of the Anglican Communion). The issue here is not the fact that the review was so hostile but the fact that it was placed on an Islamist website, thus endangering Dr Sookhdeo's life.

When confronted by several eminent mission leaders about what they had done, Chapman, Knell and Bell initially denied that they had plotted against Patrick Sookhdeo and claimed that they did not even know Ben White. Later, when confronted again, they admitted it all.

It must be noted, however, that Canon Tim Dakin, who was at that time General Secretary of the Church Mission Society (CMS), telephoned Dr Sookhdeo to say that he was not involved in any action against him and to the best of his belief that CMS was not either. This greatly encouraged Dr Sookhdeo.

Inviting the disapproval of Islamists for the work of a convert from Islam was a move that carried potential physical danger to Dr Sookhdeo. Indigo Jo blogged that Dr Sookhdeo was the "Sookhdevil" and this attack was then reproduced on other Islamist websites. Soon after this Patrick Sookhdeo received a death threat.⁸ Yet neither Global Connections (the missionary arm of the Evangelical Alliance), nor All Nations Christian College, took action to investigate the potentially life-threatening situation.

At this point in time, many Western missionaries and Christian leaders still did not accept that Islam had a violent side to it, and dismissed the whole concept of violent jihad. They saw Islam as a religion of peace.

Bob Lambert and Powerbase

Over the years Patrick Sookhdeo has faced considerable difficulties and even life-threatening situations because of his views on political Islam.

In the early 1990s he was approached by Special Branch officers including Bob Lambert (later to become notorious⁹) and for the rest of the decade functioned as an unofficial advisor on Islamic terrorism. Barnabas Fund's research on the persecution of Christians under Islam had produced one of the best databases on Islamist terrorist organisations and political Islam. In around 1999 this aspect of Special Branch's work was closed down, as the authorities concluded that there was no such thing as Islamic terrorism. Dr Sookhdeo had been considered by Special Branch to be an "asset" and was given a plaque in recognition of his work.

⁸Melanie Phillips has written of this incident in a blog dated 9 March 2009 about the emergence of an axis between a section of evangelical Christians, the hard left, Islamists, and the far right. <http://www.melaniephillips.com/beware-the-new-axis-of-evangelicals-and-islamists> (viewed 31 December 2015).

In late 2001, after 9/11 had occurred, Dr Sookhdeo was approached again by Bob Lambert, who requested his academic skills as an analyst to help track down Islamist terrorists. His input played a part when Bob Lambert and others created the Muslim Contact Unit (MCU), which was set up within Special Branch in January 2002.

But as time went on Bob Lambert led the MCU in a new direction, which was contrary to prevailing counter-terrorism policing opinion and also in opposition to what Patrick Sookhdeo advised. Under this new policy, the MCU began to engage with and support Muslim extremists, with a view to using them to defeat Muslim terrorists and bring young Muslim men into the mosques to be under sharia law.

Although the work was totally confidential and Patrick Sookhdeo had been assured of anonymity, Bob Lambert chose to break the agreement. After his retirement from the Metropolitan Police in 2007 he studied for a PhD at the University of Exeter's Institute for Arab and Islamic Studies, with financial help from the Cordoba Foundation. In the course of this work he accused Dr Sookhdeo of being a leading Islamophobe, completely misunderstanding his position on Islam and Muslims (see pages 7-8).

Lambert had links with the University of Strathclyde and Patrick Sookhdeo found himself under pressure from Professor David Miller and Melissa Jones, who worked there. So his name very soon appeared, condemned as an Islamophobe, on Powerbase, Wikispooks, SpinWatch and a number of similar organisations with which they were linked.

A former Assistant Chief Constable advised Patrick Sookhdeo to break all links with Special Branch and the Metropolitan Police because they could not be trusted and his life could potentially be at risk. Dr Sookhdeo, however, believed that he should serve the country which had given him a home, and was concerned about the consequences of the rise of militant Islam and its effect on national security. He therefore continued to assist the military, where he was deployed as an advisor. Later he worked with the Association of Chief Police Officers, when he was for many years the moderator of the UK's main counter-terrorism conference, held each autumn at Cranfield University and the Defence Academy of the UK.

⁹Bob Lambert was exposed in October 2011 as a spy and *agent provocateur* who had infiltrated animal rights activist groups from 1984-88, going as far as fathering a child with one of the genuine activists and burning down Debenhams department store in Harrow in 1987. In 1998 or earlier, he arranged for an undercover agent to infiltrate the family circle of Stephen Lawrence, the black teenager murdered in a racially motivated attack by white youths in London in 1993. This infiltration occurred in the context of the Macpherson Inquiry, which had exposed incompetence, corruption and institutional racism as the root causes of the Metropolitan Police's failure to investigate the murder properly. The infiltration was an attempt to spy on, smear and discredit the Stephen Lawrence family who were campaigning to expose the police failures.

Hostility for undisclosed reasons

Len Ashdown and the Evangelical Alliance UK

During the period September 1994 to August 1995, In Contact Ministries (later called Servants Fellowship International) had as its Director of Administration the late Len Ashdown, an elder in a Brethren assembly in Frinton-on-Sea, Essex. Towards the end of this period, it became clear that he had been stealing money from the organisation in several different ways.

After consulting with the trustees, Patrick Sookhdeo sought advice from the auditors and also from key supporting organisations. They all strongly recommended calling in the police. The police took Mr Ashdown in for questioning and raided his home. They discovered that he was acting for several Christian organisations as both secretary and treasurer, in which dual capacity he was committing fraud. Unusually the police allowed Dr Sookhdeo to hear the tape of the interview and further told him that although they did not have enough evidence to prosecute they suggested a civil action. They also recommended that Patrick Sookhdeo should contact the other organisations affected and inform them of the situation.

Patrick Sookhdeo brought the matter to the Evangelical Alliance, who convened a group under the chairmanship of Rev. Stanley Davies of the Evangelical Missionary Alliance (now Global Connections, the missionary arm of the EA). The result was that they refused to act and turned instead on Patrick himself. They wanted to cover up what had happened. Patrick was advised to drop the matter and pay off Len Ashdown. He felt in his conscience that this was the wrong thing to do, as stealing money from Christian organisations is stealing from God. So he went to the chair of one of the other organisations that had been defrauded, the Federation of London Christian Unions. However, the chairman, Lewis Rolph, refused to discuss the matter and became defensive of Len Ashdown and angry with Patrick Sookhdeo for raising the issue. Mr Rolph was involved in Premier Radio as well as having a leading position at All Souls Church, Langham Place.

After leaving In Contact Ministries, Len Ashdown contacted some of its largest funders alleging that Patrick Sookhdeo was committing fraud, which of course was completely untrue.

The Evangelical Alliance UK

The Evangelical Alliance (EA) appear to regard Open Doors, CSW and Release as their organisations for religious liberty. On a number of occasions Barnabas Fund has approached the EA to ask why the Fund was not mentioned or included in articles but no answer was given.

Barnabas Fund UK resigned from membership of the Evangelical Alliance in January 2013. This was partly because of the years of marginalisation and partly because of their gradually changing theological position. For example, the EA's earlier General Secretary Joel Edwards had urged churches to open their pulpits on Sundays for Muslim preachers, which Barnabas Fund and Patrick Sookhdeo disagreed with as a policy.

In early November 2015 Dr David Landrum, Director of Advocacy for the Evangelical Alliance UK, wrote to an arm of the World Evangelical Alliance. He referred to some of Mark

Woods' articles in *Christian Today*, and urged the organisation to break its partnership with Barnabas Fund despite a contractual agreement to acknowledge publicly our already-given financial support. The EA UK approached the WEA arm at least twice on this. The WEA arm responded by repeatedly asking the EA UK to contact Barnabas Fund direct to discuss their concerns. Two months on, the EA UK has still not been in touch with Barnabas Fund.

All this happened despite the fact that Barnabas Fund has given grants to national evangelical alliances in many countries and to the World Evangelical Alliance itself.

The trustees are very sad to see how the EA UK's current leadership is moving away from conservative evangelical values.

2012-13 dispute with Barnabas Fund UK former trustees

It is with heavy hearts that the current UK and international Barnabas trustees find themselves obliged to break their silence with regard to this dispute. Unfortunately, it appears that one or more of the former trustees, or someone close to them, has provided selective, misleading and confidential information to Rev. Mark Woods, directly resulting in some of his 2015 articles in *Christian Today* (see page 34). The trustees have been asked by our supporters to give our response. Given that these issues have been ventilated very publicly by means of a one-sided attack by Rev. Woods, we now consider it is appropriate to let our supporters have further details.

The trustees are, however, pleased to say that they have been able to resolve issues with three of the former trustees and it is to be hoped that the remainder will in time also settle their differences with us.

Background

The background to the dispute is complicated. As the charity grew, the board of trustees was expanded. New trustees were appointed all in a non-executive capacity, that is, to ensure that the charity was being administered correctly – not to become involved in its day to day operation.

At the time of the dispute there was a majority of non-executive trustees and a minority of executive trustees (including Dr Sookhdeo). The non-executive trustees (“the majority trustees” or “the dissenting trustees”) outnumbered the executive trustees (“the minority trustees”) by nine to four so they could have outvoted the executive trustees at any point. The non-executive trustees also had full access to any and all information that they required to oversee the charity properly.

The dispute, therefore, should never have arisen. If the majority trustees had had legitimate concerns they could have simply held a board meeting of trustees and outvoted the minority trustees in relation to any issues that arose.

The ostensible concerns of the majority trustees were stated to be governance, strategy and policies, finance, personnel and their relationship with the then International Director (i.e. Patrick Sookhdeo). Yet they failed to identify any material fault in any of the areas they questioned despite their very vocal and energetic efforts, which included an extra audit. For Barnabas Fund UK had been running smoothly with very low overheads,¹⁰ a contented workforce and satisfied auditors. Even those who disagreed with our principles and priorities conceded that we were efficiently and effectively delivering aid to the persecuted Church.

In contrast, the minority trustees believed the majority trustees demonstrated an inexcusably casual attitude to compliance and to modern norms of management. Furthermore, staff members complained of bullying and racism by some of the majority trustees, resulting in three formal grievances against them and two very senior staff being off work for weeks with stress.

Mainly Anglicans, the majority trustees did not appear to understand the traditional Free Church and Brethren principle of full-time Christian workers “living by faith” i.e. trusting

¹⁰The latest audited annual accounts (2014-15) show that 5% of income was used for overheads, and another 7.5% covered education, prayer and advocacy ministries, making a total of 12.5%. That left 87.5% for the project grants to persecuted Christians.

God to provide for them day by day. This had been Patrick Sookhdeo's practice since his earliest days in ministry – that is, to identify with those who were suffering, to live a life of dependence on God, and not to be a financial burden on the charity. Whilst his staff should be paid, he chose not to be. He has many friends and supporters in the Christian community who from time to time have felt led by God to support him personally. There were two particularly generous donors who supported him at different times. One of these also gave generously for the travel expenses not only of Dr Sookhdeo but also of his wife who normally travelled with him and the female colleague who often accompanied them.

Despite being aware of Dr Sookhdeo's principles, the majority trustees kept questioning why Dr Sookhdeo was not drawing a salary. He refused to do so, wishing to continue to live by faith and believing, quite understandably, that our supporters would prefer this. Incredibly, the majority trustees seemed to find this suspicious and suggestive of financial corruption.

As we have said, we the current trustees, for legal reasons, are unable to say as much as we would like, but we have good reason to believe that the former trustees' real aim all along was to have Dr Sookhdeo removed (which they ultimately did by ordering his suspension in January 2013 and then voting him off the board in June 2013).

There was abundant evidence to show that the vaguely worded issues listed by the group of trustees in their first communications were not genuine concerns, but were pretexts for finding fault and ousting Patrick Sookhdeo. They clearly did not want to receive satisfactory answers, but rather did everything they could to avoid having their "concerns" set at rest. They focused entirely on Dr Sookhdeo and refused to deal with the relevant departmental heads, not even with Personnel (Human Resources). This was nonsensical since Barnabas Fund is structured by departments with their own managers, and Dr Sookhdeo had little direct contact with most of the staff. (He would lead a weekly communion service for the staff and chair a managers' meeting about once a month, but interacted directly only with a handful of other staff. He was often away travelling overseas.) The group of trustees also refused for a long time to give any specifics about their concerns, and then produced a long list of detailed but largely spurious questions, leaving Patrick and the other minority trustees the impossible task of preparing answers to them all in just one day.

The dissenting trustees had made no effort to raise their alleged "concerns" formally at the regular scheduled board meetings before or during the dispute. They would only discuss them at special meetings that they themselves called and from which they excluded all the non-trustees who would normally attend board meetings.

In any event, questions began to be asked as to the suitability of the majority trustees in their positions as non-executive trustees. Aside from the compliance and regulatory issues mentioned above, some of them appeared to be less interested in helping persecuted Christians in other parts of the world than in preventing the advance of Islam in the UK. Furthermore, Dr Sookhdeo had in times past urged that ethnic minority members be added to the board, so as to better represent the global suffering Church and in line with Charity Commission guidelines on diversity¹¹ as part of good charity practice, but this never found favour with the majority trustee.

The tactics of the dissenting trustees

The initial leader of the group, at least in the early days, was Rev. Robert de Berry. It came to light during the dispute that he had actively solicited written complaints against Patrick

¹¹"The Hallmarks of an Effective Charity", Charity Commission publication CC10 (first published 1 July 2008), states that a charity which is fit for purpose "recognises, promotes and values equality and diversity in beneficiaries, staff and volunteers, and in all aspects of its activity".

from former staff even before Patrick was informed that there were any issues. He also told a Barnabas Fund supporter that he would not rest until Patrick was gone.

Later Rev. Canon Paul Brooks became Acting Chair and main spokesperson of the group, but Ivar Hellberg was said by Robert de Berry to be the group's planner.

Robert de Berry stated verbally to Bishop Julian Dobbs and Mr Philip Richards in February 2013 that they had "a mole" in the office. It must have been someone working very closely with Dr Sookhdeo because of the mysterious way in which the majority trustees seemed to know confidential things in advance.

On the other hand they attempted to keep confidential from Dr Sookhdeo the statements against him that they had gathered from former staff. In other words, they would not let him know what he was accused of.

From the outset, and repeatedly, Dr Sookhdeo offered to go to mediation in order to resolve the issues between the trustees in a confidential and appropriate fashion. But he was rebuffed for months. An official mediation was held but sadly was unsuccessful. The minority trustees continued with their efforts to find a solution but, despite them doing all they felt they possibly could, it was months before a resolution was reached. The group ignored many informal communications from Patrick and senior staff that were intended to alert them to the seriousness of the situation the group had created and to the need for legal compliance.

The dispute lasted for seven months (December 2012 - July 2013). Eventually, all of the trustees save for Rev. Albrecht Hauser (who remains a trustee) and one other from the majority trustees resigned. These seven months were exceedingly difficult for all involved, including the Fund's staff, many of whom found it very stressful.

Although the group of majority trustees were doing their best to find fault with the Human Resources practices at Barnabas Fund, they were very reluctant to take appropriate action when two of their own number were accused. At the staff Christmas lunch on 12 December 2012, Wilson Saraj, a Pakistani Christian who had previously worked for Tearfund and had recently been promoted at Barnabas Fund to manage the Projects Department, told Dr Sookhdeo that Robert de Berry's attitude to him had become more negative and that he felt certain this was a racist reaction to his promotion. Dr Sookhdeo, following procedure, telephoned the vice-chair of the trustees, Canon Paul Brooks, and other board members including Mrs Grainne McDonald and Rev. Nick Wynne-Jones. All those he contacted dismissed or even laughed off the idea that an accusation of racism could be made against their chairman. They closed ranks and did nothing to facilitate an investigation into the accusations. Instead, they turned in anger on the messenger (Patrick Sookhdeo) who had contacted them in order that they could deal with the issue. In the end, Mr Saraj had to submit a formal grievance against Rev. de Berry.

The group of majority trustees reacted in a similar way when Caroline Kerslake, the International Director of Projects, complained of harassment and bullying by Robert de Berry. This was in connection with his frequent attempts to get her to reverse decisions of the Projects and Disbursements Committee so that funds could be given to people and projects he knew personally. She felt that he would not have pressurised a male colleague in the same way. He took so little notice of her formal grievance against him that she had to send a legal letter, including a request that he no longer contact her direct. Rev. de Berry replied to her lawyer that the Barnabas Fund grievance procedure did not apply to trustees and sent Miss Kerslake six more emails in the next 24 hours.

A promise by one of the group to deal with these grievances at the board meeting on 7 February 2013 was not kept. This group were the same people who accused Patrick Sookhdeo and Barnabas Fund of poor governance and abusing the staff, yet they themselves seemed to have no concept of dealing with staff grievances if directed to one of their own number.

In seven months the group of trustees ran up a legal bill of over £140,000 although it was later reduced to £111,772.72 by negotiation. This is a huge sum for the group to have incurred in the belief that the charity itself, of which they were trustees, would be paying. Although the group of former trustees insisted that this sum be paid by Barnabas Fund UK as a condition for them resigning and bringing the dispute to an end, the current trustees of Barnabas Fund UK are determined that supporters' donations should not be used for this legal bill. The current trustees are therefore in the process of seeking a refund. A benefactor has offered to provide whatever cannot be recovered so supporters can be reassured that their donations are not being used wastefully.

Who were the dissenting trustees?

We have managed to effect a formal reconciliation with three of the dissenting trustees. The other six are:

Rev. Canon Paul Brooks

Anglican minister of St Paul's Church, St Helier, Jersey. Chair of the Jersey Evangelical Alliance. Acting Chair of the Barnabas Fund trustees for most of the period of the dispute. In this role, he authorised the charity to pay airfares for other trustees to attend a board meeting even though the trustees had undertaken not to charge the charity for their international travel after they had moved overseas. He also authorised the payment of an airfare for Mr Paul McDonald who had no role within the charity, but was the husband of a trustee, Mrs Grainne McDonald. This was unlawful in that Mrs McDonald was benefiting from her trusteeship by getting a free flight for her husband to accompany her to the UK. Canon Brooks knew this was not allowed, because Dr Sookhdeo had informed him and had himself refused to sanction the requested payments.

During the dispute, the majority trustees called a meeting with the staff of Barnabas Fund on 7 June 2013. Patrick and Rosemary Sookhdeo and Caroline Kerslake were unable to attend, as they were all out of the country at the time and very little notice of the meeting had been given. (The group of trustees had all refused an invitation to attend a meeting of staff and trustees, called by Dr Sookhdeo, on 19 February 2013 at which the intention was to have both sides present so that the staff could discuss with both at the same time.)

During the 7 June meeting, Paul Brooks informed the staff that the Charity Commission had told the group of trustees to get rid of Patrick and Rosemary Sookhdeo and Caroline Kerslake from Barnabas Fund. The incredulous staff pressed him to provide evidence for this, which he refused to do. When staff enquired from the Charity Commission themselves they were told no such instruction had been given and that Canon Brooks must correct his message to the staff. Eventually he emailed the staff on 17 June 2013 saying that Jim Hickey of the Charity Commission had asked him to "clarify" the comment he had made at the meeting on 7 June. He explained that what the Charity Commission had actually advised was that the group of majority trustees should take control of the charity and that it was the group's barrister who had advised that this would mean removing from the board all who were not part of their group.

The next day, 18 June 2013, Chris Cassin of the Charity Commission sent a lengthy email to Paul Brooks for circulation to all the trustees. It was about the meeting the following week at which the majority group of trustees planned to remove all four minority trustees who opposed them (i.e. remove Patrick Sookhdeo, Rosemary Sookhdeo, Caroline Kerslake and Albrecht Hauser). Mr Cassin wrote that it seemed premature to take such an action given that staff member Andrew Fleet was conducting a thorough review of the governance of the charity with the support of all the trustees and was also actively engaged in seeking to broker a solution to the impasse. While carefully stating his neutral position in the dispute, Mr Cassin urged the trustees to consider the consequences for the charity if the majority trustees carried out their plans, and to assess the risks with regard to "the financial consequences, the potential loss of skills and expertise, and the [impact on] practical management of the charity following the action". He also alluded to the impact on both donors and beneficiaries.

Rev. Robert de Berry

Retired Anglican vicar, who had also worked as a missionary in Uganda. By his own admission, he had been at least twice investigated for racism before his retirement.

Robert de Berry had been on the board of Barnabas Fund since 2002 and chair since 14 May 2009. After retiring from full-time parish ministry, he settled in Pewsey and started involving himself in the day to day affairs of Barnabas Fund, visiting the offices several times a week. He began secretly monitoring the staff, recording their movements around the building. This was despite the fact that he had no executive role.

Rev. de Berry displayed a cavalier and dismissive approach to compliance, regulations and due diligence. For example, he simply rejected two Barnabas Fund staff grievance procedures against him (one for bullying and one for racism) by claiming that, as a trustee, he was exempt from such procedures. On 4 January 2013 he misled the auditors by denying that the trustees had any financial concerns, despite the fact that a 19-point paper headed "Finance Concerns" was submitted by the majority trustees for the board agenda three days later, and "finance" had been on their list of issues to discuss since mid-December. On a later occasion he acted against the auditors' advice.

Rev. de Berry played a major part in instigating the 2012-13 actions, being the author of a letter to Patrick Sookhdeo dated 13 December 2012 (hand-delivered 11 December 2012) on behalf of the group of dissenting trustees which was the "commencement of hostilities". Despite Dr Sookhdeo's best efforts to engage verbally with Robert de Berry after receiving the letter, Rev. de Berry would not discuss with him.

Nevertheless Rev. de Berry was the main point of communication for the group in the first few weeks, during which time he told a major supporter that he would not rest until Patrick Sookhdeo had been removed from Barnabas Fund. Rev. de Berry was also the person (or the main person) who actively solicited written complaints against Dr Sookhdeo and the person who refused to let Dr Sookhdeo see them so that he could know what he had to defend himself against. Three examples of these complaints are given below: Emma Brown, Maxwell Jardim and Ian Wright (see pages 27-28).

At the board meeting on 7 February 2013, when Caroline Kerslake challenged the majority trustees about the active soliciting of complaints against Patrick Sookhdeo, their response was a general shocked murmur and shaking of heads, and the Acting Chair Paul Brooks verbally denied that it had happened. Robert de Berry, although present, failed to own up. Later Rev. de Berry admitted all this – the seeking of evidence against Patrick Sookhdeo and the refusal to admit having done so – in an undated letter to Dr Sookhdeo (probably written 8 March 2013) and hand-delivered by Bishop Martyn Minns.

Mr Ivar Hellberg

Retired army officer, with many continuing links to the intelligence services, which he claimed to have used to prevent a mosque in Camberley from being built with minarets overlooking the parade ground of the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. He claimed to have discovered that Saudi money, going via the Gulf and Azerbaijan to the UK, had been used to bribe Camberley councillors to give planning permission.

Mr Hellberg, an expert in logistics and psychological warfare, was described by Robert de Berry as the group's planner. He was the person to whom some of the former staff sent their critical reports about Dr Sookhdeo.

The accountant and company secretary issued a formal grievance against Mr Hellberg for bullying.

Mrs Grainne McDonald

Mrs McDonald and her American husband moved from the UK to live in the US during her time as trustee. Mrs McDonald agreed verbally with Patrick Sookhdeo that she would continue as a trustee after relocating but would never charge Barnabas Fund for her transatlantic travel. During the dispute she went back on this agreement, claiming not only her own airfare, but, in a breach of charity law (see above), also claiming her husband's airfare. Her husband had by then given up all his previous involvement with Barnabas Fund USA and had no links with the Barnabas family of charities.

Mrs Alison Ruoff

Member of Anglican General Synod and former JP. Mrs Ruoff's time on the board of Barnabas Fund was not a happy one as she did not seem to share Barnabas Fund's vision.¹² She appeared to have little concern for the situation of persecuted Christians, which is the main focus of Barnabas Fund's work, and disagreed with our policy of giving humanitarian assistance across all denominations. During the dispute, she objected fiercely to any investigation of the grievance against Robert de Berry for racism.

Seven months after the dispute was resolved, Patrick Sookhdeo was attacked in the one way so far untried i.e. by a sexual allegation. Mrs Ruoff emailed the information of his arrest to Andrew Presland, addressing her email to "Andrew and friends". Mr Presland evidently understood this to be a request to forward Mrs Ruoff's email to the "1990 Group" of the General Synod, which he duly did. Mrs Ruoff sent her email on 19 March 2014, at which point Patrick Sookhdeo had not yet been charged, yet she referred to the complainant as the "victim" and as being "deeply traumatised" thus implying Patrick Sookhdeo's guilt. Included within her email was the information that the complainant was "a member of staff" at Barnabas Fund, and that the allegation was sexual assault "by touching". Neither of these pieces of information were in the public domain at that point; indeed, most of the press reports of his arrest came in the few days immediately after Mrs Ruoff's email i.e. about 10-14 days after his arrest on 10 March. Mrs Ruoff stated in her email that her information came from a reliable source, the clear implication being that it was not a public source. Mrs Ruoff had severed all official connection with Barnabas Fund seven months earlier.

After various reports indicated that Alison Ruoff was continuing to make damaging comments about Patrick Sookhdeo and to discourage people from supporting Barnabas Fund, Canon Chris Sugden and Canon Vinay Samuel contacted her, in the summer of 2014. She told them that she did not believe that the two internal investigations into the February 2014 sexual allegation against Patrick Sookhdeo had been valid because of the composition of the two panels (Barnabas Fund trustees and an external Human Resources advisor, see page 29). The court trial had not yet taken place. Canon Sugden and Canon Samuel discussed with Mrs Ruoff a suggestion from Rev. Nick Wynne-Jones (see below) that there should be an independent review of the evidence by a senior retired judge. Dr Sookhdeo

¹²For example, Mrs Ruoff differed from Barnabas Fund on the issue of non-white leadership in the Church. She has claimed in the national press and on television that the reason why ethnic minorities are under-represented in the leadership of the Church of England is that they often do not want to "play a part" in leadership. (For the avoidance of doubt, these are Mrs Ruoff's personal views and certainly not endorsed by Barnabas Fund, which has always sought to empower, equip and facilitate non-white Christian leaders.) See for example the report by Jonathan Wynne-Jones "Church of England 'institutionally racist'", *The Telegraph*, 17 June 2007, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1554756/Church-of-England-institutionally-racist.html> (viewed 15 January 2016)

had agreed to abide by the findings of such a review or any other but would not be involved in deciding the composition of the new panel.

Before any action could be taken on this by Canon Sugden and Canon Samuel, the police contacted Dr Sookhdeo to warn him that convening any new panel would be seen as seeking to pervert the course of justice. However neither Patrick Sookhdeo, nor Chris Sugden, nor Vinay Samuel had contacted the police about the proposal. The question therefore was who had contacted the police about what was an internal issue and why they did so.

Rev. Nick Wynne-Jones

Retired Anglican vicar, who had only joined the board of Barnabas Fund on 5 September 2011. Nevertheless he was one of the original group in whose name Robert de Berry wrote to Patrick Sookhdeo in December 2012. He opposed any investigation into Robert de Berry when the latter was accused of racism and bullying.

Allegations by former staff – who are they?

There are around 60 UK-based Barnabas staff working out of offices in Pewsey, Coventry and Northern Ireland. Added to this there are approximately 20 other paid staff in Australia, New Zealand, USA, Russia and South Africa.

This section includes some examples of:

- Staff who left many years ago but have been very active on the internet in 2015 against Barnabas Fund and/or Servants Fellowship International and/or Patrick Sookhdeo as a result of Mark Woods' articles. We cannot attempt to respond online to everything but would ask readers to consider our comments below. We will be happy to receive any corrections to our information – please see back cover of this booklet.
- Staff who provided written complaints against Patrick Sookhdeo for use by the group of former trustees in late 2012, soon after their departure from Barnabas Fund.

Alastair Allen

Alastair Allen, who resigned from Servants Fellowship International (then called In Contact Ministries) 25 years ago in 1990, made a variety of online comments against Dr Sookhdeo in 2015.

He claimed that Patrick Sookhdeo had been dismissed from a job and that he was thrown out of his post of minister of St Andrew's Church, Plaistow. Both allegations are totally false. Dr Sookhdeo has never been dismissed from any job, and when he left St Andrew's Church in 1998 in order to move to Pewsey, Wiltshire, with Barnabas Fund, he and Rosemary were given a valedictory service and fond farewell by the congregation, who presented them with a bowl and a framed prayer for their future. Christian author Steve Maltz, a member of the congregation at the time, has written a statement confirming this.

Statement by Steve Maltz on 21/12/2015 about Dr Sookhdeo's departure from his post as minister of St Andrew's Church.

Patrick,

Monica and I were members of St Andrew's Church between 1986 and 2003, at times serving on the council and generally active over that whole period. When you left in the late 1990s the reasons that were given, according to our memory and understanding at that time, were that the Barnabas Fund ministry had grown and needed to be relocated to Pewsey. We have absolutely no recollection of you being sacked from leadership of the Church and the transition to the new leadership of the Church seemed to be a smooth one. We remember you and Rosemary still being active in the Plaistow area as late as 2003, as that was the year you bought our house from us to use as a missionary house.

Anyone claiming that you left St Andrew's under a cloud seems to be intent on rewriting history and we are happy to put the record straight if asked about this matter by a third party.

Many blessings to you and Rosemary

Steve & Monica Maltz

James Dowdeswell

James Dowdeswell has been very active in criticising Patrick Sookhdeo online in 2015. He had worked for Servants Fellowship International as a Training Officer for eight and a half months in 2002. He claimed to be unhappy with his treatment as an employee, but the correspondence shows that he was treated with great patience and courtesy.

Emma Brown

Emma Brown, along with some other staff, was made redundant in the autumn of 2012 in order to reduce overheads when Barnabas Fund suffered a downturn in income. She had always known that her advocacy role was potentially a short term post. Her salary was very high by Barnabas Fund standards. She had rejected Barnabas Fund's original salary offer and asked for a higher one, and wanted to work from home in London rather than from the Pewsey office as requested.

Miss Brown, a barrister, wrote two statements both dated 21 December 2012, the more formal running to 17 pages and specifically made "in response to a request from the trustees of Barnabas Fund". It should be remembered that on 7 February 2013 the whole group of trustees denied that they had deliberately sought damaging information from former staff against Dr Sookhdeo.

In this statement she describes Dr Sookhdeo as an "incubus" (a demon who has sex with a woman). The majority trustees circulated this document, causing Dr Sookhdeo and his family deep distress and alarm. The trustees, who had even sent it to the Charity Commission, refused his plea to withdraw the document from circulation.

Maxwell Jardim

Mr Jardim took voluntary redundancy in late 2012 when three other staff were made redundant. Soon afterwards he wrote a long report to Ivar Hellberg about what he had been able to "glean" that was critical of Barnabas Fund and Patrick Sookhdeo. Interestingly, Mr Hellberg had initially expressed grave but unspecified concerns to Patrick Sookhdeo about the idea of employing Mr Jardim. Later, after Mr Jardim had been given a job with Barnabas Fund, Ivar Hellberg advised Patrick Sookhdeo that Mr Jardim was very dangerous and implied that there had been issues when he resigned from the RAF, having served with them in Russia.

Mr Jardim claimed that there were local rumours in Pewsey village that Barnabas Fund was "a Muslim operation with a very clever façade" and that he, Mr Jardim, could not totally discount them. This document, with the implied suggestion that Patrick Sookhdeo was a Muslim plant pretending to be a Christian and presumably aiming to damage Christianity, was amongst those circulated by the group of trustees to a number of people outside Barnabas Fund. This was exceedingly distressing to Dr Sookhdeo as a convert who has suffered for his decision to follow Christ, has suffered for his open critique of Islam, and has dedicated much of his life to assisting other converts.

Ian Wright

Rev. Ian Wright, a Baptist minister, had been CEO of Barnabas Fund's office in Australia. He wrote a document entitled "Confidential Submission for the Nine Independent Trustees of Barnabas Fund UK", dated 28 December 2012. He says in his first paragraph, "The purpose of my writing this is to highlight some of my concerns about Patrick. I have not included any of the kindnesses that he has shown Margaret [his wife] and me."

When Ian Wright joined Barnabas Fund it was agreed that his salary should match the recommended minimum stipend of Baptist ministers in Queensland. This was his own suggestion, as we did not know how to choose a salary for Australia. As the years passed Rev. Wright became the highest paid staff member in Barnabas Fund globally.

Rev. Wright became aggrieved when Barnabas Fund could no longer accept his increasing salary in a time of global recession. (In the same year staff in the UK had to be made redundant to save money.) The dispute centred on these areas:

- The Baptist Union of Queensland introduced six-monthly salary reviews, in line with inflation. Rev. Wright asked for the same from Barnabas Fund but was refused.
- The Baptist Union of Queensland introduced an extra two weeks holiday per year for spiritual development. Rev. Wright asked for the same from Barnabas Fund, which would have resulted in him having nearly 50% more time off than anyone else. He was refused.
- Rev. Wright requested an increase in line with Australian inflation (CPI) of 3.1%. Barnabas international gave him instead an increase of 3.0% which he was not satisfied with.

Colin Johnston, the Barnabas Fund Australia accountant and a board member, was unable to convince Ian Wright that he needed to recognise that Australia had to see itself as part of an international structure and "share the pain" of the rest of the organisation.

Ian Wright showed a consistent and marked reluctance to consider recruiting a non-white senior colleague, which Patrick Sookhdeo often urged him to do. It seems that Ian thought the ethnic churches in Australia were of little importance to Barnabas Fund, so there was no need to relate to them, and he was not bothered by the fact that the entire Australian staff and board were (apart from Patrick Sookhdeo) white. Jude Simion, a Sri Lankan, was appointed as COO for Barnabas Fund Australia, despite opposition from Ian Wright.

Ian Wright resigned from Barnabas Fund and took up a post as minister of a Baptist Church in Queensland. Since then we have been informed that he has been spreading negative stories across Australia about people linked to Barnabas Fund, causing them distress and damaging the image and perception of the charity.

Allegations in 2014

Sexual touching

On Monday 17 February 2014 a female member of staff made a formal complaint to senior Barnabas Fund staff alleging that she had been sexually touched by Patrick Sookhdeo on the previous Friday afternoon, 14 February.¹³ There were no witnesses to this incident. Within a few days she had also made complaints to the police and to ACAS (the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service). Accordingly, three separate processes of investigation commenced. Dr Sookhdeo strongly denied the allegations.

The internal complaint was investigated for the next 14 weeks. The process involved 176 pages of written submissions, many interviews, and two panels comprising a selection of trustees and an independent external Human Resources expert. This investigation did not uphold the sexual allegations, and only confirmed two linked allegations i.e. that Dr Sookhdeo had introduced an open door policy (he would keep the door open if he met a female on his own) and had introduced a modesty dress code for the female staff in his corridor. This dress code responded to the fact that visitors of various religions and cultures would come to the office, as well as very senior dignitaries. It was an unusual workplace, where a high degree of professionalism, discretion and confidentiality were required by staff working closely with Dr Sookhdeo.

The police investigation appeared to mostly concentrate on obtaining evidence in support of the complainant's allegations. The case went to court in February 2015 and Dr Sookhdeo pleaded not guilty. After a long period of consideration the jury of ten women and two men found Dr Sookhdeo guilty of one count of sexual assault by a 10-2 majority verdict.

Witness intimidation

In June 2014 Dr Sookhdeo was accused of witness intimidation by two members of staff who were at a meeting on 6 June 2014 where about 60 Barnabas staff and trustees were present. He was arrested at home by armed police officers a few days later.

The meeting in question had been called by the international board of Barnabas to mark Dr Sookhdeo's reinstatement on the board after the internal investigation into the sexual allegation had been completed and he had agreed to the board's request to return from his voluntary sabbatical.

It was we the trustees who had called the meeting, not Dr Sookhdeo.¹⁴ We had pressed Dr Sookhdeo himself to attend the meeting and also to speak at it, both of which he did with extreme reluctance. He spoke without notes and from the heart, explaining what a painful time it had been for him and Rosemary. The speech was secretly recorded by a member of staff on her phone and given to the police.

The witness intimidation charges centred on two prosecution witnesses who at the time were due to give circumstantial evidence concerning the alleged sexual assault. One of them had been working from home and came in to the office in order to attend the meeting (this was without the knowledge of the trustees or Dr Sookhdeo). The other had been specifically told by the COO Dr Rod Westrop shortly before the meeting that she should not attend it because Dr Sookhdeo was going to be present and his bail conditions meant that he should **not** have any contact with her. However, in court on 17 February 2015 this witness said that she had

¹³On this particular date, Dr Sookhdeo was recovering from a painful invasive medical procedure for bladder cancer which he had been given the previous day.

¹⁴There were eight trustees present, in addition to Patrick Sookhdeo, when the decision was made to call the meeting.

attended the meeting because “I didn’t think I had any choice,” and was vague when asked whether or not she was expecting Dr Sookhdeo to be at the meeting. She also told the court that during the meeting she had become frightened that she would lose her job and claimed that she did in fact subsequently lose her job, after having been put on paid leave until the end of her honeymoon in October. She did not mention in court the fact she had already informed her line manager on 7 March 2014 that she intended to leave her job soon after her wedding on 12 July (which was later postponed to 11 October 2014). She also told the court that she believed the meeting had been called by Patrick Sookhdeo for the sole or main purpose of talking to the prosecution witnesses.

Both these two witnesses claimed that Dr Sookhdeo intimidated them in his speech, though Dr Sookhdeo himself had thought that neither was in the crowded room. He scarcely looked up because of his embarrassment. It is the strong belief of the trustees, many of whom were present at the meeting, that no witness intimidation occurred and they were extremely surprised by the verdict of the jury.

The two counts of witness intimidation were heard by the same jury in February 2015. Dr Sookhdeo pleaded not guilty to both but was found guilty.

Appeal against convictions

Dr Sookhdeo lodged an appeal against conviction. After being encouraged by one prestigious London law firm, who had spent considerable time looking into the situation, to continue with the appeal, a senior Queen’s Counsel barrister advised him in June 2015 that he should withdraw the appeal. This barrister advised Dr Sookhdeo that, although he had a chance of winning an appeal, appealing inevitably involved a great deal of stress, especially given that the appeal process would take approximately 12 to 18 months, then a possible further trial. He advised that he thought it better that Dr Sookhdeo should “live with the injustice”. He advised that Dr Sookhdeo should concentrate on getting on with his ministry, which at that time Patrick was able to do as he had been restored to his position on the board and was functioning again as International Director.

After considerable thought and prayer, Dr Sookhdeo decided to follow this advice. Another factor in his decision not to appeal was the major financial outlay that would have been required, which he and Rosemary could not afford. A number of people encouraged him to see his situation as a way of more closely identifying with the persecuted Christians he has fought to support for so many years and who often suffer great injustice and false accusation.

Due to subsequent developments, Dr Sookhdeo re-started his appeal in February 2016.

Allegations in 2015

Method of arrest

On 21 November 2015, at about 9.20 pm, Dr Sookhdeo was arrested by armed police at Heathrow Airport as he was about to board a plane for South Africa for a week's speaking tour with four colleagues on behalf of Barnabas Fund. He was informed that he was being arrested in connection with an accusation of a single incident of indecent touching alleged to have taken place in 1977. He strongly denies the accusation.

The Metropolitan police appeared to be embarrassed by the dramatic and humiliating way in which the arrest was carried out, given that Dr Sookhdeo would have been prepared to surrender at the police's convenience. They said Wiltshire police had issued an "all ports" alert for Dr Sookhdeo to be stopped at any airport. Wiltshire Police claimed that they had been unable to find Dr Sookhdeo at home! (This is very strange given that he had been living at his normal address for the past month, spending only one night away from home. Dr Sookhdeo lives only 100 metres from the local police station.)

Detention and interrogation

Dr Sookhdeo, who was dressed in thin clothes suitable for the South African summer and is diabetic, was held in an unheated cell all night with the light on and nothing to eat. He shivered with the cold, and his request to sit in the corridor for a few minutes to warm up was refused. He was eventually given a blanket and later a second blanket. In the morning he was given a small breakfast and a couple of hot drinks. By mid-morning he said that he was not in a fit state to answer questions, as his mind was affected by the cold and lack of food and sleep. (The lack of food was particularly dangerous for him because of his diabetes.) About ten minutes later, he was moved to a warm cell and given a third blanket. He was not given lunch, the police stating that there was nothing available without sugar.

In the early afternoon, he was interviewed under caution. At one point during the interrogation, the police suggested that their case was strong because his accuser was a very respectable member of the establishment. Towards the end of the questioning, the police told him not to trust his lawyer but that they, the police, were the people who had his real interests at heart.

Damage caused

In this section we will give a few examples of hindrances to Barnabas Fund's work to help persecuted Christians. Space does not permit us to look at the turmoil caused to faithful, hard-working Barnabas Fund staff and to many of our supporters too, let alone the emotional distress and anxiety caused to Patrick Sookhdeo by the constant harassment from many sources. Nor can we speculate on what the cost has been or may in the future be in terms of international events, as a result of the fact that Dr Sookhdeo's opportunities to advise the security forces and decision-makers have now been severely curtailed. This could not have come at a worse time, given that Islamist terrorism is surely the most urgent world threat and Dr Sookhdeo's decades of expertise are needed now more than ever before.

Considerable staff time has been expended to deal with the aftermath of Rev. Woods' ill-founded articles including a number of challenges from supporters who have read them.

We were very sorry to hear of one of our contractors losing business because they continue to do work for Barnabas Fund.

Certain British Christian publications, in which we have advertised for years, now refuse to take our material, in some cases even if it is only to recruit staff. Sometimes they specifically say it is because of Dr Sookhdeo, but others refuse to say why or to discuss at all. An example of this is *ReachOut* (the magazine of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland). Just before Christmas 2015 this magazine cancelled at short notice a booking for 6,000 Barnabas Fund leaflets to be included as loose inserts in their February/March 2016 issue. Barnabas Fund UK's CEO, Hendrik Storm emailed Rebecca McConnell, the editor of *ReachOut*, and tried in vain to telephone the magazine to ask why this decision had been made, but came away with the strong impression that *ReachOut* was avoiding taking his calls. On 5 January 2016 Rev. T. J. Stothers, Deputy Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, wrote to say that the Presbyterian Church of Ireland was willing to reimburse Barnabas Fund for the cost of printing the leaflets but was not willing to discuss the reasons for their decision not to allow the leaflets in their magazine.

Support

Patrick Sookhdeo and we the Barnabas trustees are very grateful to the many Christians, of all denominations and backgrounds, who have taken the trouble to make contact to affirm and encourage us, to those who have prayed diligently, and to those who have written articles, blogs, letters or emails to the press in our defence.

We are encouraged by the church leaders (many of them from the non-Western world) who have accepted the findings of our internal investigation and continued to invite Patrick Sookhdeo to speak and teach, just as they did before.

A special meeting organised by Canon Vinay Samuel and Canon Chris Sugden on 22 April 2015 at the London offices of Christian Concern brought together twelve senior Anglicans including a representative of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The meeting (at which Patrick Sookhdeo was not present) considered the court judgement against Dr Sookhdeo and after much discussion concluded that he was innocent and had been targeted. It also accepted that “there had been a concerted move to take Patrick Sookhdeo down and destroy Barnabas Fund”.

Conclusion

Thank you for reading this far in such a complicated account. Several themes have recurred: attitudes to Islam, to race and to the persecuted Church. But many mysteries remain.

Unanswered questions

Why are some UK organisations now refusing to do business with Barnabas Fund or even (as in the case of *ReachOut*) breaking specific pre-existing agreements even after Dr Sookhdeo had resigned from the organisation? The Evangelical Alliance UK tried and failed to persuade an arm of the World Evangelical Alliance to break its agreement with Barnabas Fund. Have they tried and succeeded with some British organisations?

How high up did the Lambeth initiative against Patrick Sookhdeo go? Did the Archbishop of Canterbury know? Did the Bishop of London or senior clerics in the Diocese of London know? Was it to be a smear campaign or something else? Certainly there have been many senior Anglicans vocally opposed to Patrick Sookhdeo for a number of years, for example, Philip Lewis, of Bradford Diocese, Canon Dr Christopher Lamb of Coventry Diocese, Stephen Cotterell, Bishop of Chelmsford, and Tim Thornton, Bishop of Truro.

Who wanted so badly to damage Barnabas Fund that they were manipulating google ad words and using a dozen websites to improve the search ranking for articles biased against Patrick Sookhdeo? Thanks to specialist security consultants, we have been aware for some years that Muslims in Colorado Springs, USA, were doing this. But it seems that Rev. Mark Woods and other Christians, unwittingly or otherwise, played into their hands in 2015 by providing them with plenty more material to use. As a result negative articles kept appearing at the top of the first page when searching for “Patrick Sookhdeo” despite a plethora of positive mentions in other sources over the same time period.

Then there are mysterious sets of apparent linkages that have yet to be explained. For example, Mark Woods appears to be in contact with the complainant who accused Patrick Sookhdeo in November 2015 of indecent touching 38 years earlier. The main evidence for this is that Rev. Woods’ article reporting Dr Sookhdeo’s arrest appeared before any other media report that we are aware of.

Secondly, it appears that some of the former trustees or those close to them have fed Mark Woods much of the “information” for his articles. This is strongly suggested by the fact that the content of some of his articles and the nature of some of his enquiries to Barnabas Fund demonstrate that he is familiar with the issues of this dispute, which was never in the public domain.

Thirdly, as we have already seen (page 24), at least one of the former trustees had earlier shown herself to be apparently getting information more or less direct from the person who accused Patrick Sookhdeo of sexual touching in February 2014.

Fourthly, the barrister representing the former trustees in 2012-13 also advised the individual who made the sexual allegation against Patrick Sookhdeo in 2014. The evidence for this is that his name was stated at one of the first employment tribunal hearings before an Employment Judge. (The hearing was part of the ACAS process started by the complainant.)

Our final question is simply, “Why do Mark Woods and *Christian Today* single out Barnabas Fund for criticism?” Christian organisations in the UK are subject to the same employment legislation and workplace issues as other employers. There are mission agencies and Christian aid agencies who have had major disputes with members of their staff. We are not aware that Mark Woods has attempted to expose them. In recent years, a number of Christian agencies have had huge problems with their trustees; in one case all the trustees resigned *en masse*. Also, several well-known Christian organisations have been investigated by the Charity Commission for a variety of reasons. Yet, to the best of our knowledge, *Christian Today* has not published articles about the struggles of these organisations. Why do Mark Woods and *Christian Today* focus continually on the smaller-scale challenges facing Barnabas Fund?

Why do the trustees support Patrick Sookhdeo?

For years Dr Sookhdeo has endured harassment, threats, defamation, abuse and physical danger, along with attempts to destroy his work, such as Barnabas Fund. This has at times come from the Church establishment, whether it be the Anglicans or groups like the Evangelical Alliance UK and mission agencies, and also from the police.

Dr Sookhdeo is not an establishment figure. He comes from an immigrant, inner-city background. As an Asian he has been subjected to appalling racism by the Church, this coming on top of the alienation he suffered as a convert from Islam.

Much of the harassment has been in the form of slanderous rumours that people will never discuss openly with him.

Why do all the national Barnabas boards as well as the international board continue to believe in Patrick Sookhdeo’s innocence? Some people have inferred that we do not take seriously allegations of sexual abuse. That is not true. We recognise that many real and devastating examples of abuse have occurred within the Christian Church and those perpetrators must be dealt with.

But we learn from the Bible (Deuteronomy 19:15; Matthew 18:16) that there must be two or three witnesses to corroborate an allegation. In England, unlike Scotland, there is no requirement for corroboration; a person can be found guilty on the simple accusation of one individual, no matter how long ago.

We have described on page 29 the detailed process of investigation followed by Barnabas Fund, which we believe was both Biblical and met the highest standards of modern Human Resources best practice. Indeed, its thoroughness was praised by an external Human Resources expert. By contrast the police, as already noted, appeared to focus their efforts mainly on looking for evidence to support the accuser. Should we the trustees not stand for justice on Patrick Sookhdeo’s behalf as we do for persecuted Christians in other parts of the world?

We are baffled as to why so few Western Christian organisations and church leaders have sought to follow Biblical practices when they hear of Dr Sookhdeo’s situation. We do not understand how Christian leaders justify spreading baseless rumours, slander, gossip and malicious stories when the Bible not only condemns such behaviour but also says clearly that if you have something against a fellow believer you should discuss it with them and then bring it to the church (Matthew 18:15-17). Many non-Western Christian groups have contacted us, the Barnabas trustees, to ask questions, and, when fully satisfied, invited Patrick Sookhdeo to speak at their conferences and assemblies as he did before.

All the boards of Barnabas Fund around the world have reluctantly accepted Dr Sookhdeo's resignation, but continue to support him and have urged him to carry on assisting the ministry as much and as long as he feels able.

This document comes from the board of trustees of Barnabas Aid International (charity registered in England number 1155957, company limited by guarantee number 8826012)

Rt Rev. Julian Dobbs
Rev. Albrecht Hauser (chair)
Mr Colin Johnston
Miss Caroline Kerslake
Rev. Ian McNaughton
Rev. Paul Mursalin
Mr Ernest Poon
Mrs Rosemary Sookhdeo